**GEORGE WHITEFIELD**

A BIOGRAPHY,

WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS LABORS  
 IN AMERICA.

COMPILED

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 ETC., ETC.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.

MORAL STATE OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE EARLY  
 PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY — WHITE-  
 FIELD, FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS FIRST SERMON.

1714-1736.

Low state of religion in Great Britain and its dependencies when  
Whitefield appeared—His birth in Gloucester—Hooper—Raikes  
—Whitefield’s early life—His entrance at the university of Ox-  
ford—Becomes connected with the Wesleys and other Method-  
ists—Illness and mental trials—Relief—Preparation for the min-  
istry—Return to Gloucester—Ordination—First sermon----13

CHAPTER II.

WHITEFIELD’S SUCCESS AS A PREACHER IN ENG-  
 LAND-FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA.

1736-1738

Whitefield’s return to Oxford—Usefulness there—-Visits London—  
Great popularity—Georgia—His anxiety as to duty—Invited to  
Georgia by the Wesleys—Preparation and departure—Preaching  
and excitement at Deal—Labors and success on board—Arrival  
and labors at Gibraltar—Interesting incidents on the voyage—  
Sickness and recovery—His reception at Savannah—Visit to an  
Indian king—Origin of the Orphan asylum—Visit to Frederica—  
Return to Savannah—Visit to Charleston—Treatment by Gar-  
den—Embarkation for Europe—Stormy voyage—Arrival in Lim-  
erick—-Journey to London—Meeting with the trustees of Geor-  
gia—Ordination as priest—Return to London—-First extempore  
prayer—-First idea of open-air preaching-- -- -- -- -- -- -- -- -- 40

CHAPTER III.

OPEN-AIR PREACHING IN ENGLAND AND WALES—  
 ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE IN LONDON.

1738, 1739.

Whitefield’s visit to Bristol—-New opposition—Interviews with the  
chancellor of the diocese—-Preaching at Kingswood—Large con-  
gregations—Preaching at Bristol—Labors in Wales with Howel  
Harris—Gloucester—Old Mr. Cole—Return to London—Conflict

with Bishop Warburton and others—Moorfields—Kennington  
Common—Blackheath—Anecdotes—Erection of the Tabernacle  
—New Tabernacle—Certificate—Visit to Norwich—Conversion  
of Robert Robinson—Preaching at the West End of London—  
Liberality of Whitefield’s congregations—Attendance of the no-  
bility on Whitefield’s ministry—Architecture of Tabernacle and  
Tottenham Court road chapel --- 71

CHAPTER IV.

WHITEFIELD’S SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA.

1739, 1740.

Joseph Periam’s release by Whitefield from Bedlam—Whitefield’s  
arrival at Philadelphia—Preaches to vast crowds in the open  
air—Testimony of Dr. Franklin and others—Account of the Log  
College—William Tennent, Sen.—Whitefield’s own account of  
his preaching at Philadelphia—Subsequent discovery of the con-  
version of Dr. Rodgers—Whitefield’s first visit to New York

Description of him by one of his hearers—Sermons in New Jer-  
sey—Old Tennent church—Places of preaching at New York—  
Address to sailors—Letter to Pemberton—Interview with Gil-  
bert Tennent—Some of Whitefield’s sermons printed—Departure  
from Philadelphia—Sermons on his journey to Savannah—Arri-  
val and reception at Charleston—Departure for Savannah—Dan-  
gers of the way—State of things in Georgia—Whitefield revisits  
Charleston—Controversy with Commissary Garden—Lays the  
foundation-stone of the Orphan house—Sermon by Smith on the  
character of Whitefield --- 97

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF HIS SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA.

1740.

Feebleness of Whitefield’s health—Again visits Charleston, Phila-  
delphia, etc.—Extent of his former success—Extracts from Sew-  
ard’s journal—Extracts from newspapers—Whitefield’s letter to  
England—His correspondence on marriage—Birth and death of  
his son—His funeral sermon for his wife—Franklin and others  
on Whitefield’s eloquence—Anecdote—Extract from the New  
England Weekly Journal—Return to Savannah—Manner of his  
reception—Activity at Savannah—Again visits Charleston—  
Cited into the Commissary’s court—Various examinations—  
Whitefield’s appeal to the Court of Chancery—Interview with  
the Commissary—Usefulness at Charleston—Sails for New Eng-  
land --- 129

CHAPTER VI.

WHITEFIELD’S FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER, 1740.

State of religion in New England—Testimony of Prince—Dr. I.  
Mather—Dr. Jonathan Edwards success—Prevalence of prayer—  
Whitefield’s arrival and labors at Newport—Interview with  
Clap—Honeyman—Letter from Barber—Journey to Boston—  
Interview with the Commissary and the clergy—Preaches at  
Brattle-street, Old South church, New North, Common, Rox-  
bury, Old North, Cambridge, First church—Interview with Gov-  
ernor Belcher—Roxbury—Hollis-street—Old South church—  
Brattle-street — Marblehead — Salem — Ipswich — Newbury —  
Plampton—Portsmouth—York — Return to Boston—Frequent  
preaching—Invitation to children—Interesting conversation with  
a child—Anecdote of juvenile usefulness—Remarks on an uncon-  
verted ministry—Whitefield’s character of Boston—Preaches at  
Concord, Sudbury, Marlborough, Worcester, Leicester, Brook-  
field. Cold Spring, Hadley, Northampton—Revival there—White-  
field’s opinion of Mr. Edwards and family—Important interview  
—Preaching at East Windsor, Westfield, Springfield, Suffield—  
Opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, Sen.—Relinquishment of  
appointments to preach—Visit to New Haven—Interview with  
Principal Clap—Departure from New England—Whitefield’s  
character of it—Conversion of Mr. Emerson—Prince’s account of  
Whitefield’s visit—Dr. Baron Stow on its results—Anecdote, --- 118

CHAPTER VII.

LABORS IN NEW YORK AND THE MIDDLE AND SOUTH-  
ERN STATES.

1740, 1741.

Whitefield’s arrival and labors at New York, Staten Island, and  
Newark—Mr. Burr-—Meeting with Gilbert Tennent—Visit to  
Baskinridge—Tennent’s preaching in Cross’ barn—Whitefield  
preaches in the new house at Philadelphia—Franklin’s advice to  
Gilbert Tennent—Remarkable instances of conversion—Success  
in Philadelphia—Apostrophe in a sermon—Visit to Gloucester,  
Greenwich, Cohansey, Salem, Newcastle, Fagg’s Manor, Bohe-  
mia—Sails from Reedy island to Charleston—Arrival at Bethes-  
da—Remarkable escape from death—Prosecution at Charleston  
—Preaching—Letters from Boston—Departure for England—  
Separation from Messrs. Wesley—Difficulties in London—Tri-  
umph—Howel Harris- ----- - -- --- - - -- - 196

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST AND SECOND VISITS TO SCOTLAND—LABORS  
IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

1741-1744.

Scheme of comprehension—Account of Rev. John Cennick—Voy-  
age to Scotland—Letter to Rodgers—Visit to Erskine—Preach-  
ing in Edinburgh—Labors at Glasgow—His sermons printed—  
Return to England—Letter from McCulloch—Renewed glance  
at Edinburgh—Public attention deeply riveted—Execution of  
a convict—Improvement of the event in a sermon—Conversion  
of a mimic—A drunken sergeant—Miss Hunter—Marquis of  
Lothian—Conduct of Rev. Mr. Ogilvie—Second visit to Scot-  
land—Cambuslang—Kilmarnock—Glance at subsequent visits—  
Orphan-house park, Edinburgh—Glasgow—Increasing reputa-  
tion—Extracts from letters—Anecdotes—Visit to Wales—Let-  
ters from America—Visit to Gloucester, Strand, Tewkesbury—  
Encouraging news from America—Success in London—Awaken-  
ing at the Tabernacle—Visit to Gloucester and its neighborhood  
—South Wales—Return to London—Bristol—Exeter—Mr.  
Saunders—Conversion of Thomas Olivers—Birmingham—Kid-  
derminster—Health—Assizes at Gloucester—Plymouth—Deliv-  
erance from assassination—Conversion of Mr. Tanner—Visits to  
the poor—Anecdote—Embarkation for America- - - — --- 222

CHAPTER IX.

WHITEFIELD’S SECOND VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND.

1744, 1745.

Incidents of the voyage from England—Prayer heard—General  
alarm—Whitefield’s illness—Arrival at York—-Threatening  
sickness—Rev. Mr. Moody—Preaching at York and Portsmouth  
—Apparent danger of death—Departure for Boston—Constant  
preaching there — Chelsea—Malden—Prince’s account of his  
preaching and conduct—Objections made to his administration  
of the Lord’s supper—Changes in New England—Opposition to  
Whitefield in Connecticut, New Haven, Massachusetts, Harvard  
College—Large meeting in his favor at Boston—Number of sig-  
natures to the testimony—Progress of revival—Proceedings of  
Harvard College—Whitefield’s defence—Subsequent act of the  
College—Expositions at Boston, Ipswich, Portland, Exeter—Ex-  
pedition against Cape Breton—Sherburne’s request—Sermon to  
the soldiers—Refusal of chaplaincy—Conversion of a colored  
trumpeter—Of a noted scoffer—Anecdote of Whitefield and Dr.  
Hopkins- - - — - -- ---- 254

CHAPTER X.

LABORS IN THE MIDDLE AND SOUTHERN STATES—

THE BERMUDAS.

1745-1748.

Whitefield’s preaching in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia—  
Liberal offer declined—Usefulness of his printed sermons in Vir-  
ginia—Preaches at Hanover—Isaac Oliver—Visit to Bethesda—  
His account of the Orphan-house—His character as given by the  
New York Post-boy—Public testimony as to Whitefield’s integ-  
rity—Preaching tour in Maryland—Visit to Charleston—Success  
of his preaching in Maryland—Visits New York, Newport, Ports-  
mouth, Boston—Return to Philadelphia—Bohemia—Journey to  
North Carolina—Embarkation for the Bermudas—His progress  
and labors—Honored by the governor and others—Usefulness  
among the negroes—-Summary of his proceedings in the Bermu-  
das—Kindness of the people there—Voyage to England—His la-  
bors on the voyage—Arrival at Deal- - - - -- -- -- -- 277

CHAPTER XI.

LABORS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND-CHAPLAIN  
TO LADY HUNTING-DON.

1748, 1749.

Triumphs and trials in London—Becomes chaplain to the Countess  
of Huntingdon—Complimented by the great—Bolingbroke and  
Rev. Mr. Church—Rev. James Hervey—Honors conferred on  
Whitefield—Falsehoods of Horace Walpole—Charged with vul-  
garism—Defence—Third visit to Scotland—Return to London—  
Visit to the west of England—Conversions in Gloucestershire—  
Tour in Cornwall—Brilliant assemblies in London—Excursion to  
Exeter and Plymouth—Rev. Andrew Kinsman—Return to Lon-  
don—Decline of health and visit to Portsmouth and Wales—  
Arrival of Mrs. Whitefield from the Bermudas—Visit to the north  
of England—Popularity there—Intensely interesting services—·  
Rev. W. Grimshawe—Solemn instances of mortality—Return to  
London for the winter—Usefulness — - - --- 301

CHAPTER XII.

LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN—FOURTH VISIT TO AMER-  
ICA-NEW TABERNACLE IN LONDON, AND TABER-  
NACLE AT BRISTOL.

1750-1754.

Efforts made by Whitefield for Bethesda—His ardent love for Amer-  
ica—Love to his mother—His mourning for sin—Dr. Doddridge

London ministers—Interview with Doddridge and Hervey—  
Earthquake in London—Bishop Horne’s sermon—Universal con-  
sternation—Preaching of Whitefield at midnight in Hyde park—  
Whitefield and his friends at Court—Journey to Bristol—Taun-  
ton—Rev. R. Darracott—Preaching at Rotherham, Bolton, Ul-  
verston — Conversion of Mr. Thorpe — Edinburgh and other  
places in Scotland—Testimony of Hume—Second visit to Ire-  
land—Opposition on Oxmantown Green—Usefulness in Ireland  
—Rev. John Edwards—Fourth voyage to America—Interview  
with Lady Huntingdon—Moravians—Lady Huntingdon’s testi-  
mony—Letter to Dr. Franklin—Itinerant labors—Revision of  
manuscripts—Erection of the new Tabernacle—Again itinerates  
—Dedication of the Tabernacle at Bristol—Somersetshire—Con-  
dolence on Mr. Wesley’s sickness—Visit of Messrs. Davies and  
Tennent to England—Whitefield’s fifth voyage to America--323

CHAPTER XIII.

FIFTH VISIT TO AMERICA— RENEWED LABORS IN  
GREAT BRITAIN—TOTTENHAM COURT-ROAD CHAP-  
EL.

1754-1763.

Whitefield’s arrival and proceedings in Lisbon—Lands at Beaufort,  
S. C.—Voyage to New York—New Jersey—Interview with Will-  
iam Tennent—Accompanies President Burr to New England—  
Popularity at Boston—Correspondence, with Habersham—Ports-  
mouth—Rhode Island—Franklin’s narrative of a drummer and  
Whitefield—Powerful, address in Virginia—Pleasant interview  
at Charleston—Embarks for England—Arrival at New Haven—  
His feelings on arriving in England—Labors at the Tabernacle—  
Love for America—Journey to Bristol, Gloucestershire, Nor-  
wich—Returns to London—Reproof from Grimshawe—Serious  
illness—Earthquake at Lisbon—Tottenham Court-road Chapel—  
Conversion of Mr. Crane—Publication of “A short Address”—  
Personal character of Whitefield’s preaching—His servant—Shu-  
ter—Violent persecution—Interference of government—Journey  
to Bristol—Lines on a chair—Journey to Kent, north of Eng-  
land, Scotland—Meeting at Leeds—Interview with the new gov-  
ernor of Georgia—Prosperity of Tottenham Court—Journey to  
Scotland—Ireland—Returns to London—111 health—Anecdote—  
Another visit to Scotland—Death of friends—Debts of Bethesda  
paid—Renewed visit to Scotland—Visit to Brighton—Footers  
mimicry—Activity—Sails on his sixth voyage to America--- 350.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIXTH VISIT AND LABORS IN AMERICA—RENEWED  
LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

1763-1767.

Improvement of Whitefield’s health—Friends in Virginia—Proceed-  
ings in Philadelphia—New Jersey—A collegiate hearer—New  
York—Letter from Boston Gazette—Opposition of Seabury—  
Arrival and preaching at Boston—Public thanks to him—Leaves  
Boston—New Haven—New York—New Jersey College—Phila-  
delphia—Virginia—South Carolina—Bethesda—Proceedings of  
the government—Prosperity of the Orphan-house—Thoughts of  
returning to England—Still detained in America—Sails for  
England—Arrival there—Dedicates a church at Bath—Returns  
to London—Sickness—Interest in American affairs—Rev. Sam-  
son Occum—Labors with Mr. Whitaker in England—Success—  
Whitefield’s journey to Bristol—Success in London—Mr. Joss  
becomes his colleague—Rev. Rowland Hill—Whitefield again  
visits Bath and Bristol—Mr. Fletcher’s sermons in London—Pref-  
ace to Bunyan’s works—Whitefield in Wales and Gloucester-  
shire-North of England—Disappointed in obtaining a char-  
ter for Bethesda 375

CHAPTER XV.

HIS LAST LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN - COLLEGE  
AT TREVECCA— EARL OF BUCHAN—TUNBRIDGE  
WELLS.

1767-1769.

Letter to Keen—Whitefield preaches before the Book Society—  
Change in his style and manner of preaching—Expulsion of six  
students from Oxford—Whitefield’s letter to the Vice-chancel-  
lor—Usefulness of the expelled young men—Letter to a gentle-  
man at Wisbeach—To Captain Scott—To Hon. and Rev. Walter  
Shirley—Death and funeral services of the Earl of Buchan—  
Whitefield’s last visit to Edinburgh—Death of Mrs. Whitefield—  
Whitefield’s own sickness—Dedication of the college at Trevec-  
ca—Improvement of his health—Letter to Mr. Shirley—Letter  
of Dr. Franklin to Whitefield—Whitefield’s remarks on it—Ded-  
ication of church at Tunbridge Wells—Contemplated voyage to  
America—His last sermon—Account of Rev. George Burder—  
Messrs. Wilson—Embarkation of Whitefield—Detained in the  
Downs—Ordination and preaching at Deal—Anecdote of Dr.  
Gibbons—Clears the Channel—Arrival at Charleston------- 400

CHAPTER XVI.

SEVENTH VISIT AND LAST LABORS IN AMERICA—  
DEATH.

1769, 1770.

Arrival at Bethesda—Its prosperity—Honors paid him by the legis-  
lature—Letter at Charleston—Plan of the proposed college—  
Visits Philadelphia—Preaches at Burlington, New York, Albany  
—Attends an execution—Visit to Sharon—Conversion of Mr.  
Randall—Visit to Boston—Letters to Messrs. Wright and Keen  
—Letter in Pennsylvania Journal—Arrival at Exeter—Anec-  
dote—Vast congregation—Delivers his last sermon—Account of  
it—His solemnly interesting appearance—Rodgers’ Journal—  
Journey of Whitefield to Newburyport—Alarming illness —  
Death—His remarks to Dr. Finley—Arrangements for the funer-  
al—Its solemn services—Cenotaph- - ------- —- - - --- 423

CHAPTER XVII.

TESTIMONIES AND FACTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF WHITE-  
FIELD’S CHARACTER.

Funeral sermon by Dr. Cooper—Respect shown to his memory in  
Georgia—Whitefield county—Sermon by Rev. Mr. Ellington—  
Arrival of the news in London—Sermon by Rev. J. Wesley—  
Rev. John Newton—Anecdote—Reply of Bacon the sculptor—  
Visits to his tomb—Old man in Ipswich—Whitefield’s indifference  
to his reputation and ease—Institution at Georgia-—Laborious  
life—Extraordinary voice—Use of common facts—Anecdotes—  
His solemnity of manner—Testimony of an American preacher—  
Of Winter—Anecdotes—Sermons in storms—Appearance in the  
pulpit—Character of his printed sermons—His devotional spirit—  
Visiting the sick—Intercourse with society—Neatness--- 445

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHARACTER OF WHITEFIELD AS A PREACHER—CEN-  
TENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS.

Prominence given by him to the truths of salvation—His ardent  
glow of feeling—His direct address—His habitual dependence on  
the Spirit of God—Dealt with men as immortal beings—Dr.  
Hamilton’s estimate of Whitefield—Comparison of Whitefield and  
Wesley—Centennial commemorations—Hymns by Mr. Conder—  
Usefulness—Bristol Tabernacle—Mr. James’ sermon—Character  
of Whitefield’s ministry, by Mr. Glanville --- 479

PREFACE.

The excellent Matthew Henry has very truly said,  
“There are remains of great and good men, which,  
like Elijah’s mantle, ought to be gathered up and pre-  
served by the survivors—their sayings, their writings,  
their examples; that as their works follow them in  
the reward of them, they may stay behind in the ben-  
efit of them.”

Influenced by this and kindred sentiments, the  
compiler of this volume has devoted no small labor  
to gather from every source to which he could gain  
access, whatever appeared to him important to be  
known respecting the most distinguished uninspired  
preacher perhaps of any age or country. Whatever  
may be the faults of the work, to use the language of  
the Rev. Dr. Campbell, one of the present pastors of  
Whitefield’s churches in London, in reference to a  
short sketch he had himself prepared of our great  
evangelist, “It will serve to bring him and his apos-  
tolic labors before the minds of vast multitudes of  
the rising generation, to whom both are all but un-  
known; and this is far from unimportant. What-  
ever tends to fix the minds of men afresh upon the  
character of Whitefield is, and it always will be,  
something gained to the cause of true religion. The  
contemplation of that character is one of the most  
healthful exercises that can occupy a Christian heart,  
  
 11

of a Christian understanding. It is an admirable  
theme for ministerial meditation. It tends equally to  
humble, to instruct, and to encourage; to excite love  
to Christ, zeal for his glory, and compassion for the  
souls of men. What Alexander and Caesar, Charles  
XII. of Sweden and Napoleon the first, are to those  
of the sons of men who have not yet ceased to ‘learn  
war,’ that Whitefield and Wesley are to those who  
aspire to eminent usefulness as ministers and mission-  
aries of the cross.”

In the preparation of this memoir, the compiler  
has sought to collect together incidents which might  
interest and instruct, especially in connection with  
Whitefield's labors in America; to present him as  
much as possible in his own dress; and to use the  
facts of his life to excite and cherish his own spirit,  
so far as he had the spirit of Christ. Facts reflect-  
ing on the reputation and feelings of others have  
been used only as the interests of truth seemed to  
demand.

It would have been easy to place on almost every  
page an array of authorities, and to give here a long  
list of friends to whom the writer has been indebted  
for aid; but the sole object of the volume is the honor  
of Christ in the salvation of men, and that this may  
be accomplished, we pray that the blessing of Heaven  
may rest upon it.

**Philadelphia, 1857**.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

MORAL STATE OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE EARLY  
PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY-WHITE-  
FIELD FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS FIRST SERMON.

That we may have a clear and comprehensive view  
of the labors and success of George Whitefield, it is  
important that we consider the moral condition of  
Great Britain and its dependencies when the Head of  
the church brought him on the field of action. The  
latter part of the seventeenth and the beginning of the  
eighteenth centuries presented in that country a scene  
of moral darkness, the more remarkable as it so soon  
succeeded the triumph of evangelical truth which dis-  
tinguished the seventeenth century, and which is per-  
petuated in a religious literature that will bless the  
world. Causes had long been at work which pro-  
duced such insensibility and decline as to all that is  
good, and such a bold and open activity in evil, as it  
is hoped the grace of God may avert from his churches  
in all future time. The doctrine of the divine right  
of kings to implicit obedience on the part of their sub-  
jects; the principle of priestly control of the minds of  
men in religious matters; and clerical influence, sus-  
  
 13

tained by kingly authority, in favor of sports on the  
Lord’s day, together with the evil examples of men high  
in rank and power, had produced their natural results  
on the masses of the people, and make it painful, even  
at this distant period, to survey the scene.

Nor were these all the evils of that day. The ex-  
pulsion from their pulpits, by the “Act of Uniformi-  
ty,” of two thousand of the most able and useful of  
the clergy in England, had led to great ignorance  
and neglect of religion; and though men like Leigh-  
ton and Owen, Flavel and Baxter, with Bunyan and  
a host of others, had continued, in spite of opposing  
laws, to preach when they were not shut up in prison,  
and to write their immortal practical works, by the  
time of which we are speaking they had been called  
to their eternal reward, leaving very few men of like  
spirit behind them. Thus infidelity, profligacy, and  
formalism almost universally prevailed.

The low state of religion in the established church  
at that time may be learned from the Rev. Augustus  
M. Toplady, himself one of its ministers, who died in  
1778. In a sermon yet extant he says, “I believe no  
denomination of professing Christians, the church of  
Rome excepted, were so generally void of the light  
and life of godliness, so generally destitute of the doc-  
trine and of the grace of the gospel, as was the church  
of England, considered as a body, about fifty years  
ago. At that period a converted minister in the estab-  
lishment was as great a wonder as a comet; but now,  
blessed be God, since that precious, that great apostle  
of the English empire, the late dear Mr. Whitefield,  
was raised up in the spirit and power of Elias, the

word of God has run and been glorified; many have  
believed and been added to the Lord all over the  
three kingdoms; and blessed be his name, the great  
Shepherd and Bishop of souls continues still to issue  
his word, and great is the company of preachers,  
greater and greater every year.”

If it be said that Toplady, as he belonged to a  
different school of theology from that which then gen-  
erally prevailed, could scarcely be expected to be  
impartial, we ask leave to transcribe a few lines from  
Bishop Butler, who within six months of Whitefield’s  
ordination wrote thus: “It is come, I know not how,  
to be taken for granted by many persons, that Chris-  
tianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but  
that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious.  
And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age  
this were an agreed point among all people of discern-  
ment and nothing remained but to set it up as a  
principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by  
way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the  
pleasures of the world.” Bishop Warburton, who  
commenced his ministry a few years before White-  
field, and who cannot be charged with enthusiasm,  
says, “I have lived to see that fatal crisis, when re-  
ligion hath lost its hold on the minds of the people.”  
Many other witnesses might be brought to testify  
that error and worldly mindedness had made mourn-  
ful havoc among the clergy, and that spiritual relig-  
ion had been almost buried in forms and ceremonies.  
A recent writer has well described the state of relig-  
ion in the established church at that time, as only to  
be compared to a frozen or palsied carcass. “There,”

says this Episcopal clergyman, “were the time-honored  
formularies which the wisdom of the reformers had  
provided. There were the services and lessons from  
Scripture, just in the same order as we have them now.  
But as to preaching the gospel, in the established  
church there was almost none. The distinguishing  
doctrines of Christianity—the atonement, the work  
and office of Christ and the Spirit—were compara-  
tively lost sight of. The vast majority of sermons  
were miserable moral essays, utterly devoid of any  
thing calculated to awaken, convert, save, or sanctify  
souls.” Southey, a biographer of Wesley, who assur-  
edly will not be accused of too strong a tendency to  
evangelical truth, is compelled to say, “A laxity of  
opinions as well as morals obtained, and infidelity, a  
plague which had lately found its way into the country,  
was becoming so prevalent, that the vice-chancellor  
of the university at Oxford, in a programme exhorted  
the tutors to discharge their duties by double dili-  
gence, and had forbidden the under-graduates to read  
such books as might tend to the weakening of their  
faith.”

There were undoubtedly some learned and con-  
scientious bishops at this era. Such men were Seeker  
and Gibson, Lowth and Horne, Butler, and others.  
But even the best of them seem sadly to have misun-  
derstood the requirements of the day they lived in.  
They spent their strength in writing apologies for  
Christianity, and contending against infidels. They  
could not see that without the direct preaching of the  
essential doctrines of the gospel, their labors must be  
sadly defective. The man who dared to preach the

doctrines of the Bible, and in harmony with the Arti-  
cles and Homilies of his church, was set down as an  
enthusiast or fanatic.

Among those who had dissented from the estab-  
lished hierarchy, and who were untrammelled by the  
impositions of secular authority, the state of vital god-  
liness was also unhappily very low. The noble spirits  
of early non-conformity had passed from earth, or  
crossed the Atlantic to the frozen shores of New Eng-  
land, and a race of men had sprung up, some of whom  
retained the tenets of orthodoxy, but had lost its  
power; while others reposed on comfortable endow-  
ments, and lulled themselves, or were drawn by favor-  
able breezes, into the cold elements of Arianism and  
Socinianism. As persons in the frozen regions are  
said to sleep longer and more soundly than others, so  
did they; and a more terrific blast of the trumpet of  
the gospel was required to rouse and awake them  
from their spiritual slumbers. Happily indeed for the  
world, and for the church in it, there were some ex-  
ceptions. Watts and Guyse and Doddridge, and their  
pious associates in different parts of the land, were  
laborers together in “God’s husbandry,” and ceased  
not to cultivate it with affectionate faithfulness and  
care; and wherever their labors extended, the plants  
of grace grew and flourished. Darracott, “the star of  
the west,” threw his mild rays over the vales of Som-  
erset; and in the north also a few faithful men were  
found.

Nor have we even now said all that should be  
written as to the character of those times. The high-  
est personages in the land then openly lived in ways

contrary to the law of God, and no man rebuked  
them. Profligacy and irreligion were reputable and  
respectable. Judging from the description we have  
of men and manners in those days, a gentleman might  
have been defined as a creature who got drunk, gam-  
bled, swore, fought duels, and violated the seventh  
commandment, and for all this very few thought the  
worse of him.

Those too were the days when the men whom even  
kings delighted to honor were such as Bolingbroke,  
Chesterfield, Walpole, and Newcastle. To be an in-  
fidel, to obtain power by intrigue, and to retain it by  
the grossest and most notorious bribery, were consid-  
ered no disqualifications even for the highest offices.  
Such men indeed were not only tolerated, but praised.  
In those days too, Hume, an avowed infidel, put forth  
his History, and obtained a pension. Sterne and  
Swift then wrote their talented, but obscene books;  
both of them were clergymen, but the public saw little  
inconsistency in their conduct. Fielding and Smol-  
lett were the popular authors, and the literary taste  
of high and low was suited by Roderick Random,  
Peregrine Pickle, Joseph Andrews, and Tom Jones.  
These authors were ingenious heathen philosophers,  
assuming the name of Christians, and forcibly pagan-  
izing Christianity for the sake of pleasing the world.

Turning to Scotland, we find that the bold proc-  
lamation of the discriminating truths of the gospel  
which characterize the preaching of Knox, Welsh,  
and others, was being rapidly laid aside, and cold  
formal addresses, verging towards a kind of Socinian-  
ism were becoming fashionable. Old Mr. Hutchin-

son, minister of Kilellan, in Renfrewshire, who saw  
but the beginning of this sad change, used to say to  
Wodrow the historian, “When I compare the times  
before the restoration with those since the revolution,  
I must own that the young ministers preach accurate-  
ly, and methodically; but there was far more of the  
power and efficacy of the Spirit and of the grace of  
God went along with sermons in those days than now.  
For my own part—all the glory be to God—I seldom  
set my foot in a pulpit in those days, but I had notice  
of the blessed effects of the word.” It is true, that  
even then there were a few faithful witnesses for God  
in Scotland, such as the brothers Erskine, in the Se-  
cession church; but for the most part, coldness, bar-  
renness, and death prevailed. The people knew not  
God, and were strangers to the life-giving influence  
and power of the gospel.

The Arianism of England had been carried to the  
north of Ireland, and finding a state of feeling suit-  
able to its reception, it took root and grew up, so  
as to characterize a distinct section of the Presby-  
terian church, then and still distinguished by the  
name of the Remonstrant Synod. The south and  
west of Ireland were subjected to a blight not less  
withering, though of a different kind, and which con-  
tinued much longer—continued, to a great extent,  
throughout the whole of the last century. The clergy  
were usually sons of the gentry, and accustomed to  
their sporting, drinking, and riotous habits. They  
had no preparation for ministerial duties but a col-  
lege degree; and no education, either literary or  
moral, which had not been obtained among wild

young men at the university. According to the in-  
terest which they happened to have, they passed at  
once from college to ministerial charges, and again  
mixed in all the dissipations of the districts where  
these lay. Ignorant of the truth, they and their con-  
gregations were satisfied with some short moral dis-  
course. Many of the people were almost as ignorant  
of the Scriptures and scripture truth as the inhabi-  
tants of Hindostan. The Catholic priests meanwhile  
were at work among the people, and they had many  
to help them. The sick and the dying were watched;  
their fears were wrought upon; they were told of  
the power which the priests had, of the influence pos-  
sessed by the Virgin, and much about the old church;  
and as soon as any seemed to give way, on whatever  
point, the priest was sent for, who plied them anew,  
and seldom failed in succeeding with the poor igno-  
rant people. They were now ready to receive ab-  
solution; but he had farther conditions to propose.  
The whole family must submit to be rebaptized, or at  
least promise to attend mass—and this also was not  
unfrequently gained; the Protestant clergyman being  
all the while at a distance, neither knowing nor much  
caring what was going on. In this way great num-  
bers of the lower and middle classes of the Protes-  
tants went over to the church of Rome. Throughout  
whole districts the Protestant churches were almost  
emptied, and many of those in rural districts were  
allowed to fall into ruins.

Of Wales it is not important at present to say  
much. From the middle ages downwards, great dark-  
ness and superstition had prevailed among its moun-

tains. It is true that in the days of James I., a cler-  
gyman named Wroth, whose conversion to the truth  
had been remarkable, had labored with eminent zeal  
and success, but at the period of which we are now  
writing declension had succeeded. Within the estab-  
lishment all was cold and dead; nearly every minister  
was ignorant of the Welsh language, a fact which  
also applied to several successive bishops, while the  
state of morals, among even the leaders of the hierar-  
chy, was truly deplorable. An old Methodist simply  
but truly described the country at this period, and of  
his correct narrative we will here give a free trans-  
lation.

The land, he tells us, was dark indeed. Scarcely  
any of the lower ranks could read at all. The mor-  
als of the country were very corrupt; and in this  
respect there was no difference between high and low,  
layman and clergyman. Gluttony, drunkenness, and  
licentiousness prevailed through the whole country.  
Nor were the operations of the church at all adapted  
to repress these evils. From the pulpit the name of  
the Redeemer was scarcely heard; nor was much men-  
tion made of the natural sinfulness of man, or of the  
influence of the Holy Spirit. On Sunday mornings,  
the poor were more constant in their attendance at  
church than the gentry; but the Sunday evenings  
were spent by all in idle amusements. Every Sabbath  
there was practised a kind of sport, called in Welsh  
Achwaren-gamp, in which all the young men of the  
neighborhood had a trial of strength, and the people  
assembled from the surrounding country to witness  
their feats. On a Saturday night, particularly in the

summer, the young men and women held what they  
called Nosweithian cann, or singing eves; that is, they  
met together and amused themselves by singing in  
turns to the harp, till the dawn of the Sabbath.  
These things, with the performance of rustic dramas,  
would occupy sometimes the whole of the sacred day  
itself; while a set of vagabonds, called the Bohl  
gerdded, or walking people, used to traverse the vil-  
lages, begging with impunity, to the disgrace alike of  
the law and the country. With all this social spright-  
liness, the Welsh were then a superstitious, and even  
a gloomy people. They still retained many habits  
apparently derived from paganism, and not a few of  
the practices of popery. Their funerals, like those of  
the Irish, were scenes of riot and drunkenness, fol-  
lowed by prayers for the release of the deceased from  
the pains of purgatory. Such was the superstition of  
the people, that when Methodism was first introduced  
among them, many of the peasantry expressed their  
horror of the new opinions by the truly Popish ges-  
ture of crossing the forehead; and when Wesley first  
visited them, he pronounced them “as little versed in  
the principles of Christianity as a Creek or Cherokee  
Indian.” To this declaration he added the striking  
remark, that, “notwithstanding their superstition and  
ignorance, the people ‘were ripe for the gospel,’ and   
most enthusiastically anxious to avail themselves of  
every opportunity of instruction.”

As an illustration of the truth of the remark we  
have just introduced from the discerning Wesley, we  
may mention an incident which occurred in 1736. At  
this period dissent itself was reduced so low in the

country, that there were only six dissenting houses of  
worship in all North Wales. One Sunday, Mr. Lewis  
Rees, a dissenting minister from South Wales, and the  
father of Dr. Rees, the author of the celebrated Cyclo-  
pedia which bears his name, visited Pwllheli, a town  
on the promontory of Sleyn, in Caernarvonshire, and  
one of the few places in which the Independents still  
had a chapel. After the service, the congregation,  
collecting around him, complained very sorely that  
their numbers were rapidly diminishing, that the few  
who yet remained were for the most part poor, and  
that everything connected with their cause looked  
gloomy. To which the minister replied, “The dawn  
of religion is again breaking out in South Wales,”  
referring them to the fact, that already a distin-  
guished man—Howel Harris—had risen up, going  
about instructing the people in the truths of the  
gospel. Such was the character of the times when  
God was raising up agents to revive and extend his  
cause. We shall before long return to Wales with  
lively interest.

“Such,” says the eloquent Robert Hall, “was the  
situation of things when Whitefield and Wesley made  
their appearance, who, whatever failings the severest  
criticism can discover in their character, will be hailed  
by posterity as the second reformers of England.  
Nothing was farther from the views of these excellent  
men than to innovate on the established religion of  
their country; their sole aim was to recall the people  
to the good old way, and to imprint the doctrines of  
the Articles and Homilies on the spirits of men. But  
this doctrine had been so long a dead letter, and so

completely obliterated from the mind by contrary  
instructions, that the attempt to revive it met with  
all the opposition that innovation is sure to encoun-  
ter, in addition to what naturally results from the  
nature of the doctrine itself, which has to contend  
with the whole force of human corruption. The re-  
vival of the old, appeared like the introduction of a  
new religion; and the hostility it excited was less  
sanguinary, but scarcely less virulent, than that which  
signalized the first publication of Christianity. The  
gospel of Christ, or that system of truth which was  
laid at the foundation of the Reformation, has since  
made rapid advances, and in every step of its progress  
has sustained the most furious assaults.”

It ought here to be stated, as illustrating the prov-  
idence of God in preparing the British empire for the  
reception of the gospel, that the revolution of 1688  
introduced the spirit of toleration, and in 1714, the  
very year of Whitefield’s birth, Anne, the last English  
sovereign of a persecuting spirit, died, and the throne  
was assumed by George I., the first prince of the  
house of Hanover. The way of the Lord was thus  
prepared for bright illustrations of his mercy.

Rising from the beautiful valley of the Severn, and  
on the borders of that noble stream, reposes in an-  
tique glory the affluent city of Gloucester, with its  
regular streets, and its majestic cathedral and other  
relics of bygone days. In that city the traveller  
may examine three spots which will long be interest-  
ing to the student of ecclesiastical curiosities. The  
first of these is the ancient church of Mary de Crypt,

where reposes the dust of Robert Raikes, the founder  
of Sunday-schools; the second, is the little stone  
which, in a pensive-looking inclosure, marks the site  
on which the truly noble-minded and Protestant Bishop  
Hooper was burnt, an early martyr of bloody Mary’s  
reign. There wicked men stood around to light up  
the flames, and to mock his sorrows; but as we stand  
and look, we exult in the subsequent triumphs of  
truth.

The third spot, and the one to us at the present  
moment the most interesting, is the Bell inn or hotel,  
yet standing, though enlarged and beautified since  
the period of which we write. There WHITEFIELD—  
the saint, the seraph, the “angel, flying in the midst  
of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to  
them that dwell on the earth”—first breathed the  
vital air. Venerable city, we will rejoice that though  
within thy walls one glorious luminary of salvation  
was extinguished, another “burning and shining light”  
was raised up to diffuse joy and happiness over the  
two most influential quarters of the globe, and a third  
has since been given to suggest the simple plan by  
which millions of the young have already acquired  
the knowledge of salvation.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, the sixth son of Thomas and  
Elizabeth Whitefield, was born December 16,1714, old  
style. Concerning his father and mother he writes,  
“The former died when I was two years old; the  
latter died in December, 1751, in the seventy-first  
year of her age, and has often told me how she en-  
dured fourteen weeks’ sickness after she brought me  
into the world; but was used to say, even when I

Whitefield. **2**

was an infant, that she expected more comfort from  
me than from any other of her children. This, with the  
circumstance of my being born in an inn, has often  
been of service to me, in exciting my endeavors to  
make good my mother’s expectations, and so follow  
the example of my dear Saviour, who was laid in a  
manger belonging to an inn.”

In one of his journals, which he commenced at a  
very early part of his ministry, Whitefield details with  
great simplicity many incidents of his childhood and  
youth; from which it appears, that though at times  
he had many serious thoughts and impressions, the  
general course of his life, till the age of sixteen, was  
irreligious. He tells us that in early youth he was  
“so brutish as to hate instruction, and used purposely  
to shun all opportunities of receiving it,” and that  
he spent much money, improperly obtained from his  
mother, in cards, plays, and romances, “which,” says  
he, “were my heart’s delight. Often have I joined  
with others in playing roguish tricks; but was gener-  
ally, if not always, happily detected: for this I have  
often since, and do now bless and praise God.” His  
full confessions of this character are very affecting,  
and should be a caution to young persons to repel all  
such temptations.

When George was about ten years of age, his  
mother married a second time, thus forming a connec-  
tion which led to much unhappiness. He was, how-  
ever, continued at school; and when twelve years old,  
was transferred to the grammar-school of St. Mary de  
Crypt, where he remained about three years. Having  
a graceful elocution and a good memory, he gained

much credit for delivering speeches before the city  
corporation at the annual visitation of the school, and  
received pecuniary rewards for his performances on  
those occasions. How deeply he afterwards deplored  
these celebrations, especially the performance of plays  
in connection with his school-fellows, may be learned  
from his own words: “I cannot but observe here,  
with much concern of mind, how this way of training  
up youth has a natural tendency to debauch the mind,  
to raise ill passions, and to stuff the memory with  
things as contrary to the gospel of Christ, as darkness  
to light, hell to heaven.” This sad tendency was  
but too clearly evinced in the case of Whitefield him-  
self. “I got acquainted,” he says, “with such a set  
of debauched, abandoned, atheistical youths, that if  
God, by his free, unmerited, and special grace, had  
not delivered me out of their hands, I should have sat  
in the scorner’s chair, and made a mock at sin. By  
keeping company with them, my thoughts of religion  
grew more and more like theirs. I went to public  
service only to make sport, and walk about. I took  
pleasure in their lewd conversation. I began to rea-  
son as they did, and to ask why God had given me  
passions, and not permitted me to gratify them. In  
short, I soon made great proficiency in the school of  
the devil. I affected to look rakish, and was in a  
fair way of being as infamous as the worst of them.”  
These were the things, and not oratory, as has some-  
times been said, which Whitefield learned from plays  
and acting.

In the midst of all this, his conscience often made  
him unhappy; and he wished, if possible, to combine

religion with, his pleasures. He purchased and care-  
fully read “Ken’s Manual for Winchester Scholars,”  
a book which commended itself as having comforted  
his mother in her afflictions, and which he afterwards  
considered to have been “of great benefit to his  
soul.”

At the age of fifteen, he thought he had acquired  
learning enough for any ordinary occupation in life,  
and as his mother’s business was declining, he per-  
suaded her to allow him to leave school and assist in  
labor. “began,” says he, “to assist her occasionally  
in the public-house, till at length I put on my blue  
apron and my snuffers, washed mops, cleaned rooms,  
and in one word, became professed and common drawer  
for nearly a year and a half.” In the midst of the  
activity called for in such a situation, it pleased God  
to renew his religious impressions, which induced him,  
at least at intervals, to attend with much earnestness  
to the concerns of his soul.

From his childhood, Whitefield tells us, he “was  
always fond of being a clergyman, and used frequently  
to imitate the ministers’ reading prayers.” Nor did  
this tendency towards clerical engagements cease as  
he became older. “Notwithstanding,” he says, “I  
was thus employed in a large inn, and had sometimes  
the care of the whole house upon my hands, yet I com-  
posed two or three sermons, and dedicated one of  
them to my elder brother. One day, I remember, I  
was very much pressed to self-examination, and found  
myself very unwilling to look into my heart. Fre-  
quently I read the Bible when sitting up at night.  
And a dear youth, now with God, would often entreat

me, when serving at the bar, to go to Oxford. My  
general answer was, ‘I wish I could.’”

His mother’s difficulties increasing, it became ne-  
cessary for her to leave the inn; in which she was suc-  
ceeded by one of her married sons, with whom George  
for some time remained to continue his assistance in  
the business. Some disagreement, however, arising  
between them, he after a time took his departure from  
the inn, and went to spend a month with his eldest  
brother at Bristol. Returning from that city to Glou-  
cester, he resided for a short season with his mother.  
While thus living unemployed, without any definite  
object before him, and waiting the openings of provi-  
dence, his mother was visited by an Oxford student,  
a servitor of Pembroke college in that university.  
In the course of their conversation, he told her, that  
after all his expenses at college for the quarter  
were discharged, he had one penny remaining. She  
immediately exclaimed, “This will do for my son!”and turning to him, said, “Will you go to Oxford,  
George?” He replied, “With all my heart.” Appli-  
cation was immediately made to several friends who  
had influence at the college, and they pledged them-  
selves to serve her. In this confidence, her favorite  
son returned to the grammar-school, where he not  
only resumed his studies with greater diligence, but  
endeavored, and not altogether in vain, to promote  
religion and virtue among his associates.

Having fully secured his literary preparation for  
the university, Whitefield removed to Oxford in his  
eighteenth year, and was immediately admitted, as a  
servitor, into Pembroke college. He soon found that

the seat of learning was also a scene of danger. From  
the period of 1662, when the two thousand Non-con-  
formists had been expelled from the church, the uni-  
versities had been sinking into a moral lethargy, pre-  
ferring uniformity to vital religion. Our young ser-  
vitor was shocked with the impiety of the students in  
general, and dreading their influence on himself, he  
as much as possible abstained from their society, and  
shut himself up in his study.

Before he went to Oxford, Whitefield had heard  
of a class of young men in the university who “lived  
by rule and method,” and were therefore called Meth-  
odists, They were much talked of, and generally  
despised. Of this party, John Wesley, a Fellow of  
Lincoln college, and already in holy orders, was the  
leader, his brother Charles being also as warmly at-  
tached to it. They avowed that the great object of  
their lives was to save their souls, and to live wholly  
to the glory of God; and rarely have men subjected  
themselves to greater self-denials and austerities.  
Drawn towards them by kindred feelings, Whitefield  
strenuously defended them whenever he heard them  
reviled, and when he saw them going, through a crowd  
manifesting their ridicule, every Sunday to receive the  
sacrament at St. Mary’s or Christ church, he was  
strongly inclined to follow their example.

For more than a year he intensely desired to be  
acquainted with them, but a sense of his pecuniary  
inferiority to them prevented his advances. At length,  
learning that a pauper had attempted suicide, White-  
field sent a poor woman to inform Charles Wesley,  
that so he might visit her, and administer religious

instruction. He charged the woman not to tell Mr.  
Wesley who sent her, but, contrary to this injunction,  
she told his name; and Charles Wesley, who had fre-  
quently seen Whitefield walking by himself, on the  
next morning invited him to breakfast. An introduc-  
tion to the little brotherhood soon followed, and he  
also, like them, “began to live by rule, and pick up  
the very fragments of his time, that not a moment  
might be lost.”   
 It is painful to read Whitefield’s own account of the  
mortifications of body to which he now submitted; and  
we are not surprised that, as the result, his health  
was so reduced as to place even his life in danger.  
All this time he had no clear view of the way of sal-  
vation, and was “seeking to work out a righteousness  
of his own.” In this state he lay on his bed, his  
tongue parched with fever, and the words of the dy-  
ing Saviour, “I thirst,” were impressed on his mind.  
Remembering that this thirst occurred near the end  
of the Saviour’s sufferings, the thought arose in his  
mind, “Why may it not be so with me? Why may  
I not now receive deliverance and comfort? Why  
may I not now dare to trust and rejoice in the par-  
doning mercy of God?” There was, as Tracy has  
said, no reason why he might not—why he ought not.  
He saw nothing to forbid him. He prayed in hope,  
borrowing language from the fact which suggested  
the train of thought—“I thirst, I thirst for faith in  
pardoning love. Lord, I believe; help thou mine  
unbelief.” His prayer was heard. He dared to trust  
in the mercy of God, as revealed in the death of Jesus  
Christ for sinners. Conscience and his Bible bore

witness that he did right. The load that had so  
heavily oppressed him, the load of guilt and terror  
and anxiety, that weighed down his spirit while he  
sinfully and ungratefully hesitated to trust in divine  
mercy, was gone. He saw the trustworthiness of the  
mercy of God in Christ, and his heart rejoiced.

“Though,” as Tracy has well said, “the English  
universities were established mainly for the purpose  
of educating men for the ministry, Whitefield was not  
likely to gain a good knowledge of theology there.  
He took another, and a characteristic course. Some-  
time after his conversion, when he was at Gloucester,  
he says, ‘I began to read the holy Scriptures upon my  
knees; laying aside all other books, and praying over,  
if possible, every line and word. This proved meat  
indeed and drink indeed to my soul. I daily received  
fresh life, light, and power from above. I thus got  
more true knowledge in reading the book of God in  
one month, than I could ever have acquired from all  
the writings of men.’”

Every hour of Whitefield’s time, especially after  
he had been “filled with peace and joy in believing,”  
was sacredly devoted to preparation for the great  
work to which he had now solemnly devoted himself.  
He visited the prisoners in the jail, and the poor in  
their cottages, and gave as much time as he could to  
communion with God in his closet. His friends now  
earnestly importuned him to apply for ordination;  
but from this his deep sense of unworthiness made  
him shrink. Besides, he intended to have a hundred  
and fifty sermons carefully written before he began  
to preach. He had as yet but one, and he lent that to

a neighboring clergyman, to convince him that he was  
not yet fit to be ordained. The clergyman kept it  
for two weeks, divided it into two, preached it to his  
own people, and then returned it to Whitefield, with  
a guinea for the use of it.

Still, however, the work of preparation for the  
ministry was rapidly going on. The state of his  
health compelled him to retire for a season from Ox-  
ford, and he returned home to increase the depth of  
his piety, and to be led, little as he thought of it, at  
once to the pulpit. He writes, “0 what sweet com-  
munion had I daily vouchsafed with God in prayer,  
after my coming to Gloucester. How often have I  
been carried out beyond myself, when meditating in  
the fields. How assuredly I felt that Christ dwelt in  
me, and I in him; and how daily did I walk in the  
comforts of the Holy Ghost, and was edified and re-  
freshed in the multitude of peace. I always observed  
that as my inward strength increased, so my outward  
sphere of action increased proportionally.”

Thus, happy in himself, and thankful to the gra-  
cious God who made him so, the affectionate soul of  
George Whitefield ardently desired that others might  
participate in his sacred joys. In order to advance  
this object, he mixed in the society of young people,  
and endeavored to awaken them to a just sense of the  
nature of true religion. Some were convinced of the  
truth, and united with him in religious exercises; and  
these were some of the first-fruits of his pious labors.  
His discovery of the necessity of regeneration, like  
Melancthon’s great discovery of the truth, led him to  
imagine that no one could resist the evidence which

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convinced his own mind. He writes, “Upon this,  
like the woman of Samaria, when Christ revealed  
himself to her at the well, I had no rest in my soul  
till I wrote letters to my relations, telling them  
there was such a thing as the new birth. I imagined  
they would have gladly received it; but, alas, my  
words seemed to them as idle tales. They thought I  
was going beside myself.” He visited the jail every  
day, and read and prayed with the prisoners; at-  
tended public worship very frequently, and read twice  
or three times a week to some poor people in the city.  
In addition to all this, he tells us, “During my stay  
here, God enabled me to give a public testimony of  
my repentance as to seeing and acting plays; for  
hearing the strollers had come to town, and knowing  
what an egregious offender I had been, I was stirred  
up to extract Mr. Law’s excellent treatise, entitled,  
“The absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertain-  
ment.” The printer, at my request, put a little of it  
in the newspaper for six weeks successively; and God  
was pleased to give it his blessing.”

In this manner Whitefield employed himself dur-  
ing nine months; and one effect of so doing was, that  
the partition wall of bigotry was soon broken down  
in his heart. He says, “I loved all, of whatever de-  
nomination, who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sin-  
cerity.” This statement in his diary is connected  
with an account of the benefit he derived from study-  
ing the works of the Non-conformists. “Baxter’s Call,”  
and “Alleine’s Alarm,” so accorded with his own  
ideas of fidelity and unction, that wherever he recog-  
nized their spirit he acknowledged “a brother beloved.”

On this portion of his history we dwell with unspeak-  
able delight; the only drawback is an undue impor-  
tance he appears to have attached to dreams; and even  
those, considered as an index to his waking hours, are  
interesting, revealing as they do his deep solicitude  
on the behalf of souls.

Here then, before he had completed his twenty-  
first year, we see Whitefield returned to Gloucester,  
and such was already the fame of his piety and talents,  
that Dr. Benson, the bishop of the diocese, offered to  
dispense, in his favor, with the rule which forbids the  
ordination of deacons at so unripe an age. Thus  
graphically did he afterwards describe his acceptance  
of this proposal.

“I never prayed against any corruption I had in  
my life so much as I did against going into holy  
orders so soon as my friends were for having me go.  
Bishop Benson was pleased to honor me with peculiar  
friendship, so as to offer me preferment, or to do  
anything for me. My friends wanted me to mount  
the church betimes. They wanted me to knock my  
head against the pulpit too young; but how some  
young men stand up here and there and preach, I do  
not know. However it be to them, God knows how  
deep a concern entering into the ministry and preach-  
ing was to me. I prayed a thousand times, till the  
sweat has dropped from my face like rain, that God  
of his infinite mercy would not let me enter the church  
till he called me and thrust me forth in his work. I  
remember once in Gloucester—I know the room; I  
look up to the window when I am there and walk  
along the street—I said, ‘Lord, I cannot go; I shall

be puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation  
of the devil. Lord, do not let me go yet.’ I pleaded  
to be at Oxford two or three years more. I intended  
to make one hundred and fifty sermons, and thought  
that I would set up with a good stock in trade. I  
remember praying, wrestling, and striving with God.  
I said, ‘I am undone, I am unfit to preach in thy great  
name. Send me not. Lord, send me not yet.’ I  
wrote to all my friends in town and country to pray  
against the bishop's solicitation; but they insisted I  
should go into orders before I was twenty-two. After  
all their solicitations these words came into my mind:

‘Nothing shall pluck you out of my hands they came  
warm to my heart. Then, and not till then, I said,  
‘Lord, I will go; send me when thou wilt.' ”

Sunday, June 20, 1736, was the day appointed for  
his ordination in the cathedral at Gloucester. On  
the preceding evening he spent two hours in prayer  
for himself and the others who were to be set apart  
to the sacred office with him; and on the day itself  
he rose early, and passed the morning in prayer and  
meditation on the qualifications and duties of the office  
he was about to undertake. On a review of the sol-  
emn services of the day, he says, “I trust I answered  
every question from the bottom of my heart, and heart-  
ily prayed that God might say, Amen. And when  
the bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my vile  
heart do not deceive me, I offered my whole spirit,  
soul, and body to the service of God's sanctuary.  
Let come what will, life or death, depth or height,  
I shall henceforward live like one who this day, in the  
presence of men and angels, took the holy sacrament,

on the profession of being inwardly moved by the  
Holy Ghost to take upon me that ministration in the  
church. I call heaven and earth to witness, that  
when the bishop laid his hands upon me, I gave my-  
self up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the  
cross for me. Known unto him are all future events  
and contingencies; I have thrown myself blindfold,  
and I trust without reserve, into his almighty hands.  
When I went up to the altar, I could think of nothing  
but Samuel’s standing before the Lord with a linen  
ephod.”

Having thus received ordination as a deacon of  
the church of England, he delayed not to enter upon  
the work to which he was appointed; and according-  
ly, on the next Sabbath he preached his first sermon  
in his native city of Gloucester, selecting for his sub-  
ject, “The necessity and benefit of religious society.”At the appointed time he ascended the pulpit, in the  
church of St. Mary de Crypt. We have his own  
record of the service: “Last Sunday, in the afternoon,  
I preached my first sermon in the church where I first  
received the Lord’s supper. Curiosity drew a large  
congregation together. The sight, at first, a little  
awed me; but I was comforted with a heartfelt sense  
of the divine presence, and soon found the advantage  
of having been accustomed to public speaking when  
a boy at school, and of exhorting and teaching the  
prisoners and the poor people at their private houses,  
while at the university. By these means I was kept  
from being daunted overmuch. As I proceeded, I  
perceived the fire kindled, till at last, though so young,  
and amidst a crowd of those who knew me in my

childish days, I trust I was enabled to speak with  
some degree of gospel authority. Some few mocked,  
but most, for the present, seemed struck; and I have  
since heard that a complaint was made to the bishop,  
that I drove fifteen people mad the first sermon. The  
worthy prelate, as I am informed, wished that the  
madness might not be forgotten before the next Sun-  
day. Before then, I hope that my sermon upon, ‘He  
that is in Christ is a new creature,’ will be completed.  
Blessed be God, I now find freedom in writing. Glo-  
rious Jesus,

“Unloose my stammering tongue to tell  
Thy love immense, unsearchable.’”

It is remarkable, under all the circumstances of  
the case, that Bishop Benson, a man never distin-  
guished for his evangelical views, always showed his  
friendship for Whitefield. Not only did he offer him  
ordination when others might have refused, and defend  
him against the persecutions to which he was exposed,  
but he more than once gave him pecuniary help when  
it was much needed, though the young clergyman had  
never complained.

Thus early apprized of the secret of his strength,  
his profound aspirations for the growth of Christian-  
ity, the delight of exercising his rare powers, and the  
popular admiration, operating with combined and  
ceaseless force upon a mind impatient of repose, urged  
him into exertions which, if not attested by irrefra-  
gable proofs, might appear incredible. It was the  
statement of one who knew him well, and who was  
incapable of wilful exaggeration, and it is confirmed  
by his letters, journals, and a “cloud of witnesses,”

that “in the compass of a single week, and that for  
years, he spoke in general forty hours, and in very  
many sixty, and that to thousands: and after his  
labors, instead of taking any rest, he was engaged in  
offering up prayers and intercessions, with hymns and  
spiritual songs, as his manner was, in every house to  
which he was invited.” Never perhaps, since the  
apostolic age, has any man given himself so entirely  
to preaching the gospel of Christ for the salvation of  
souls, adopting as his motto the language of the apos-  
tle Paul, “This one thing I do.”

CHAPTER II.

WHITEFIELD’S SUCCESS AS A PREACHER IN ENG-  
LAND—FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA.

1736-1738.

Whitefield, though thus prepared for action, was  
not impatient, but willing to wait till his duty was  
fully ascertained. On the Wednesday after his first  
sermon he went to Oxford, where, he says, “I was  
received with great joy by my religious friends. For  
about a week I continued in my servitor’s habit, and  
then took my degree of Bachelor of Arts, after having  
been at the university three years and three quarters,  
and going on towards the twenty-second year of my  
age. My dear and honored friends, the Rev. Messrs.  
John and Charles Wesley, being now embarked for  
Georgia, and one or two others having taken orders,  
the interest of Methodism, as it was then and is now  
termed, had visibly declined, and very few of this  
reputedly mad way were left at the university. This  
somewhat discouraged me at times, but the Lord Jesus  
supported my soul, and made me easy by giving me a  
strong conviction that I was where he would have me  
to be. My degree, I soon found, was of service to  
me, as it gave me access to those I could not be  
seen with when in an inferior station; and as oppor-  
tunity offered, I was enabled to converse with them  
about the things which belonged to the kingdom of  
God. The subscriptions for the poor prisoners, which

amounted to about forty pounds per annum, were soon  
put into my hands; two or three charity schools,  
maintained by the Methodists, were under my more  
immediate inspection which, with the time I spent in  
following my studies, private retirement, and religious  
converse, sweetly filled up the whole of my day, and  
kept me from that unaccountable but too common  
complaint of having any time hang upon my hands.”

The stay of Mr. Whitefield at Oxford, however,  
was very short. He says, “By a series of unforeseen,  
unexpected, and unsought-for providences, I was called  
in a short time from my beloved retirement to take a  
journey to the metropolis of England. While I was  
an under-graduate, among the religious friends, I was  
very intimate with one Mr. B--- n, a professed Meth-

odist, who had lately taken orders, and was curate at  
the Tower of London. With him, when absent, I  
frequently corresponded, and when present took sweet  
counsel, and walked to the house of God as friends.  
He mentioned me to that late good and great man,  
Sir John Phillips; and being called down for a while  
into Hampshire, he wrote to me to be of good  
courage, and in the strength of God bade me hasten  
to town to officiate in his absence, and to be refreshed  
with the sight and conversation of many who loved  
me for Christ’s sake, and had for a long time desired  
to see me.”

On his arrival in London, Whitefield delivered his  
first sermon there in Bishopsgate church, on the after-  
noon of Lord’s day, August 8. On entering the pul-  
pit, his juvenile aspect excited a general feeling of his  
unfitness for the station, but he had not proceeded far

in his sermon before it gave place to universal expres-  
sions of wonder and pleasure. If however he was thus  
exposed to the danger of vanity, as he says, “God sent  
me something to ballast it. For as I passed along  
the streets, many came out of their shops, admiring to  
see so young a person in a gown and cassock. One  
I remember in particular, cried out, ‘There’s a boy  
parson;’ which, as it served to mortify my pride, put  
me also upon turning that apostolical exhortation into  
prayer, ‘Let no man despise thy youth.’” From his  
first sermon to his departure, at the end of two months,  
his popularity in London continued to increase, and  
the crowds were so vast that it was necessary to place  
constables both inside and outside of the churches to  
preserve the peace. He tells us himself, “Here I con-  
tinued for the space of two months, reading prayers  
twice a week, catechizing and preaching once, visiting  
the soldiers in the infirmary and barracks daily. I also  
read prayers every evening at Wapping chapel, and  
preached at Ludgate prison every Tuesday. God  
was pleased to give me favor in the eyes of the inhab-  
itants of the Tower; the chapel was crowded on  
Lord’s days; religious friends from divers parts of  
the town attended the word, and several young men  
came on Lord’s-day morning, under serious impres-  
sions, to hear me discourse about the new birth, and  
the necessity of renouncing all in affection in order  
to follow Jesus Christ.”

The preaching of Mr. Whitefield now excited an  
unusual degree of attention among persons of all  
ranks. In many of the city churches he proclaimed  
the glad tidings of great joy to listening multitudes,

who were powerfully affected by the fire which was  
displayed in the animated addresses of this man of  
God. Lord and Lady Huntingdon constantly at-  
tended wherever he preached, and Lady Anne Frank-  
land became one of the first-fruits of his ministry  
among the nobility of the metropolis. Her ladyship  
spent much of her time with Lady Huntingdon, from  
whose society and conversation she derived great  
comfort. She was a daughter of Richard, the first  
Earl of Scarborough; was for many years lady of the  
bedchamber to the Princess Anne, and to the Prin-  
cesses Amelia and Caroline; and finally became the  
second wife of Frederic Frankland, Esq., a member  
of Parliament, from whose cruelty she endured much.

We have already said, that some time before this  
Messrs. John and Charles Wesley had embarked for  
Georgia, and to their names we might have added  
that of Mr. Ingham, also a member of the Methodist  
fraternity at Oxford.

Georgia, which was explored by Sir Walter Ra-  
leigh in 1584, had been colonized by debtors from  
Europe, by multitudes who had fled from the grasp of  
persecution, and by others who were interested in  
constructing a barrier against Spanish aggression.  
It originally had trustees in England, concerned for  
its interests, including sons of the nobility. The chief  
agent in executing the benevolent designs in view  
was the truly excellent General Oglethorpe, who ad-  
mirably carried out the motto he gave to his com-  
panions in the work, “Non sibi sed aliis”—“Not for  
themselves, but for others.” The children of poverty,

taken from the overgrown agricultural population,  
already a tax upon parish bounty at home, were to  
be transferred in large numbers to the silk and indigo  
plantations which were established on the savannahs  
and bottoms south and west of the river, which thence  
derived its name from the peculiar conformation of the  
adjoining plains. Combined with these leading pur-  
poses, it was a cherished principle with the early  
patrons of this colony, that it should become the cen-  
tre for the diffusion of the gospel among the natives;  
while charitable foundations were also laid for the  
secular and religious education of all who "would take  
advantage of such provisions. The first Christians  
who left Europe to advance the spiritual interests of  
Georgia were Moravians, and the next were the Wes-  
leys and Ingham. The records of the colony, as  
quoted in White’s Historical Collections of Georgia,  
show that, Sept. 14, 1735, Charles Wesley was ap-  
pointed “Secretary for the Indian affairs in Georgia,”  
and that, Oct. 10, 1735, John Wesley was appointed  
“missionary at Savannah.”

Whitefield had left London, and was laboring  
among a poor and illiterate people in Hampshire,  
when his attention was directly drawn to Georgia.  
This was not, indeed, the first time his heart had been  
interested in the matter. He writes, “When I had  
been about a month in town, letters came from the  
Messrs. Wesley, and the Rev. Mr. Ingham their fel-  
low-laborer, an Israelite indeed, from Georgia. Their  
accounts fired my soul, and made me long to go abroad  
for God too. But having no outward call, and being  
as I then thought too weak in body ever to undertake

a voyage at sea, I endeavored to lay aside all thoughts  
of going abroad. But my endeavors were all in vain;  
for I felt at times such a strong attraction in my soul  
towards Georgia, that I thought it almost irresistible.  
I strove against it with all my power, begged again  
and again, with many cries and tears, that the Lord  
would not suffer me to be deluded, and at length  
opened my mind to several dear friends. All agreed  
that laborers were wanted at home, that I had as yet  
no visible call abroad, and that it was my duty not  
to be rash, but wait and see what Providence might  
point out to me. To this I consented with my whole  
heart.”

The path of duty, however, soon opened before  
him. While fulfulling his duties at Dummer, in Hamp-  
shire, preaching for the Rev. Mr. Kinchin, who was  
now absent from home, to which labors we have al-  
ready referred, he received an invitation to a lucrative  
curacy in London; but Georgia still rested like one  
of the prophetic “burdens” on his mind. At this  
juncture he received a letter from his clerical friend  
at the Tower, saying that Mr. Charles Wesley had  
arrived in London. Very soon Mr. Wesley him-  
self wrote to Whitefield, saying, that he was come  
over to procure laborers, “but,” added he, “I dare  
not prevent God’s nomination.” “In a few days after  
this,” writes Mr. Whitefield, “came another letter  
from Mr. John Wesley, wherein were these words:  
‘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 laborers so

few. What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?’In another letter were these words: ‘Do you ask me  
what you shall have? Food to eat and raiment to  
put on, a house to lay your head in—such as our Lord  
had not—and a crown of glory that fadeth not away.’ Upon reading this my heart leaped within me, and as  
it were echoed to the call.”

After having consulted his bishop, Dr. Benson, as  
also the archbishop of Canterbury, and the trustees  
of Georgia including General James Oglethorpe who  
was then in London, he went to Bristol, Bath, and  
other places, to take leave of his personal friends  
As he could not refrain from preaching, so every ser-  
mon increased his popularity. We give his account  
of his preaching at Bristol, as a specimen of the recep-  
tion he met with.

“It was wonderful to see how the people hung  
upon the rails of the organ-loft, climbed upon the  
leads of the church, and made the church itself so hot  
with their breath, that the steam would fall from the  
pillars like drops of rain. Sometimes almost as many  
would go away for want of room as came in, and it  
was with great difficulty I got into the desk to read  
prayers or preach. Persons of all ranks not only  
publicly attended my ministry, but gave me private  
invitations to their houses. A private society or two  
were erected. I preached and collected for the poor  
prisoners in Newgate twice or thrice a week, and  
many made me large offers if I would not go abroad.”

Having mentioned General James Edward Ogle-  
thorpe, the first governor, and indeed the founder of  
the colony of Georgia, and to the end of Whitefield’s

Success as a preacher 47

life his cordial friend, a few additional facts concern-  
ing him may here be stated. He was the son of Sir  
Theophilus Oglethorpe, and was born in London, De-  
cember 21, 1688. At sixteen he was admitted a stu-  
dent at Oxford, but did not finish his studies, as the  
military profession had more charms for him than  
literary pursuits. He was first commissioned as an en-  
sign. After the death of Queen Anne, he entered into  
the service of Prince Eugene. "When he attained the  
age of twenty-four years, he entered Parliament, for  
Haslemere, where he continued thirty-two years. In  
November, 1732, Oglethorpe, with one hundred and  
sixteen settlers, embarked for Georgia, and landed at  
Charleston, S. C., January 13, 1733. They shortly  
afterwards proceeded to Georgia, where Oglethorpe  
laid out a town, and called it Savannah. He very  
happily secured the good will of the Indians. In  
1743, he left Georgia for England, to answer charges  
brought against him by Lieutenant-colonel Cook. A  
court martial declared the charges groundless and  
malicious, and Cook was dismissed from the service.  
In 1744 he was appointed one of the field-officers  
under field-marshal the Earl of Stair, to oppose the  
expected invasion of France. He died in 1785. He  
was truly a noble man.

As the period approached when Whitefield was to  
leave England, the people showed their esteem for  
him in almost every possible way. They followed  
him so closely, and in such numbers, for holy counsels,  
that he could scarcely command a moment for retire-  
ment. They begged to receive from him religious  
books, and to have their names written therein with

his own hand, as memorials of him, and very many  
followed him from place to place till his final embar-  
kation.

It was indeed a surprising fact, that a young man,  
scarcely more than twenty-two years of age, and pre-  
viously unknown to the world, should be able to col-  
lect such immense congregations, and rouse and com-  
mand their attention; multitudes hanging upon and  
receiving instructions from his lips. But God had  
endowed him with a singular union of qualities, which  
most eminently fitted him for the work of an evange-  
list. He was faithful to his trust, and his divine Mas-  
ter abundantly blessed and honored him in the dis-  
charge of its momentous duties.

We have now traced the amazing effects of White-  
field’s sermons, and it may be interesting briefly  
to inquire into their general character, and to ascer-  
tain what truths thus aroused the public mind. Three  
of these sermons can, happily, be identified with these  
“times of refreshing and they may be depended on,  
as specimens of both the letter and the spirit of his  
preaching, because they were printed from his own  
manuscripts: they are those on “Early Piety” “Re-  
generation” and “Intercession.” Whoever will read  
the appeals in these sermons, realizing the circum-  
stances under which they were made, will scarcely  
wonder at the effect produced by them. The topics  
of the second and third, and the tone of all the three,  
are very different from the matter and manner of ser-  
monizing then known to the masses of the people.  
They do not surprise us, because happily neither the  
topics nor the tone of them are “strange things to our

Success as a preacher 49

ears.” Both, however, were novelties in those days,  
even in London. When or where had an appeal been  
made like this?

“I beseech you, in love and compassion, to come  
to Jesus. Indeed, all I say is in love to your souls.  
And if I could be but an instrument of bringing you  
to Jesus, I should not envy, but rejoice in your happi-  
ness, however much you were exalted. If I was to  
make up the last of the train of the companions of the  
blessed Jesus, it would rejoice me to see you above  
me in glory. I could willingly go to prison or to  
death for you, so I could but bring one soul from the  
devil's strong-holds, into the salvation which is by  
Christ Jesus. Come then to Christ, every one that  
hears me this night. Come, come, my guilty breth-  
ren; I beseech you, for your immortal souls' sake, for  
Christ's sake, come to Christ. Methinks I could  
speak till midnight unto you. Would you have me  
go and tell my Master that you will not come, and  
that I have spent my strength in vain? I cannot bear  
to carry such a message to him. I would not, indeed,  
I would not be a swift witness against you at the  
great day of account; but if you will refuse these  
gracious invitations, I must do it.”

In this spirit, not very prevalent even now, White-  
field began his ministry. There is a fascination as  
well as fervor, or rather a fascination arising from  
fervor, in some of his earliest as well as his later dis-  
courses. How bold and beautiful is the peroration, of  
that on “Intercession.” Referring to the holy impa-  
tience of uthe souls under the altar,” for the coming  
of the kingdom of God, he exclaims,

Whitefield. 3

“And shall not we who are on earth be often  
exercised in this divine employ with the glorious com-  
pany of the spirits of just men made perfect? Since  
our happiness is so much to consist in the communion  
of saints in the church triumphant above, shall we not  
frequently intercede for the church militant below,  
and earnestly beg that we may be all one? To pro-  
voke you to this work and labor of love, remember,  
that it is the never-ceasing employment of the holy  
and highly exalted Jesus himself; so that he who is  
constantly interceding for others, is doing that on  
earth which the eternal Son of God is always doing  
in heaven. Imagine, therefore, when you are lifting  
up holy hands for one another, that you see the heav-  
ens opened, and the Son of God in all his glory, as  
the great High-priest of your salvation, pleading for  
you the all-sufficient merit of his sacrifice before the  
throne. Join your intercession with his. The imagi-  
nation will strengthen your faith, and excite a holy  
earnestness in your prayers.”

The nearer the time approached for his leaving  
the country, the more affectionate the people grew  
towards him, and the more eagerly did they attend on  
his ministry. Many thousands of ardent petitions  
were presented to heaven on behalf of his person and  
his ministry; and multitudes would stop him in the  
aisles of the churches, or follow him with their tearful  
looks. Most of all was it difficult for him to part  
from his friends at St. Dunstan’s, where he adminis-  
tered the sacrament, after spending the night before  
in prayer.

The man who had produced these extraordinary

effects, says Dr. Gillies, had many natural advantages.  
He was something above the middle stature, well pro-  
portioned, though at that time slender, and remark-  
able for native gracefulness of manner. His com-  
plexion was very fair, his features regular, his eyes  
small and lively, of a dark blue color: in recovering  
from the measles, he had contracted a squint with one  
of them; but this peculiarity rather rendered the ex-  
pression of his countenance more rememberable, than  
in any degree lessened the effect of its uncommon  
sweetness. His voice excelled both in melody and  
compass, and its fine modulations were happily accom-  
panied by the grace of action which he possessed in  
an eminent degree, and which is said to be the chief  
requisite of an orator. An ignorant man described  
his eloquence oddly, but strikingly, when he said that  
Mr. Whitefield preached like a lion. So strange a  
comparison conveyed no unapt idea of the force, and  
vehemence, and passion—of the authority which awed  
the hearers, and made them tremble like Felix before  
the apostle. Believing himself to be the messenger of  
God, commissioned to call sinners to repentance, he  
spoke as one conscious of his high credentials, with  
authority and power; yet in all his discourses there  
was a fervor and melting charity, an earnestness of  
persuasion, an outpouring of redundant love, partak-  
ing of the virtue of the faith from which it flowed,  
insomuch that it seemed to enter the heart which it  
pierced, and to heal it as with a balm.

At length, having preached in a considerable num-  
ber of the London churches, collected about a thou-  
sand pounds for the charity schools, and obtained up-

52 GEORGE WHITEFIELD

wards of three hundred pounds for the poor in Geor-  
gia, Whitefield left London, December 28, 1737, in  
the twenty-third of his age, and went in the strength  
of God, as a poor pilgrim, on board the Whitaker.

Scarcely had he entered on his voyage from Lon-  
don, when he discovered that but little comfort was  
to be expected in the ship on which he had embarked.  
There was no place for retirement, no disposition to  
receive him as an ambassador of Christ, and a decided  
dislike even to the forms of religion. They moved  
but slowly to the Downs, where they were detained  
for nearly a month, and where Whitefield went on  
shore to visit Deal, an ancient town, one of the Cinque-  
ports, so called, where “the common people,” as in  
the case of his great Master, “heard him gladly.”  
With him, through his whole ministry, it was of small  
importance whether he preached to the rich or the  
poor; for he viewed the gospel as a message of mercy  
to sinners, and wherever men were found, he was will-  
ing to persuade them to be reconciled to God.

The account given by Mr. Whitefield of his visit  
to Deal, and of the different treatment he received  
there from different persons, would be almost as cor-  
rect a description of his labors and reception in a  
hundred other places. He spent his first evening  
very comfortably in religious conversation and family  
prayer, at which a poor woman was much affected.  
“Who knows,” he says, “what a fire this little spark  
may kindle?” Next evening, eight or nine poor peo-  
ple came to him at the report of this poor woman;  
and when, after three or four days, the ship in which  
he had embarked was driven back to Deal, many met

together to bewail their own sins and those of others.  
Soon the landlady who owned the house where he  
lodged, sent to her tenants, beseeching them not to  
let any more persons come in, for fear the floor should  
break under them; and they actually put a prop un-  
der it.

The minister of Upper Deal, a mile or two from  
the town, now invited Whitefield to preach in the  
church; it was much crowded, and many went away  
for want of room. Some stood on the leads of the  
building outside, and looked in at the top windows,  
and all around seemed eager to hear the word. “May  
the Lord” says the good man, “make them doers of it.  
In the evening I was obliged to divide my hearers  
into four companies, and was enabled to expound to  
them from six till ten. Lord, keep me from being  
weary of, or in well-doing.”

The excitement at Deal became very great, in con-  
sequence of the conviction of the people that their  
own minister, the Rev. Dr. Carter, did not preach the  
gospel. The good man, to disprove the charge, pub-  
lished a volume of his sermons, which, however ad-  
mired by gay formalists, furnished but too much evi-  
dence of the justice of the charge.

Just as he had left the church at Upper Deal,  
where he had been preaching to a vast congregation,  
Mr. Whitefield, in consequence of a sudden change of  
the wind, was summoned on board, and the Whitaker  
sailed for Georgia. A very few hours afterwards,  
the vessel which brought back John Wesley from that  
colony anchored in the Downs, when he learned that  
the ships had passed each other, but neither of these

54 GEORGE WHITEFIELD

remarkable men then knew how dear a friend was on  
board the other. When Wesley landed, he found it  
was still possible to communicate with his friend, and  
Whitefield was surprised to receive a letter from him,  
saying, “When I saw God by the wind which was  
carrying you out brought me in, I asked counsel of  
God. His answer you have enclosed.” The enclo-  
sure was a slip of paper with the words, “Let him  
return to London,” which Wesley had obtained by  
lot, to which he had had recourse. Whitefield prayed  
for direction, and went on his voyage.

This first voyage of Whitefield to America was in-  
vested with scenes of far more than common interest.  
Perhaps, since the apostle Paul’s memorable voyage  
to Rome, the ocean had never exhibited a more re-  
markable spectacle than that furnished by this ship.  
He was but a stripling in his twenty-third year, and  
a faint and hesitating homage once on a Sabbath-day,  
from a few of the less obdurate sinners among his  
hearers, would be all that such a clergyman could  
expect from an assemblage of gentlemen, of soldiers  
with their wives and families, and the ship’s crew.  
Yet in the hands of this remarkable youth all be-  
came pliant as a willow. He converted the chief  
cabin into a cloister, the deck into a church, and the  
steerage into a school-room. He so bore down all  
opposition by love, reason, and Scripture, that we  
soon see him, at the request of the captain and offi-  
cers, with the hearty concurrence of the gentlemen  
who were passengers, reading “full public prayers”to them twice a day in the great cabin, and expound-  
ing every night after the evening prayers, besides daily

reading prayers, and preaching twice a day on deck  
to the soldiers and sailors, and increasing the services  
on Sundays. In addition to all this, he daily cate-  
chized a company of young soldiers, and engaged in the  
same exercise with the women apart by themselves.

Nor did even all this suffice to expend his zeal,  
for he commenced a course of expositions on the creed  
and ten commandments; and so convinced was he of  
the value of catechetical teaching, that on February 3d  
he writes, “I began to-night to turn the observations  
made on the lessons in the morning into catechetical  
questions, and was pleased to hear some of the soldiers  
make very apt answers.”

Nor were the children forgotten; the Hon. Mr.  
Habersham, a personal friend who accompanied him,  
assumed their instruction as his department of holy  
labor. Mr. Whitefield wrote of him, that he was  
“pleased to see Mr. Habersham so active in teaching  
the children. He has now many scholars-—may God  
bless him.”

Friendship for Whitefield had influenced Mr. Hab-  
ersham to accompany the young evangelist to Geor-  
gia. Mr. Habersham’s friends, at Beverly, in York-  
shire, where he was born in 1712, were greatly op-  
posed to his plans, but surely the hand of God directed  
them. He presided over the Orphan-house till 1744,  
when he entered into a commercial partnership. He  
occupied several important stations, till he became  
president of the colony in 1769. The proceedings  
connected with the revolutionary war more than once  
placed him in great difficulties; he did not live to see  
its happy results, for in 1775 the state of his health

56 GEORGE WHITEFIELD  
  
compelled him to visit the north, in hope of its reno-  
vation. The change, however, was of no benefit, and  
he died at New Brunswick, New Jersey, August 28,  
1775. The “Gazette” of the day said of him, “In the  
first stations of the province he conducted himself with  
ability, honor, and integrity, which gained him the love  
and esteem of his fellow-citizens; nor was he less dis-  
tinguished in private life by a conscientious discharge  
of the social duties, as a tender and affectionate par-  
ent, a sincere and warm friend, and a kind and indul-  
gent master. Mr. Habersham was married by the  
Rev. Mr. Whitefield to Mary Bolton at Bethesda, on  
the 26th of December, 1740, by whom he had ten chil-  
dren, three of whom, sons, survived him, and were  
zealous in the cause of American liberty.”

In harmony with the solemn duties which Mr.  
Whitefield had assumed, he watched over the conduct  
of all around him. He tells us that the ship’s cook  
was awfully addicted to drinking, and when reproved  
for this and other sins, he boasted that he would be  
wicked till within two years of his death, and would  
then reform. Alas, he died on the voyage, after an  
illness of six hours, brought on by drinking.

One day on this voyage, finding on Captain Whit-  
ing’s pillow “The Independent Whig,” Whitefield ex-  
changed it for a book entitled “The Self-Deceiver.”  
The next morning, the captain came smiling and in-  
quired who made the exchange. Mr. Whitefield con-  
fessed the fact, and begged his acceptance of the book,  
which he said he had read, and liked very well. From  
thenceforward a visible alteration took place in the  
conduct of the captain.

On their arrival at Gibraltar, where they had to  
continue some time, Mr. Whitefield found that Major  
Sinclair, without solicitation, had provided a lodging  
for him, and the governor and military invited him  
to their table. Being apprehensive that at a public  
military table he might be more than hospitably  
treated, to prevent any thing disagreeable, he remind-  
ed his excellency that, at the court of Ahasuerus,  
“none did compel.” The governor took the hint, and  
pleasantly replied, “No compulsion of any kind shall  
be used at my table;” and everything was conducted  
with the greatest propriety. Here he often preached,  
and was heard by many, including all in high offices.  
Unusual indeed were the scenes, both with respect to  
the place and the people. The adjacent promonto-  
ries, and the vastness of the rock of Gibraltar, aided  
in the enlargement of the ideas of the preacher as  
to Him, who “in his strength setteth fast the moun-  
tains, and is girded about with power.” And the  
place being a sort of public rendezvous of all na-  
tions, he thought, he says, “he saw the world in  
epitome.”

The success of Whitefield's ministry at Gibraltar  
was truly remarkable. He quaintly says of it, “Sam-  
son's riddle was fulfilled there: ‘out of the strong  
came forth sweetness.' Who more unlikely to be  
wrought upon than soldiers? And yet, among any  
set of people, I have not been where God has made  
his power more known. Many that were quite blind,have received their sight; many that had fallen back,  
have repented and turned to the Lord again; many  
that were ashamed to own Christ openly, have waxed

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58 GEORGE WHITEFIELD

bold; and many saints have hd their hearts filled  
with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”

Among of her religious societies to which White-  
field was introduced at Gibraltar, he one day attended  
the Jewish synagogue, and was agreeably surprised  
when one of the rulers handed him into the chief seat.  
The rabbi had the day before heard him preach against  
profane swearing, and now thanked him for his ser-  
mon. He remained in the synagogue during the whole  
service, engaged, he says, “in secret prayer that the  
veil might be taken from the heart of the Jews, and  
they grafted again into their own olive-tree.”

Several facts occurred on the way to Savannah  
after their embarkation from Gibraltar, which are too  
interesting to pass without notice. On one occasion  
Captain Mackay, after Whitefield had preached against  
drunkenness, urged the men to attend to the things  
which had been spoken; telling them that he was a  
notorious swearer until he did so; and beseeching  
them for Christ's sake to give up their sins. On  
another occasion, while marrying a couple on deck,  
Whitefield suddenly shut the prayer-book in the midst  
of the ceremony, because the bridegroom had behaved  
with levity; and not until the laughter was turned  
into weeping, would he proceed. At the close of the  
service he gave the bride a Bible. When a shark  
was caught, with five pilot-fish clinging to its fins, he  
said, “Go to the pilot-fish, thou that forsakest a friend  
in adversity; consider his ways, and be abashed.”  
When a dolphin was caught, the change of its hues  
from lovely to livid, reminded him to say, “Just so is  
man; he flourishes for a little while, but when death

**IN GEORGIA. 59**

cometh, how quickly his beauty is gone! A Christian  
may learn instruction from ever thing he meets "with.”While he was preaching on the death of Christ dark-  
ness came on, and he said, “It puts me in mind of that  
darkness which overwhelmed the world when the God  
of nature suffered.”

In the latter part of the voyage, fever laid pros-  
trate all in the ship except four persons, and at  
length it seized Whitefield, and confined him to his  
bed for a week. The attack, though short, must have  
been severe; for besides other remedies, he was bled  
three times. During his illness, the captain gave up  
his own bed to him, and Mr. Habersham watched him  
day and night; but that which gratified him most  
was, that the sick between decks, whom he had endan-  
gered his life to console, prayed for him with great  
fervor. He recovered, and repaid the kindness of all.  
At length, on May 5, they came in sight of Savannah  
river, and sent off for a pilot; and such was the joy  
of all, when they came to anchor at Tybee island, that  
he could not help exclaiming, “How infinitely more  
joyful will the children of God be, when, having passed  
through the waves of this troublesome world, they  
arrive at the haven of everlasting rest!” Though  
still weak, he preached a farewell sermon to his “red-  
coated and blue-jacketed parishioners,” as he called  
his military and naval congregation. It was heard  
with floods of tears.

Upon this voyage, says Dr. Gillies, he made these  
reflections many years after: “Even at this distance  
of time, the remembrance of the happy hours I enjoyed  
in religious exercises on deck, is refreshing to my

soul; and although nature sometimes relented at being  
taken from my friends, and I was little accustomed to  
the inconveniences of a sea-life, yet, a consciousness  
that I had the glory of God and the good of souls in  
view, afforded me, from time to time, unspeakable  
satisfaction.”

Whitefield was cordially welcomed at Savannah  
by Delamotte and other friends of the Wesleys: the  
magistrates also offered to wait upon him to pay their  
respects; but this he declined, and waited upon them.  
They agreed to build him a tabernacle and a house at  
Frederica, and to accept his services at Savannah as  
long as he pleased. He was soon, however, again  
laid aside by the return of his fever, now accompanied  
with ague. This attack in a few days brought him  
so low, and made so great an alteration in his person,  
that he says, “Had my friends seen me at that hour,  
they might have learned not to have any man’s person  
in admiration, and not to think more highly of me  
than they ought to think.”

The first thing which Whitefield did after his re-  
covery was to visit Tomo-Chici, the Indian king, then  
on his death-bed. This was the micoe, or king, whom  
Oglethorpe had taken to England, in 1734, and intro-  
duced to king George the Second. He was accom-  
panied by his wife and son, and seven other Indians  
of the Creek nation. His eloquent speech to the  
king and queen was so well received at court, that he  
was loaded with presents, and when he had again to  
embark, was sent in one of the royal carriages to  
Gravesend. “He now lay,” says Whitefield, “on a  
blanket, thin and meagre; little else but skin and

**IN GEORGIA. 61**

bones. Senanki, his wife, sat by, fanning him with  
Indian feathers. There was no one who could talk Eng-  
lish, so I could only shake hands with him and leave  
him. A few days afterwards, Mr. Whitefield again  
went to visit Tomo-Chici, and found that his nephew,  
Tooanoowee, could speak English. Whitefield says, “I  
desired him to ask his uncle, whether he thought he  
should die; who answered, ‘I cannot tell.’ I then  
asked where he thought he should go after death.  
He replied, ‘To heaven.’ But alas, how can a drunk-  
ard enter there? I then exhorted Tooanoowee, who  
is a tall, proper youth, not to get drunk; telling him  
that he understood English, and therefore would be  
punished the more if he did not live better. I then  
asked him whether he believed in a heaven. He said,

‘Yes,’ I then asked whether he believed in a hell,  
and described it by pointing to the fire. He replied,  
‘No,’ from whence we may easily gather, how nat-  
ural it is to all mankind to believe there is a place of  
happiness, because they wish it to be so; and on the  
contrary, how averse they are to believe in a place of  
torment, because they wish it may not be so. But  
God is just and true ; and as surely as the righteous  
shall go away into everlasting happiness, so the im-  
penitently wicked shall go into everlasting punish-  
ment.”

The records of Georgia say, under date of Decem-  
ber 21, 1737, “Ordered, that a license be made out  
for the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield to perform eccle-  
siastical offices in Georgia, as a deacon in the church  
of England.”

Before Whiteiield had any thoughts of going

abroad, Charles Wesley talked to him of an orphan-  
house in Georgia, which he and General Oglethorpe  
had contemplated. When he arrived in Savannah,  
and had sufficiently recovered from his illness to  
examine the state of the colony, the condition of the  
children deeply affected him; and he set his heart on  
founding the projected institution as soon as he should  
be able to collect the needful funds. In the mean  
time he opened schools in the villages of Highgate  
and Hampstead, and one also, for girls, in Savannah.  
He afterwards visited the Saltzburgher’s orphan-  
school at Ebenezer; and if anything had been want-  
ed to settle his own determination, or to inflame his  
zeal, he found it there. The Saltzburghers were ex-  
iles for conscience sake, and were eminent for piety  
and industry. Their ministers, the Rev. Messrs. Gre-  
naw and Boltzius, were eminently evangelical, and  
their asylum, which they had been enabled to found  
by British benevolence, for widows and orphans, was  
flourishing. Whitefield was so delighted with the  
order and harmony of Ebenezer, that he gave a share  
of his own “poor’s store” to Boltzius, for his orphans.  
Then came the scene which entirely completed his  
purpose: Boltzius “called all the children before him;  
catechized and exhorted them to give God thanks for  
his good providence towards them; then prayed with  
them, and made them pray after him; then sung a  
psalm. Afterwards, the little lambs came and shook  
me by the hand, one by one, and so we parted.”

Whitefield was now pledged to this cause for life.

Most of our readers probably know that the con-  
ductors of “The Gentleman’s Magazine,” a work which

has now been regularly published in London for much  
more than a century, have never been favorable to  
evangelical truth, or its ministers; it is therefore the  
more gratifying to copy from that work for Novem-  
ber, 1737, the following lines: it will be seen that  
they were published more than a month before Mr.  
Whitefield’s departure to the American colonies.

“TO THE REV. MR. WHITEFIELD, ON HIS DESIGN  
FOR GEORGIA.

“How great, how just thy zeal, adventurous youth,

To spread in heathen climes the light of truth!

Go, loved of heaven, with every grace refined,

Inform, enrapture each dark Indian’s mind;

Grateful, as when to realms long hid from day,

The cheerful dawn foreshows the solar ray.

How great thy charity, whose large embrace  
Intends the eternal weal of all thy race;

Prompts thee the rage of waves and winds to scorn,

To effect the work for which thy soul was born.

What multitudes, whom Pagan dreams deceive,

Shall, when they hear thy heavenly voice, believe!

On Georgia’s shore thy Wesley shall attend,

To hail the wished arrival of his friend;

With joy the promised harvest he surveys,

And to his Lord for faithful laborers prays;

Though crowded temples here would plead thy stay,

Yet haste, blest prophet, on thy destined way.

Be gentle, winds, and breathe an easy breeze,

Be clear, ye skies, and smooth, ye flowing seas!

From heaven, ye guardian angels, swift descend,  
Delighted his blest mission to attend;

Which shall from Satan’s power whole nations free,  
While half the world to Jesus bow the knee.

Long as Savannah, peaceful stream, shall glide,

Your worth renowned shall be extended wide;

Children as yet unborn shall bless your lore,

Who thus to save them left your native shore;

The apostles thus, with ardent zeal inspired,

To gain all nations for their Lord desired.

They measured seas, a life laborious knew,

And numerous converts to their Master drew;

Whose hallelujahs, on the ethereal plains,

Rise scarce beneath the bright seraphic strains.

“ Gloucester, Nov. 1, 1737.”

After spending a few weeks at Savannah, laboring  
as much as his health would permit, Whitefield went  
to Frederica, where he was gladly received; the peo-  
ple “having had a famine of the word for a long sea-  
son.” They had no sanctuary, and therefore he had  
to preach under a tree, or in Mr. Habersham’s house.  
This visit, although short, endeared him to all the  
people; and he had the satisfaction before he left, to  
see them “sawing timber for a commodious place of  
worship, until a church could be built.” His return,  
however, to Savannah was hastened by a somewhat  
painful event. One of his friends was lost in the  
woods, and missing from Tuesday till Friday. The  
great guns had been fired to direct the wanderer, but  
in vain; and some of the people had searched for him  
day and night, without success. This report was sent  
to Whitefield, and it hurried him away from Frederica.  
He had the pleasure, however, on his arrival at Savan-  
nah, to find his “lost sheep.”

During the stay of Whitefield in Georgia, the  
weather was intensely hot, sometimes almost burning  
his feet through his shoes. Seeing others do it, he  
determined to accustom himself to hardship by lying  
constantly on the floor; which by use he found to be

so far from "being uncomfortable, that afterwards it  
became so to lie on a bed. Nor was he more ready  
to deny himself than he was assiduous to do good;  
preaching often, catechizing the young, visiting the  
sick, and exhorting from house to house. Entirely  
independent and unrestrained, he knew no fear in the  
discharge of what he regarded as his duty. Knowing  
that some men of influence, to whom his voice could  
not be addressed from the pulpit, were living in open  
defiance of morality and shame, he went into the  
court and made an address to the grand jury, urging  
them to present all such offenders without partiality  
or fear, since the miserable state of the colony was  
doubtless owing to divine displeasure against their  
sins.

Reflection on the character, labors, and success of  
his predecessors, stimulated his zeal and encouraged  
his hope. It could not be denied that John Wesley  
had been misrepresented and unkindly treated, both  
in Savannah and Frederica, and Whitefield therefore  
rejoiced to bear honorable testimony of him and his  
colleagues. He says, “Surely I must labor most  
heartily, since I come after such worthy men. The  
good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inex-  
pressible. His name is very precious among the peo-  
ple, and he has laid such a foundation, that I hope  
neither men nor devils will be able to shake it. 0  
that I may follow him as he has followed Christ.”

Mr. Whitefield having as yet only received dea-  
con’s orders, and wishing to be ordained priest, for  
the more complete performance of his duty as a min-  
ister of the church of England, it became necessary

66 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
for him to return to Europe for that purpose; and  
being also desirous of making collections for his Or-  
phan-house, he left Mr. Habersham at Savannah, and  
went to Charleston, S. C., on his way to England.

At Charleston he became acquainted with the Rev.  
Alexander Garden, the ecclesiastical commissary of  
the Bishop of London, who with apparent cordiality  
twice invited him into his pulpit, and assured him  
that he would defend him with his life and property,  
should the same arbitrary proceedings ever be com-  
menced against him which Mr. Wesley had met with  
in Georgia. Dr. Deems, in his recently published  
volume, “The Annals of Southern Methodism,” tells  
us, when speaking of his first sermon, “The people at  
first despised his youth, but his engaging address soon  
gained their general esteem, and Mr. Garden thanked  
him most cordially.” In an after-period, however,  
when Mr. Garden more fully understood the evan-  
gelical character of Mr. Whitefield’s preaching, he  
frequently took occasion to point out what he called  
the pernicious tendency of his doctrines, and irregular  
manner of life. He represented him as a religious  
quack, who had an excellent way of setting off and  
rendering palatable his poisonous tenets. On one  
occasion Garden, to keep his flock from going after  
this strange pastor, preached from the text, “These  
that have turned the world upside down are come  
hither also.” Whitefield, however, was not to be  
silenced in this way, and returned the compliment by  
preaching from the words, “Alexander the copper-  
smith did me much evil; the Lord reward him ac-  
cording to his works.”

On. September 6, 1738, Whitefield embarked for  
London. The voyage was perilous in the extreme.  
They were tossed about with bad weather, in a ship  
out of repair, and in sad want of provisions. When  
they were over about one-third of the Atlantic, a ves-  
sel from Jamaica would have gladly received him,  
but he chose to share the lot of his shipmates. They  
highly valued his services, and one of his fellow-pas-  
sengers, Captain Gladman, became, as the result of  
this voyage, a truly pious man. The captain, in a  
subsequent period, at his own earnest request, became  
the fellow-traveller of his teacher.

After a passage of about nine weeks, they made  
the port of Limerick, in Ireland. “I wish,” White-  
field says, “I could never forget what I felt when  
water and provisions were brought us from the shore.  
Mr. M’Mahon, a country gentleman, came from his  
seat at midnight on purpose to relieve us, and most  
kindly invited me, though unknown, to his house, to  
stay as long as I pleased.” At Limerick he was cor-·  
dially received by that worthy prelate, Bishop Birs-  
eough, who engaged him to preach at the cathedral.  
From thence he went to Dublin, where he preached,  
and was hospitably entertained by Archbishop Bolton,  
Bishop Bundel, and Dr. Delany.

Remaining but a short time in Ireland, he pro-  
ceeded to London, where he arrived December 8.  
Here he had the pleasure of conversing with some of  
the Moravian brethren, whose faith and love refreshed  
his spirit, though he did not entirely approve some  
of their views. He soon discovered somewhat of a  
change of feeling towards him on the part of many of

68 GEORGE WHITEFIELD  
  
the London clergy. Within two days, he found five  
of the churches were closed against him. He called  
on the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of  
London, who received him with cold civility. The  
bishop asked him if his journals were not tinctured  
with enthusiasm; and he replied, with his usual meek-  
ness and candor, that they were written only for his  
own use, and that of his private friends, and that they  
were published without his knowledge. So anxious  
was he to avoid giving offence, that he took the ear-  
liest opportunity to expunge from his journals what-  
ever he discovered to be erroneous, and whatever he  
had said without imperative necessity, or which was  
likely to injure the character and feelings of any one.

The trustees of Georgia, at a meeting in London,  
received Whitefield with great cordiality, and in com-  
pliance with the wishes of the colonists, they present-  
ed him with the living of Savannah, the salary of which  
he declined to receive; but he thankfully accepted  
five hundred acres of land, on which he proposed to  
erect his orphan-house.

On Sunday, January 14, 1739, being then in his  
twenty-fifth year, Whitefield was ordained priest at  
Oxford, by his worthy friend Bishop Benson. Hav-  
ing preached twice to very crowded congregations,  
and administered the Lord’s supper at the castle, he  
returned to London the next day. As Dr. Benson  
once expressed regret that he had ordained Mr.  
Whitefield, it may be proper here to explain the cir-  
cumstances. Shortly after the late Countess of Hun-  
tingdon first became acquainted with the truth as it  
is in Jesus, Bishop Benson, who had been lord Hun-

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tingdon’s tutor, was sent for to remonstrate with her  
ladyship, and to induce her to relinquish what were  
then considered her erroneous views; but she pressed  
him so hard with the Articles and Homilies of his own  
church, and so plainly and faithfully urged upon him  
the awful responsibility of his station, that for the  
moment his mind was hurt, and he rose up to depart,  
lamenting that he had ever laid his hands upon George  
Whitefield, to whom he imputed the change which had  
been wrought in her ladyship. “My lord,” said she,  
“mark my words; when you come upon your dying  
bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will  
reflect upon with pleasure.” It would seem that it  
was so; for, on his death-bed, the Bishop sent ten  
guineas to Mr. Whitefield as a token of his favor and  
approbation, and begged to be remembered by him in  
his prayers.

The interval between his taking priests’ orders,  
and embarking a second time for Georgia, was em-  
ployed by Whitefield, with his usual energy and suc-  
cess, in preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,  
and in making collections for his Orphan-house. Hav-  
ing, before his visit to America, collected large sums  
for the charity schools in the metropolis, he naturally  
expected that the pulpits would not be denied him  
now, in which to plead the interests of his own poor.  
But he was scarcely yet aware that the tide of cleri-  
cal opinion had turned so extensively and strongly  
against him. The doctrines he had preached, and the  
manner in which he had preached them, had produced  
a sensation so strong, that he found himself excluded  
from most of the churches in London. A few, how-

ever, were yet open to him for his benevolent design.  
The Rev. Mr. Broughton conducted himself, among  
others, very nobly. Having been urged to refuse his  
pulpit, as some of his neighbors had done, he boldly  
replied, that “having obtained the lectureship of St.  
Helen’s by Whitefield’s influence, he should have the  
pulpit if he desired it.” Mr. Whitefield preached,  
but Mr. Broughton thus losing the lectureship, White-  
field blamed himself for having done so. Whatever  
he might himself be willing to suffer, he was not will-  
ing to inflict inconvenience on others.

Only a few days before his being ordained as  
priest, Whitefield offered his first public extempore  
prayer, in a large meeting in Red Cross-street, Lon-  
don. He mentions this fact in a note of his diary as  
“the first time I ever prayed extempore before such  
a number.” He did not even then suppose that his  
preaching, as well as his prayers in this manner, were  
to develop his mighty power. The crowding of the  
churches now suggested the idea of preaching in the  
open air. He says, “When I was informed that  
nearly a thousand people stood out in the church-  
yard, and that hundreds returned home, this put me  
first upon thinking of preaching without doors. I  
mentioned it to some friends, who looked upon it as a  
mad motion. However, we kneeled down and prayed  
that nothing might be done rashly. Hear and an-  
swer, 0 Lord, for thy name’s sake.”

We shall soon see how his extempore expositions  
and prayers were fitting him for this new enterprise.  
He would have commenced in London now, but he  
lacked a fair opportunity.

CHAPTER III.

**OPEN-AIR PREACHING IN ENGLAND AND WALES—**

**ERECTION OP THE TABERNACLE IN LONDON.**

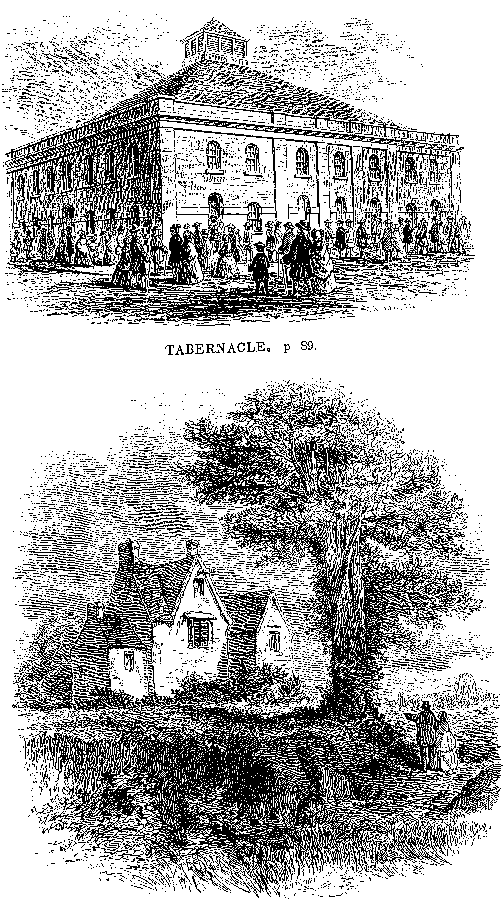
**1738-1739.**

Under the circumstances we have related in our  
last chapter, Whitefield paid another visit to Bristol,  
and soon found that he had to meet with new and  
very unexpected opposition. When he arrived in the  
city, the chancellor of the diocese, while he did not  
approve of what he considered his irregular conduct,  
told him that he would not prohibit any clergyman  
from lending him his church; but in a few days after-  
wards he sent for the evangelist, and announced  
his entire opposition to his movements. Strangely  
enough, he now asked Whitefield by what authority  
he preached in the diocese of Bristol without a license.  
The reply of the intrepid minister was, that he sup-  
posed such a custom had become obsolete, and asked  
the chancellor in his turn, “And pray, sir, why did  
you not ask the clergyman who preached for you last  
Thursday this question?” The chancellor then read  
to him the canons which forbid any clergyman from  
preaching in a private house; to which Whitefield  
replied, that he did not suppose these canons referred  
to professed ministers of the church of England; and  
when the chancellor told him he was mistaken, he  
reminded his superior, “There is also a canon, sir,  
forbidding all clergymen to frequent taverns and play  
at cards; why is not that put in execution?” And

he then added, that notwithstanding any canons to  
the contrary, he could not but speak the things which  
he knew, and that he was resolved to proceed as usual.  
His answer was written down, and the chancellor  
closed the interview with the words, “I am resolved,  
sir, if you preach or expound anywhere in this dio-  
cese till you have a license, I will first suspend, and  
then excommunicate you.” The crisis was now come;  
the Rubicon had been passed, and the inquiry might  
well be made, “What will Whitefield now do?”

Already have we seen that he had earnestly de-  
sired, in London, to preach in the open air, for want  
of room in the churches, and indeed also from the  
opposition of the clergy, which had begun so strongly  
to manifest itself; and during this journey to Bristol  
he found it necessary to preach in the open air or not  
at all. As this event was of vast importance in its  
results, both in his own history and that of Mr. Wes-  
ley, who also began to preach on the same spot within  
two months after Whitefield had opened the way, we  
must stay a while to narrate the facts.

At that time, the colliers of Kingswood, near the  
city of Bristol, were a most depraved and reckless  
class of men. Inconceivably barbarous and ignorant,  
they trampled on all laws, human and divine, and  
hesitated not to set the magistrates at defiance. It  
was dangerous to pass near the scene of their labors,  
even in open day, for robberies and murders were of  
frequent occurrence; in a word, it was truly “a seat  
of Satan.” When Whitefield was at Bristol, making  
collections for his projected orphan institution in  
Georgia, not a few persons had said to him, “Why



**IIANHAM MOUNT**

FIRST OPEN-AIR PREACHING 73

go abroad; have we not Indians enough at home?  
If you have a mind to convert Indians, there are col-  
liers enough in Kingswood.” “I thought,” says he,  
“it might be doing the service of my Creator; who  
had a mountain for his pulpit, and the heavens for his  
sounding-board, and who, when his gospel was refused  
by the Jews, sent his servants into the highways and  
hedges.” After much prayer and many inward strug-  
gles, he went one day to a gentle elevation on the  
south side of Kingswood, called Hanham Mount, and  
there, under an old sycamore-tree, he preached his,  
first sermon in the open air to about a hundred col-  
liers. The scene must have been very impressive.  
Before him stretched the rich and beautiful valley of  
the Avon, through which the river was gently wind-  
ing, bordered in the distance by the undulating hills;  
while on his right and left the cities of Bath and  
Bristol were within sight.

The fact of his preaching here soon and extensively  
spread, and at meeting after meeting his audience in-  
creased, till he found himself addressing nearly twenty  
thousand persons. His own account of the effects pro-  
duced is very striking. He says, “The first discovery  
of their being affected, was in 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 happily ended in sound and thor-  
ough conversion. As the scene was quite new, and  
I had just begun to be an extempore preacher, I had  
often many inward conflicts. Sometimes, when twenty  
thousand people were before me, I had not, as I

Whitefield. 4

**74 GEORGE WHITEFIELD**  
thought, a word to say; but I was never deserted;  
and I was often so assisted as to understand what  
that meaneth, ‘Out of his belly shall flow rivers of  
living water.’ The open firmament above; the pros-  
pect of the adjacent fields; with the sight of thousands  
and thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback,  
and some in the trees, and all so affected as to be  
drenched in tears together, to which sometimes was  
added the solemnity of the approaching night, were  
almost too much for me; I was occasionally all but  
overcome.” Writing to Mr. Wesley a few weeks  
afterwards, he says, “Yesterday I began to play the  
madman in Gloucestershire, by preaching on a table  
in Thornbury-street. To-day I have exhorted twice,  
and by and by I shall begin a third time; nothing  
like doing good by the way. I suppose you have  
heard of my proceedings in Kingswood.”

We scarcely need to remark here, that Kingswood  
has ever since been regarded as a sacred spot in ec-  
clesiastical history. Here houses for Wesleyan Meth-  
odists and Independents were soon erected, and in  
them thousands have been converted to God. Here  
was placed the first school for the sons of Methodist  
preachers, and on Hanham Mount, besides the voice of  
Whitefield, those of the Wesleys, Coke and Mather,  
Pawson and Benson, and Bradburn, accomplished some  
of the mightiest effects which attended their powerful  
preaching. There are yet some living in the neigh-  
borhood who were awakened under their ministry, and  
whose eyes glisten as they tell of the blessed days that  
are past.

Besides the colliers, and thousands from the neigh-

boring villages, persons of all ranks daily flocked out  
of Bristol. And he was soon invited by many of the  
most respectable people to preach on a large bowling-  
green in the city itself. Many of the people indeed  
sneered to see a stripling with a gown mount a table  
on unconsecrated ground; this even excited once or  
twice the laugh of some of the higher ranks, who had  
admired him in the churches. But he was unmoved,  
and his preaching was so blessed, that many were  
awakened. Sometimes he was employed almost from  
morning till night answering those who, in distress of  
soul, cried out, “What shall I do to be saved?” He  
now sought the help of Mr. John Wesley, who, after  
much reasoning with himself on the subject, complied  
with the invitation, and followed Whitefield's exam-  
ple, who immediately committed the work to him.  
Before leaving the neighborhood, however, White-  
field had the satisfaction of laying the foundation of  
a school for Kingswood; for the support of which the  
colliers liberally and cheerfully subscribed.

Taking an affectionate leave of his Bristol friends,  
Whitefield made an excursion into Wales, where a  
revival of religion had commenced several years be-  
fore, under the ministry of the Rev. Griffith Jones,  
and was now carried on by the ministry of Mr. Howel  
Harris, a man of strong mental powers, great Christian  
zeal, and considerable learning. They met at Cardiff.  
Whitefield’s heart was then glowing with the fire he  
had himself kindled at Bristol and Kingswood. On  
his way from Bristol to Cardiff, he was delayed at the  
New Passage by contrary winds. He says, “At the  
inn there was an unhappy clergyman who would not

76 GEORGE WHITEFIELD  
  
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. I heartily wish those who charge me cause-  
lessly with schism and being righteous overmuch,  
would consider that the canons of our church forbid  
the clergy to frequent taverns, or to play at cards or  
dice, or any other unlawful games. Their indulging  
themselves in these things is a stumbling-block to  
thousands.”

We have said that Whitefield first met Howel  
Harris at Cardiff. After preaching in the town-hall,  
from the judges’ seat, he says, “I was much refreshed  
with the sight of Mr. Howel Harris; whom, though  
I knew not in personal have long loved, and have  
often felt my soul drawn out in prayer in his behalf. . .  
When I first saw him, my heart was knit closely to  
him. I wanted to catch some of his fire, and gave  
him the right hand of fellowship with my whole heart.  
After I had saluted him, and given an exhortation to  
a great number of people, who followed me to the inn,  
we spent the remainder of the evening in taking sweet  
counsel together, and telling one another what God  
had done for our souls. A divine and strong sympa-  
thy seemed to be between us, and I was resolved to  
promote his interest with all my might. Accordingly  
we took an account of the several societies, and agreed  
on such measures as seemed most conducive to pro-  
mote the common interest of our Lord. Blessed be  
God, there seems a noble spirit gone out into Wales;

PREACHING IN WALES. 77  
  
and I believe that, ere long, there will be more visible  
fruits of it. What inclines me strongly to think so  
is, that the partition wall of bigotry and party spirit  
is broken down, and ministers and teachers of differ-  
ent communions join, with one heart and one mind, to  
carry on the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Lord  
make all the Christian world thus minded; for, until  
this is done, we must, I fear, despair of any great  
reformation in the church of God.”

Before leaving Cardiff, Whitefield preached again  
in the town-hall, to a large assembly. He says, “My  
dear brother Harris sat close by me. I did not ob-  
serve any scoffers within; but without, some were  
pleased to honor me so far as to trail a dead fox, and  
hunt it about the hall. But, blessed be God, my voice  
prevailed. This being done, I went, with many of my  
hearers, among whom were two worthy dissenting  
ministers, to public worship; and in the second les-  
son were these remarkable words: ‘The high-priests,  
and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to  
destroy him; but they could not find what they might  
do to him; for all the people were very attentive to  
hear him.’

“In the afternoon I preached again, without any  
disturbance or scoffing. In the evening, I talked for  
above an hour and a half with the religious society,  
and never did I see a congregation more melted  
down. The love of Jesus touched them to the quick.  
Most of them were dissolved in tears. They came to  
me after, weeping, bidding me farewell, and wishing I  
could continue with them longer. Thanks be to God,  
for such an entrance into Wales. I wrestled with God

for them in prayer, and blessed be His holy name for  
sending me into Wales. I hope these are the first-  
fruits of a greater harvest, if ever it should please  
God to bring me back from Georgia. ‘Father, thy  
will be done.’”

Whitefield returned from this short excursion, to  
Bristol, baptized with Welsh fire, and renewed his  
labors among the Kingswood colliers with more than  
his usual power and success. He could not, however,  
forget the tears which had entreated him to stay lon-  
ger in Wales, and in three or four weeks he visited  
Usk and Pontypool, where he was again met by Howel  
Harris. At Usk, “the pulpit being denied, I preached  
upon a table, under a large tree, to some hundreds,  
and God was with us of a truth. On my way to Pon-  
typool, I was informed by a man who heard it, that  
Counsellor H—— did me the honor to make a public  
motion to Judge P — to stop me and brother Howel  
Harris from going about teaching the people. Poor  
man, he put me in mind of Tertullus, in the Acts; but  
my hour is not yet come. I have scarcely begun my  
testimony. For my finishing it, my enemies must  
have power over me from above. Lord, prepare me  
for that hour.”

The report to which we have just referred did not  
prevent the curate of Pontypool from cordially invit-  
ing Whitefield into his pulpit. He also read prayers  
for him. After the sermon, it was found that so many  
had come to hear who could not find room in the  
church, that another sermon was loudly called for.  
He says, “I went and preached to all the people in  
the field. I always find I have most power when I

PREACHING IN WALES. 79  
  
preach in the open air; a proof to me that God is  
pleased with this way of preaching. I betook myself  
to rest, full of such unutterable peace as no one can  
conceive of but those who feel it.”

In several other places did our evangelist, during  
this excursion, unfurl the banner of the cross; and at  
its close he writes, “Oh how swiftly this week has  
glided away. To me it has been but as one day.  
How do I pity those who complain that time hangs  
on their hands! Let them but love Christ, and  
spend their whole time in his service, and they will  
find but few melancholy hours.” Nor will any won-  
der that he should thus speak, who consider the spirit  
which animated his soul. What he some time after-  
wards wrote to Howel Harris, from Philadelphia, in-  
dicated the spirit he himself cherished: “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 were your  
last; weep out, if possible, every argument, and compel  
them to cry, ‘Behold how he loveth us.’”

From Wales, Whitefield went to visit his native  
city, Gloucester; and after one or two sermons, he  
found himself here also excluded from the parochial  
pulpits. But notwithstanding his persecutions, and  
the infirm state of his health at that time, his labors  
in Gloucester and its vicinity were constant and emi-  
nently successful. Bowling-greens, market-crosses,  
highways, and other such places, bore witness to his  
faithful and tearful labors.

80 GEORGE WHITEFIELD  
  
 At Gloucester lived at that time the Rev. Mr.  
Cole, an old dissenting minister, who often heard  
Whitefield preach, and used to say, “These are the  
days of the Son of man indeed!” Whitefield, when a  
boy, had been taught to ridicule this Mr. Cole; and  
when he was once asked what profession he would  
engage in, replied, “I will be a minister, but I will  
take care never to tell stories in the pulpit like old  
Cole.” Twelve years afterwards, the old minister  
heard the young one preach, and tell some story to  
illustrate his subject, when the venerable servant of  
Christ remarked, “I find young Whitefield can tell  
stories now as well as old Cole.” The good man  
was much affected with the preaching of his young  
friend, and was so humble, that he used to subscribe  
himself his curate, and went about in the country preach-  
ing after him. One evening, while preaching, he was  
struck with death, and asked for a chair to lean on  
till he had finished his sermon. Having done this, he  
was carried up stairs and died. When the fact was  
told to Whitefield, he said, “0 blessed God, if it be  
thy holy will, may my exit be like his!” How striking  
is this fact when looked at in connection with the cir-  
cumstances of his own removal from earth.

Intent on the advancement of his orphan-house in  
Georgia, Whitefield soon went to London, passing on  
his way through Oxford. At both places he found  
opposition, and in London was shut out of the churches.  
He preached to thousands in Islington churchyard,  
and now resolved to give himself to the work in the  
open air.

From the conflict with the enemies who a few

years before had threatened her existence, the po-  
lemics of the church of England now turned to resist  
the unwelcome ally who menaced her repose. Bishop  
Warburton led the van, and behind him many a mitred  
front scowled on the audacious innovator. Divested  
of the logomachies which chiefly engaged the attention  
of the disputants, the controversy between Whitefield  
and the bishops lay in a narrow compass. It being  
mutually conceded that the virtues of the Christian  
life can result only from certain divine impulses, and  
that to lay a claim to this holy inspiration when its  
legitimate fruits are wanting, is a fatal delusion, he  
maintained, and they denied, that the person who is  
the subject of this sacred influence has within his own  
bosom an independent attestation of its reality. So  
abstruse a debate required the zest of some more pun-  
gent ingredients, and the polemics with whom White-  
field had to do were not such sciolists in their calling  
as to be ignorant of the necessity of riveting upon  
him some epithet at once opprobrious and vague.  
While therefore milder spirits arraigned him as an  
enthusiast, Warburton, with constitutional energy of  
invective, denounced him as a fanatic. In vain White-  
field demanded a definition of these reproachful terms.  
To have fixed their meaning would have been to blunt  
their edge. They afforded a solution, at once com-  
pendious, obscure, and repulsive, of whatever was re-  
markable in his character, and have been associated  
with his name from that time to the present.

The spots on which Whitefield now began, in his  
own language, “to take the field,” and publicly to  
erect the standard of the Redeemer’s cross, are well

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82 GEORGE WHITEFIELD  
  
known. Moorfields, then a place of general rendezvous  
and recreation from the crowded city, Kennington  
Common then about two, and Blackheath about five  
miles from London, were the favorite sites to which  
he loved to resort, and “open his mouth boldly” to  
listening thousands, in honor of his crucified and  
glorified Lord. Recording his first engagement of  
this kind in his diary of Sabbath evening, April 29,  
1739, he writes, “ Begun to be yet more vile this day,  
for I preached at Moorfields to an exceeding great  
multitude; and at five in the evening went and preach-  
ed at Kennington Common, where upwards of twenty  
thousand were supposed to be present. The wind  
being for me, it carried my voice to the extreme part  
of my audience. All stood attentive, and joined in  
the psalm and the Lord’s prayer so regularly, that I  
scarce ever preached with more quietness in a church.  
Many were much affected.

“‘For this let men revile my name,

I’ll shun no cross, I’ll fear no shame;

All hail, reproach, and welcome pain,

Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain.’ ”

For several successive months, the places we have  
named were his chief scenes of action. At a moder-  
ate computation, the audience frequently consisted of  
twenty thousand. It is said that the singing could  
be heard two miles, and the voice of the preacher  
nearly one. Sometimes there were upwards of a hun-  
dred coaches, besides wagons, scaffolds, and other  
contrivances by which a sight of him could be ob-  
tained. The rising ground on Blackheath, from which  
Whitefield preached, is still known as “Whitefield’s

PREACHING IN LONDON 83  
  
mount,” and after his death, Lord Dartmouth planted  
it with fir-trees. It will ever be a grateful recollec-  
tion to the author of this volume, that during the  
summer of 1839 he prevailed on some of the most em-  
inent ministers of England to preach on every succes-  
sive Monday evening on this hallowed spot; and that  
here many thousands then heard the way of salvation,  
and not a few were brought to the cross of Christ.  
In that immediate neighborhood too, now densely  
populated, he organized, and for some years preached  
to a Christian church. Memorable times! Many  
were the manifestations of the Redeemer’s favor.

An anecdote which we heard many years ago from  
one of Whitefield’s Blackheath hearers, may here be  
related. While one day preaching on “the heath,”  
there passed along the road at some distance, an old  
man and “Mary” his wife, with their ass and his  
loaded panniers, returning from London to their home  
in Kent. Attracted alike by the crowd and the  
preacher’s voice, the old man and his wife turned a  
little out of their way to hear “what the man was  
talking about.” Whitefield spoke of somewhat which  
occurred eighteen hundred years ago, and the old  
man said, “Mary, come along, it is only something  
which happened a long while ago but Mary’s atten-  
tion had been arrested, and she wished to stay a min-  
ute or two longer. They were both soon in tears,  
and the inquiry was excited in their hearts, “What  
shall we do to be saved?” On their way home, while  
“talking of all these things,” the old man recollected  
his neglected Bible, and asked, “Why, Mary, does  
not our old book at home say somewhat about these

things?” They went home, and examined the old book  
with new light. “Why, Mary,” asked the old man,  
“is this indeed our old book? why, everything in it  
seems quite new.” So true is it, that the teaching of  
the Spirit gives new discernment as to the truths of  
divine revelation.

A fact strikingly illustrating the children’s love  
to our evangelist may be here mentioned. In his  
open-air preachings, especially in and about London,  
he was usually attended by many of them, who sat  
round him, in and about the pulpit, and handed to  
him the notes of those who desired his counsels and  
prayers. These children were exposed to the missiles  
with which he was often assailed, but however terri-  
fied they might be? or even hurt, they seldom shrunk;  
“but,” says he, “on the contrary, every time I was  
struck, they turned up their little weeping eyes, and  
seemed to wish they could receive the blows for me.”

Speaking of his open-air labors, the devoted preach-  
er says, “Words cannot express the displays of divine  
grace which we saw, and heard of, and felt. Lord, not  
unto me, but unto thy name be all the glory.” On a sub-  
sequent occasion he writes, “We have had a glorious  
season, a true Easter. Jesus Christ is risen indeed.  
I have been preaching in Moorfields, and our Saviour  
carries all before us. Nothing can resist his conquer-  
ing blood. It would have delighted you to see poor  
sinners flock from the booths to see Jesus lifted up on  
the pole of the gospel.” The climax of his success  
there, is one of the most remarkable letters that ever  
came from a mortal’s pen. He records at its close,  
“We then retired to the Tabernacle, with my pockets

TABERNACLE IN LONDON 85  
  
full of notes from persons brought under concern, and  
read them amidst the praises and spiritual acclama-  
tions 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 beginning of  
the Tabernacle society. Three hundred and fifty  
awakened souls were received in one day; and I be-  
lieve the number of notes exceeded a thousand. But  
I must have done, believing you want to retire, to join  
in mutual praise with me in thanksgiving to God and  
the Lamb.”

Having thus introduced the name of the Taberna-  
cle, it is important that the reader should be acquaint-  
ed with the origin of the buildings which have borne  
that name. From the very first of what may be called  
his irregular labors, Whitefield always declared that  
he “would never be the founder of a sect.” He kept  
his word; yet two London churches remain as his  
memorial—the Tabernacle, and Tottenham Court-road  
chapel, the one in the north, and the other in the wes-  
tern part of the metropolis. The Tabernacle, which  
was first erected, was his more especial and favorite  
field of labor, and he dwelt in the house adjoining it,  
which is still the pastoral residence.

Moorfields, just without the limits of the old north  
city wall of London, was, a few years before White-  
field first knew it, a marsh, and during the greater  
part of the year, was absolutely impassable. Having  
been partially drained, a brick kiln was erected, and  
the first bricks used in London are said to have been  
manufactured there. Afterwards it was a field for

86 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
the practice of archery, when it was laid out in walks,  
and called the City Mall. Though improved in name  
and appearance, it became the rallying ground for the  
rabble of London; wrestlers, boxers, and mounte-  
banks, the idle, the dissolute, and the profane, held  
here their daily and nightly revels. It appeared, in  
fact, to be one of the strong-holds of Satan, and there-  
fore became a most tempting and important point of  
attack for the daring eloquence of Whitefield. All  
London rang one day with the announcement that  
Whitefield would preach the day following at Moor-  
fields.

This was in January, 1739. Gillies says, “The  
thing being strange and new, he found, on coming out  
of the coach, an incredible number of people assem-  
bled. Many told him that he would never come out  
of that place alive. He went in, however, between  
two friends, who by the pressure of the crowd were  
soon parted from him entirely, and obliged to leave  
him to the mercy of the rabble. But these, instead of  
hurting him, formed a lane for him, and carried him  
along to the middle of the fields, where a table had  
been placed. This, however, having been broken by  
the crowd, he mounted a wall, and preached to an  
exceeding great multitude in tones so melting, that  
his words drew tears and groans from the most aban-  
doned of his hearers. Moorfields became henceforth  
one of the principal scenes of his triumphs. Thirty  
thousand people sometimes gathered together to hear  
him, and generous contributions here poured in for  
his orphan-house at Bethesda. On one occasion  
twenty pounds—about one hundred dollars—were re-

TABERNACLE IN LONDON. 87  
  
ceived in half-pennies, more than one person was able  
to carry away, and enough to put one out of conceit  
with a specie currency.”

It was not till his fifth visit to London, in March,  
1741, that Whitefield ventured to preach in Moor-  
fields on a week-day; the day selected for this bold  
action being Good-Friday. His chief, if not his only  
friends on this occasion, he tells us, were a few  
“orthodox dissenters.” These people perceiving the  
inconvenience to which he was subjected by the  
weather, during the morning and evening services in  
Moorfields, procured the loan of a piece of ground,  
and employed a carpenter to build a large temporary  
shed, to screen the auditory from the cold and rain.  
This building Whitefield called a “ tabernacle,” as it  
was only intended to be used a few months during his  
stay in his native country, previous to his return to  
America. Providence, however, had otherwise deter-  
mined, and this proved the commencement of a per-  
manent establishment of the means of grace. A great  
spiritual awakening took place; congregations be-  
came very large, acquiring at the same time consider-  
able cohesion, and assuming a stationary character.  
This original fabric of wood was a place of large  
dimensions; and notwithstanding its rude aspect and  
temporary design, it sufficed for the accommodation of  
Whitefield and his flock, during the twelve succeeding  
years—a period the most brilliant and useful of his  
extraordinary career.

Some of Whitefield’s friends, however, did not  
approve of the original wooden structure; and an-  
ticipating or desiring the formation of a Christian

church, they called for the immediate erection of a  
substantial brick building, a point which was debated  
with a warmth approaching to violence, of which  
Whitefield makes pathetic mention seven years after-  
wards. Here then several important facts are estab-  
lished: that the original tabernacle sprang not from  
Whitefield, but from a voluntary movement among his  
adherents, composed chiefly, if not wholly, of Protes-  
tant dissenters; that the expense was borne not by  
him, but by them; that much debate and dissension  
attended the measure, proving the thoroughly free  
and popular character of the original movement; and  
that, as the edifice originated with the people alone,  
so did the institution of regular worship. It is cer-  
tain that fears existed in the mind of Whitefield as to  
the success of such an organization; but the results  
most happily disappointed his expectations.

The subject of the erection of a more spacious  
edifice in the place of the tabernacle of wood, was  
first discussed at the mansion of Lady Huntingdon, in  
Leicestershire, when Drs. Doddridge and Stonehouse,  
and the Rev. Messrs. Hervey and Whitefield happen-  
ed to meet together, in the summer of 1751. During  
the following winter, Whitefield began to make col-  
lections for the object, and on almost its first presenta-  
tion in London, nine hundred pounds, or four thou-  
sand five hundred dollars, were subscribed. “But,”  
he says, “on the principle that burned children dread  
the fire, I do not mean to begin until I get one thou-  
sand in hand, and then to contract at a certain sum  
for the whole.” The fact was, that Whitefield had  
often been in great straits for the support of his or-

TABERNACLE IN LONDON. 89  
  
phan-house in Georgia, “for I forgot,” he says, “that  
Professor Francke built in Glaucha, in a populous  
country, and that I was building at the very tail of  
the world.” In March, 1753, he wrote to Mr. Charles  
Wesley,” On Tuesday morning the first brick of our  
new Tabernacle was laid with awful solemnity. I  
preached from Exodus 20:24, ‘In all places where I  
record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will  
bless thee.’ The wall is now about a yard high. The  
building is to be eighty feet square. It is on the old  
spot. We have bought the house, and if we finish  
what we have begun, shall be rent free for forty-six  
years.” In June the dedicatory services took place,  
when the Tabernacle, though capable, with its capa-  
cious galleries, of holding four thousand people, was  
crowded almost to suffocation. Often have we seen  
this vast building crowded with worshippers, with  
delight have we occupied its pulpit, and with devout  
gratitude do we record, that never for a moment has  
the frown of heaven rested upon it. Thousands will  
ever bless God for its erection.

Not unfrequently has the question been discussed,  
to what denomination of Christians does the Taberna-  
cle really belong? In answer to this question, we give  
a legal document which may also show what is done  
in reference to houses of worship in England, under  
the laws for the maintenance of religious toleration.

“These are to certifie whom it may Concern, that  
a Certificate bearing date the Eighteenth Day of June,  
in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hun-  
dred and Sixty-four, under the Hands of Starkey  
Myddleton Minister, Robert Keen, Thomas Cox,

90 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
Samuel Grace, Robert Hodgson, James Smith, Thomas  
Robinson, Benjamin Coles, Thomas Brooks, and Samuel  
Lockhart, for appropriating and setting apart a Cer-  
tain Building for that purpose erected, situate near  
the Barking Dogs in the Parish of Saint Luke in the  
County of Middlesex, and intended for the meeting  
place of a certain Congregation of Protestant Dis-  
senters from the Church of England, calling them-  
selves Independents, was Registered in the Registry  
of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of  
Saint Paul, London, This Twenty-first Day of June in  
the year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred  
and Sixty-four.

“THOMAS COLLINS, Deputy Registrar.”

While the new Tabernacle was in the course of  
erection, Whitefield visited Norwich, where his minis-  
try was largely attended, and notwithstanding much  
opposition, was followed with considerable success.  
Writing to his friend Keen, he says, “How does God  
delight to exceed even the hopes, and to disappoint the  
fears of his weak, though honest-hearted people. In  
spite of all opposition, he hath caused us to triumph  
even in Norwich. Thousands attend twice every day,  
and hear with the greatest eagerness. I hope it will  
appear yet more and more that God hath much peo-  
ple here.” Compelled by alarming illness, the result  
of his too much preaching, he suddenly returned to  
London, from whence he thus wrote to one of the con-  
verts at Norwich: “I shall little regard the weakness  
and indisposition of my body, if I can but have the  
pleasure of hearing, if not before, yet at the great  
day, that good was done to one precious soul at Nor-

TABERNACLE IN LONDON. 91  
  
wich. Blessed be God for the seed sown there. I  
doubt not but it will be watered with the dew of his  
heavenly blessing, and bring forth a divine increase.”

Truly the gospel did triumph, not only in the erec-  
tion of the Tabernacle in that city, but in preparing  
sinners to be pillars in the temple of God, and to win  
others to his service.

Among other converts won at Norwich, was the  
afterwards popular and useful minister of Christ, the  
Rev. Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, England. When  
a young man, about eighteen, he resided in that city,  
and was engaged in the business of a barber. When  
he was walking one morning with several companions  
who had agreed that day to take their pleasure, the  
first object which attracted their attention was an old  
woman who pretended to tell fortunes. They imme-  
diately employed her to tell theirs, and that they  
might qualify her for the undertaking, first made her  
thoroughly intoxicated. Robinson was informed,  
among other things, that he would live to a very old  
age, and see his children, grandchildren, and great-  
grandchildren growing up around him. Though he  
had assisted in intoxicating the old woman, he had  
credulity enough to be struck with those parts of the  
prediction which related to himself. “And so,” said  
he when alone, “I am to see children, grandchildren,  
and great-grandchildren. At that age I must be a  
burden to the young people. What shall I do? There  
is no way for an old man to render himself more  
agreeable to youth, than by sitting and telling them  
pleasant and profitable stories. I will then,” thought  
he, “during my youth, endeavor to store my mind

with all kinds of knowledge. I will see and hear,  
and note down everything that is rare and wonder-  
ful, that I may sit, when incapable of other employ-  
ments, and entertain my descendants. Thus shall my  
company be rendered pleasant, and I shall be respect-  
ed, rather than neglected, in old age. Let me see,  
what can I acquire first? Oh, here is the famous  
Methodist preacher, Whitefield; he is to preach here,  
they say, to-night; I will go and hear him.”

From these strange motives, as he told the cele-  
brated Rev. Andrew Fuller, he went to hear White-  
field preach. That evening his text was, “But when  
he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to  
his baptism, he said unto them, 0 generation of vipers,  
who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”  
Matt. 3 :7. “Mr. Whitefield,” said Robinson, “de-

scribed the Sadducees’ character; this did not touch  
me; I thought myself as good a Christian as any man  
in England. From this he went to that of the Phari-  
sees. He described their exterior decency, but ob-  
served, that the poison of the viper rankled in their  
hearts. This rather shook me. At length, in the  
course of his sermon, he abruptly broke off; paused  
for a few moments; then burst into a flood of tears,  
lifted up his hands and eyes, and exclaimed, ‘Oh, my  
hearers, the wrath’s to come! the wrath's to come!”  
These words sunk into my heart like lead in the  
water; I wept, and when the sermon was ended re-  
tired alone. For days and weeks I could think of  
little else. Those awful words would follow me wher-  
ever I went: “The wrath’s to come! The wrath’s to  
come!”

TOTTENHAM COURT-ROAD CHAPEL. 93

Scarcely had Whitefield completed the Tabernacle  
in London, before he was earnestly solicited to hold  
public services at the west end of the city, and Long-  
Acre chapel, then under the charge of a dissenter, was  
offered for his use. An unruly rabble endeavored to  
drive the preacher from his post; but a running fire  
of brickbats, broken glass, bells, drums, and clappers,  
neither annoyed nor frightened the intrepid evange-  
list; nor did an interference on the part of the hierar-  
chy, which followed soon after, prohibiting his preach-  
ing in an incorporated chapel. “I hope you will not  
look on it as contumacy,” said Whitefield to the bish-  
op, “if I persist in prosecuting my design until I am  
more particularly apprized wherein I have erred. I  
trust the irregularity I am charged with will appear  
justifiable to every lover of English liberty, and what  
is all to me, be approved at the awful and impartial  
tribunal of the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls.”  
Writing to Lady Huntingdon, he says, “My greatest  
distress is so to act as to avoid rashness on the one  
hand and timidity on the other;” and this shows, what  
indeed was proved in his whole life, an entire absence  
of that malignant element of fanaticism which courts  
opposition and revels in it.

“Determined,” as Mrs. Knight says, in her beauti-  
ful volume, “Lady Huntingdon and her Friends,” “not  
to be beaten from his ground, yet hoping to escape  
some of its annoyances, Whitefield resolved to build  
a chapel of his own. Hence arose Tottenham Court-  
road chapel, which went by the name of ‘Whitefield’s  
soul-trap.’” Admirably does he say, “I pray the  
Friend of sinners to make it a soul-trap indeed to

94 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
many wandering creatures. My constant work is  
preaching fifteen times a week. Conviction and con-  
version go on here, for God hath met us in our new  
building.” It was completed and dedicated in No-  
vember, 1756. Though not equal in its triumphs to  
the Tabernacle, the congregation has always been  
large, and its preachers—always the same as those  
at the Tabernacle—have not labored in vain. In  
1829, ’30, improvements were made in the building,  
which still, however, contains Whitefield's pulpit. A  
vast area in the centre was originally filled with plain  
seats, where the masses of the people were accommo-  
dated free of all pew rent.

Let not infidels tell us, that the religion of these  
men and of those times was mere enthusiasm, and that  
the temporal interests of men were neglected in pro-  
fessions of high regard for those of a spiritual charac-  
ter. Let such men know that within two years of the  
opening of Tottenham Court-road chapel, not only  
did the congregation build a parsonage-house for their  
minister, but twelve almshouses for as many poor wid-  
ows. The Tabernacle has always acted with equal  
generosity. In proportion to their means, few con-  
gregations in the world have exceeded these two in  
works of benevolence.

Assuredly what has sometimes been charged on  
evangelical ministers—that they attend to the spirit-  
ual interests of mankind, but neglect their temporal  
sufferings—would never apply to Mr. Whitefield. No  
sooner had he completed these large edifices, where  
vast congregations assembled, than he was heard fre-  
quently to plead for those laboring under oppression

or distress in foreign lands. He preached in both  
these houses in behalf of the poor French Protestants  
in Prussia, who had suffered much from the cruelty  
of the Russians, when great numbers of the nobility,  
and some of the highest officers of the crown went to  
hear him. The collections for this object amounted  
to upwards of fifteen hundred pounds, or seven thou-  
sand five hundred dollars; and for this disinterested  
act of benevolence Whitefield received the thanks of  
his Prussian Majesty.

Again, on the day recommended by the govern-  
ment for a general fast, Mr. Whitefield preached both  
at the Tabernacle and at Tottenham Court-road chap-  
el, after which he collected five hundred and sixty  
pounds for the relief of the German Protestants, and  
the sufferers by fire at Boston, for which he received  
the unanimous thanks of the inhabitants of that town.  
Lady Huntingdon wrote to one of her friends, “It  
would delight you to have seen what crowds of the  
mighty and noble flocked to hear him. The collection  
was for the relief of the poor German Protestants. I  
invited several to come who probably would not at-  
tend his ministry on other occasions.” Few places at  
that time could boast of such a constellation of trans-  
cendent genius and senatorial talent, such a brilliant  
assemblage of wisdom, magnanimity, and oratorical  
powers, as were then found within these houses of the  
living God.

One word may be allowed here on the plain archi-  
tecture of these buildings. “We are,” says the excel-  
lent Mr. James, “in many things improved, and I  
rejoice in the improvement; but the occasion of my

96 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
joy is at the same time the occasion of my fear and  
my jealousy also. Our ecclesiastical architecture is  
just now a special object of our attention. White-  
field, it may be confessed, paid too little attention to  
this; we, perhaps, are paying too much. His only  
solicitude was to save souls, careless altogether of the  
tastefulness of the building within which that work,  
which has no relation to styles of architecture, was  
carried on. His only calculation in the construction  
of a building was, how many immortal souls could be  
crowded within four square walls, and under a roof,  
to hear ‘the joyful sound.’ Hence the somewhat un-  
couth buildings which he erected. Ah, but when I  
consider that every stone in those unsightly walls has  
echoed to the sound of salvation and the hymns of  
redeemed spirits, and that almost every spot on the  
floor has been moistened by the tears of penitence,  
then, in a feeling of sanctity I seem to lose the sense  
of deformity, and there comes over me an awe and  
solemnity which no modern gothic structure with its  
lofty arches and painted windows can inspire. But  
still, as religion is not only the most holy, but the  
most beautiful thing in God’s universe, there is no  
reason why taste and devotion should not be united.  
It is the ministry of the word, however, upon which  
the church must be chiefly intent.”

SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA. 97

CHAPTER IV.

**WHITEFIELD’S SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA.**

**1739, 1740.**

As in the preceding chapter, for the sake of con-  
necting the history of Whitefield’s church edifices in  
London, we have anticipated the order of events, we  
go back to the period, shortly before his second voyage  
to America.

About the time of which we are now writing, a  
circumstance occurred of deep interest, which White-  
field relates at considerable length. Joseph Periam,  
a young man in London, who had read his sermon on  
“regeneration,” became deeply impressed by it; he  
sold all that he possessed, and prayed so loud and  
fasted so long, that his family supposed him deranged,  
and sent him to the Bedlam madhouse, where he was  
treated as “methodistically mad,” and as “one of  
Whitefield’s gang.” The keepers threw him down,  
and forced a key into his mouth, while they drenched  
him with medicine. He was then placed in a cold  
room without windows, and with a damp cellar under  
it. Periam, however, found some means of conveying  
a letter to Whitefield, requesting both advice and a  
visit. These were promptly given. The preacher  
soon discovered that Periam was not mad; and tak-  
ing a Mr. Seward and some other friends with him,  
he went before the committee of the hospital to ex-  
plain the case. It must have been somewhat of a

Whitefield.

98 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

ludicrous scene. Seward so astounded the committee  
by quoting Scripture, that they pronounced him to be  
as mad as Periam. The doctors frankly told the dep-  
utation, that in their opinion, Whitefield and his fol-  
lowers were “really beside themselves.” It was how-  
ever agreed, that if Whitefield would take Periam out  
to Georgia, his release would be granted. Thus the  
conference ended, and the young man went out as a  
schoolmaster at the Orphan-house. There he was ex-  
emplary and useful, and when he died two of his sons  
were received into the institution.

Mr. Whitefield so successfully pleaded the cause  
of his American orphans, that during his journeys of  
twelve months he collected upwards of one thousand  
pounds towards the erection of his intended house for  
their accommodation. With this sum in his posses-  
sion, he set sail for America the second time, August  
14, 1739, accompanied by his friend Mr. Seward, eight  
men, one boy, and two children.

While all this was going on, the inhabitants of  
Georgia were making every possible preparation for  
his reception. The records of the trustees say, May  
16, 1739, “Read a commission to the Rev. George  
Whitefield to perform all religious and ecclesiastical  
offices at Savannah, in Georgia.” Again: “June 2,  
1739. Sealed a grant of five hundred acres of land  
to the Rev. George Whitefield, in trust for the use of  
the house to be erected and maintained for the receiv-  
ing such children as now are, and shall hereafter be  
left orphans in the colony of Georgia, in pursuance of  
the direction of the Common Council held the 30th of  
last month.”

Not only was Whitefield anxious to establish the  
orphan-house for the benefit of the whole colony of  
Georgia, but having been ordained priest, for the pur-  
pose of instructing the inhabitants of the town of Sa-  
vannah, he was desirous of making full proof of his  
ministry among them. After a passage of nine weeks  
he landed at Philadelphia, and was immediately in-  
vited to preach in the churches; to which people of  
all denominations thronged as in England. He was  
especially pleased to find that they preferred sermons  
when “not delivered within the church walls.” And  
it was well they did, for his fame had arrived in the  
city before him, and crowds were collected to hear  
him which no church could contain.

A letter written on this voyage to America has  
recently come to light, which beautifully illustrates  
the spirit by which Whitefield was now animated. It  
was addressed to the Rev. John Gumming of Andover,  
Hampshire, England.  
  
 “Wrote at Sea, dated at Philadelphia, Nov. 9, 1739.  
 “Reverend and dear Sir—You see by my writing  
this how willing I am to cultivate a correspondence  
with you. I wish Christians in general, and ministers  
of Christ in particular, were better acquainted. The  
cause of Christ thereby must be necessarily promoted.  
But bigotry and sectarian zeal have been the bane of  
our holy religion. Though we have one Lord, one  
faith, and one baptism, yet if we do not all worship  
God in one particular way, we behave to each other  
like Jews and Samaritans. Dear sir, I hope that nei-  
ther of us have so learned Christ. Blessed be God

for his free grace in Christ. The partition wall has for  
some time been broken down out of my heart, and I  
can truly say, whosoever loves the Lord Jesus, £ the  
same is my brother, and sister, and mother/ For this  
reason, dear sir, I love you. For this reason, though  
I decrease, yet I heartily wish you may increase, even  
with all the increase of God. I am persuaded you  
are like-minded. I believe my friends have prayed  
for me. The Lord hath dealt most lovingly with me  
his servant. He has chastened and corrected, but hath  
not given me over into the hands of the enemy. A  
future journal will acquaint you with particulars.  
What I have sent over to be published will afford you  
abundant matter for thanksgiving in behalf of,

“Dear sir, your affectionate friend,

“ Brother, and servant,

“ G. WHITEFIELD.”

The old court-house of Philadelphia, then stand-  
ing on Second and Market streets, had a balcony,  
which several years before the visit of Whitefield had  
been often used instead of a pulpit. In 1736, we find  
that Mr. Abel Noble had preached “from the court-  
house steps,” on a Monday, to a large congregation  
standing in Market-street, on the subject of keeping  
the Sabbath. In the same year, Michael Welfare ap-  
peared there to give his “warning voice,” and now, in  
1739, it became one of the favorite preaching stands  
of the great evangelist. Here he stood, surrounded  
by many thousands, even down to the side of the Del-  
aware river, not a few bathed in tears, and inquiring  
after the way of salvation.



OLD COURT-HOUSE, PHILADELPHIA.

TENNENT CHURCH, FREEHOLD, N. J. p. 117.

Hosted by

Dr. Franklin says, “The multitudes of all sects  
and denominations that attended his sermons were  
enormous; and it was a matter of speculation with  
me to observe the influence of his oratory on his hear-  
ers, and how much they admired and respected him,  
notwithstanding his common abuse of them, by assur-  
ing them that they were, naturally, half beasts and  
half devils. It was wonderful to see the change soon  
made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being  
thoughtless and indifferent about religion, it seemed  
as if all the world was growing religious; so that one  
could not walk through the town in an evening with-  
out hearing psalms sung in different families in every  
street.”

A constant attendant on his ministry at this time  
says, “His hearers were never weary; every eye was  
fixed on his expressive countenance; every ear was  
charmed with his melodious voice; every heart cap-  
tivated with the beauty and propriety of his address.  
He was no contracted bigot; all denominations par-  
took of his religious charity. Anxious in America  
for our civil privileges, he was alike solicitous for the  
spiritual and temporal happiness of mankind. No  
man since the apostolic age preached oftener or with  
better success. He was, moreover, a polite gentle-  
man, a faithful friend, an engaging companion, and a  
sincere Christian. His sermons in the open air lasted  
about one and a half hours.”

Watson, in his “Annals of Philadelphia,” speaking  
of Whitefield’s first visit to that city, tells us that he  
preached to a crowd of fifteen thousand persons on  
Society hill, and adds, “About the same time he so

far succeeded to repress the usual public amusements,  
that the dancing-school was discontinued, and the  
ball and concert rooms were shut up, as inconsistent  
with the requisitions of the gospel. No less than  
fourteen sermons were preached on Society hill in the  
open air in one week, during the session of the Pres-  
byterian church; and the gazette of the day, in no-  
ticing the fact, says, ‘The change to religion here is  
altogether surprising, through the influence of White-  
field; no books sell but religious, and such is the  
general conversation.’”

It is said, that though some gentlemen broke open  
the assembly-rooms, no company could be induced to  
visit them. Such was the popularity of Whitefield,  
that when he left the city, about one hundred and  
fifty gentlemen accompanied him as far as Chester,  
fifteen miles from Philadelphia, where he preached to  
about seven thousand people. At White Clay creek,  
he preached to eight thousand people, three thousand  
of whom, it is said, were on horseback. Many com-  
plimentary effusions to him appeared in the newspa-  
pers, and James Pemberton, a very distinguished  
Friend, said of him, “In his conversation he is very  
agreeable, and has not much of the priest; he frequents  
no set company.”

An old gentleman assured Watson, the annalist,  
that on one occasion the words, “And he taught them,  
saying,” as pronounced by Whitefield on Society hill,  
were heard at Gloucester point, a distance by water  
of two miles.

Abundant reasons might be assigned for our in-  
troducing in this place an account of the institution

called “the Log college.” It has proved the parent  
of every collegiate and theological institution con-  
nected with the large and wealthy body of Presbyte-  
rians in this country it was originated by a family  
which became especially endeared to Mr. Whitefield;  
and from his journal, recording his visit to it, we  
have, in some respects at least, the clearest state-  
ment of facts concerning it which history has pre-  
served.

As we have already shown, about one hundred and  
forty years ago, the state of religion, both in Europe  
and America, was very low. Nor was the condition of  
the Presbyterian body an exception. As the late Dr.  
Alexander, in his interesting volume, called “The Log  
College,” says, “The ministers composing the Pres-  
byterian church in this country were sound in the  
faith, and strongly attached to the Westminster con-  
fession of faith and catechisms, as were also their peo-  
ple; and there were no diversities or contentions  
among them respecting the doctrines of the gospel;  
but as to the vital power of godliness, there is reason  
to believe that it was little known or spoken of.  
Revivals of religion were nowhere heard of, and an  
orthodox creed, and a decent external conduct were  
the only points on which inquiry was made, when per-  
sons were admitted to the communion of the church.  
Indeed, it was very much a matter of course, for all  
who had been baptized in infancy, to be received into  
communion at the proper age, without exhibiting or  
possessing any satisfactory evidence of a change of  
heart by the supernatural operations of the Holy  
Spirit. And the habit of their preachers was to ad-

dress their people as though they were all pious, and  
only needed instruction and confirmation.”

Such was the lamentable state of things when the  
Rev. William Tennent, sen., an Irish clergyman past  
the middle stage of life arrived in this country, about  
the year 1716. After laboring for a season in the  
state of New York, till about 1721, he received an  
invitation to settle at Bensalem, where he ministered  
to the small Presbyterian congregation till 1726, when  
he was called to Neshaminy, in the same county, where  
he labored for the rest of his life, living till 1746,  
when he died, aged seventy-three. In Neshaminy the  
good man felt that he was called not only to discharge  
the duties of a preacher and pastor, but to look over  
the whole country, and to devise means for the exten-  
sion of the cause of Christ. He had himself four  
sons, the subjects of divine grace, and blessed with  
talents for usefulness in the kingdom of the Redeemer,  
and he felt that when other young men rose up in the  
church, favored with ministerial talents, they also  
would need mental cultivation. Hence his determi-  
nation to erect the humble building of which we now  
write, which was the first Presbyterian literary and  
theological institution in this country, the immediate  
parent of the college at Princeton, and from which,  
indeed, all similar institutions emanated.

The site of the Log college is about a mile from  
Neshaminy creek, where the Presbyterian church has  
long stood. The ground near and around it lies hand-  
somely to the eye, and the more distant prospect is  
very beautiful for while there is a considerable ex-  
tent of fertile, well-cultivated land, nearly level, the

view is bounded to the north and west by a range of  
hills, which have a very pleasing appearance. Mr.  
Whitefield has left in his “Journal,’ the only descrip-  
tion we have of the building. “ The place,” says he,  
“wherein the young men study now, is in contempt  
called ‘the college.’ It is a log-house about twenty  
feet long, and nearly as many broad; and to me it  
seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets,  
for their habitations were mean. That they sought  
not great things for themselves is plain from these  
passages of Scripture, wherein we are told that each  
of them took a beam to build them a house; and  
that at the feast of the sons of the prophets, one of  
them put on the pot, while the others went to fetch  
some herbs out of the field. All that we can say of  
most of our universities is, they are glorious without.  
From this despised place, seven or eight worthy minis-  
ters of Jesus have lately been sent forth; more are  
almost ready to be sent, and the foundation is now  
laying for the instruction of many others.”

Of the senior Tennent, the founder of the Log col-  
lege, little more is known than what we have already  
given. He was a member of the synod of Philadel-  
phia, who were satisfied with his reasons for leaving  
the Established church of Ireland, and for several  
years this body cordially cooperated with him in his  
zealous labors. Their unity of feeling, however, seems  
to have declined. This we learn from a passage in  
Whitefield’s “Journal,” which also gives us a beauti-  
ful view of the good old man. “At my return home,  
was much comforted by the coming of one Mr. Ten-  
nent, an old gray-headed disciple and soldier of Jesus

**5\***

Christ. He keeps an academy about twenty miles  
from Philadelphia, and has been blest with four gra-  
cious sons, three of which have been, and still con-  
tinue to be eminently useful in the church of Christ.  
He brought three pious souls along with him, and  
rejoiced me by letting me know how they had been  
evil spoken of for their Master's sake. He is a great  
friend of Mr. Erskine, of Scotland; and as far as I  
can learn, both he and his sons are secretly despised  
by the generality of the synod, as Mr. Erskine and  
his friends are hated by the judicatories of Edinburgh,  
and as the Methodist preachers, as they are called,  
are by their brethren in England."

Not long after this, the Log college was visited by  
Whitefield, who wrote the account we have already  
given. He also says, under the date of Nov. 29,1739,  
“Set out for Neshaminy, twenty miles distant from  
Trent Town, where old Mr. Tennent lives, and keeps  
an academy, and where I was to preach to-day, accord-  
ing to appointment. About twelve o'clock, we came  
thither, and found about three thousand people gath-  
ered together in the meeting-house yard. Mr. Will-  
iam Tennent, junior, an eminent servant of Jesus  
Christ, because we stayed beyond the time appointed,  
was preaching to them. When I came up, he soon  
stopped sung a psalm, and then I began to speak as the  
Lord gave me utterance. At first, the people seemed  
unaffected, but in the midst of my discourse, the power  
of the Lord Jesus came upon me, and I felt such a  
struggling within myself for the people as I scarce  
ever felt before. The hearers began to be melted  
down immediately, and to cry much; and we had

good reason to hope the Lord intended good for many.  
After I had finished, Mr. Gilbert Tennent gave a word  
of exhortation, to confirm what had been delivered.  
At the end of his discourse, we sung a psalm, and dis-  
missed the people with a blessing; 0 that the people  
may say Amen to it. After our exercises were over,  
we went to old Mr. Tennent’s, who entertained us  
like one of the ancient patriarchs. His wife, to me  
seemed like Elizabeth, and he like Zachary; both, as  
far as I can learn, walk in the commandments and  
ordinances of the Lord blameless. Though God was  
pleased to humble my soul, so that I was obliged  
to retire for a while, yet we had sweet communion  
with each other, and spent the evening in concerting  
what measures had best be taken for promoting  
our dear Lord’s kingdom. It happened very provi-  
dentially that Mr. Tennent and his brethren are ap-  
pointed to be a presbytery by the synod, so that  
they intend bringing up gracious youths, and send-  
ing them out from time to time into the Lord’s vine-  
yard.”

We may be permitted to add here, that among the  
ministers sent out by Mr. Tennent, from the Log col-  
lege, to preach the gospel, were his four sons, Gilbert,  
William, John, and Charles, the Rev. Messrs. Samuel  
Blair, John Blair, Charles Beatty, and Rev. Dr. Samuel  
J. Finley, President of Princeton College; of some of  
these excellent men the reader will hear again in the  
course of this volume.

In reference to his first visit to Philadelphia,  
Whitefield thus writes: “I have scarcely preached  
among them, but I have seen a stirring among the

dry bones. Go where I will, I find people with great  
gladness receive me into their houses. Sometimes I  
think I am speaking to stocks and stones; but before  
I have done, the power of the Lord comes over them,  
and I find I have been ploughing up some fallow  
ground, in a place where there has been a great fam-  
ine of the word of God. But as God’s word increases,  
so will the rage and opposition of the devil. Scoffers  
seem to be at a stand what to say. They mutter in  
coffee-houses, give a curse, drink a barrel of punch,  
and then cry out against me for not preaching more  
morality. Poor men, if God judges them, as he cer-  
tainly will do, by their morality, out of their own  
mouths will he condemn them. Their morality, falsely  
so called, will prove their damnation. God has en-  
larged my heart to pray. Tears trickle down my  
face, and I am in great agony; but the Lord is pleased  
to set his seal to what he enables me to deliver.  
Amid cries and groans in the congregation, God gives  
me much freedom of speech. Many people and many  
ministers weep. My own soul is much carried out.  
I preached to a vast assembly of sinners; nearly  
twelve thousand were collected; and I had not spoken  
long, before I perceived numbers melting; as I pro-  
ceeded, the power increased, and thousands cried out;  
never before did I see so glorious a sight. Oh, what  
strong crying and tears were poured forth after the  
dear Lord Jesus! Some fainted; and when they had  
gotten a little strength, they would hear and faint  
again. Never was my soul filled with greater power.  
Oh, what thoughts and words did God put into my  
heart. As great, if not greater commotion was in

the hearts of the people. Look where I would, most  
were drowned in tears.”

An aged man who was living in 1806, and who  
well remembered the scenes he witnessed, bore testi-  
mony that after this visit of the great eyangelist, pub-  
lic worship was regularly celebrated in Philadelphia  
twice a day for a whole year; and that on the Lord’s  
day it was celebrated three, and frequently four times  
in each church. He said there were not less than  
twenty-six societies regularly held for prayer and  
Christian conference.

Such was the influence of Whitefield, not only in  
Philadelphia, but throughout the colony of Pennsyl-  
vania, that in the city attention to commerce was  
suspended, and in the country the cultivation of the  
land for the time being was abandoned, that people  
might hear him proclaim the gospel of the Lord  
Jesus.

Among other very striking conversions in Phila-  
delphia at this period, was that of a young lady, who  
had for several years made a public profession of  
Christianity, but who now became fully convinced  
that “she was totally unacquainted with vital piety.”  
When Mr. Whitefield began his labors in that city,  
she was greatly affected by his preaching, on which  
she constantly attended, and often afterwards told  
her friends, that after the first sermon she heard  
him preach, she was ready to say with the woman of  
Samaria, “Come see a man who told me all things  
that ever I did.” The preacher, she said, so exactly  
described all the secret workings of her heart, her  
wishes, and her actions, that she really believed he

110 George Whitfield

was either more than human, or else that he was su-  
pernaturally assisted to know her heart. She was  
not then aware that all depraved hearts are much  
alike, and that he who in lively colors can paint one,  
gives a description which will he recognized by many  
as their own. This young lady once walked twenty  
miles to hear a sermon from Whitefield; she became  
a most eminent Christian, and was one of the constit-  
uent members of the church organized by Mr. Ten-  
nent. She married Mr. Hugh Hodge, who was also  
one of the seals of Mr. Whitefield’s ministry, and a  
deacon of the church, and for more than sixty years  
she eminently “adorned the gospel of God in all  
things.”

During this first visit of Mr. Whitefield to Phila-  
delphia, another interesting circumstance occurred.  
Whitefield preached one evening standing on the  
steps of the court-house, in Market-street, which be-  
came, as we have said, his favorite spot during that  
and subsequent visits. A youth some thirteen years  
of age stood near him, and held a lantern for his ac-  
commodation; but becoming deeply absorbed in the  
sermon, and strongly agitated, the lantern fell from  
his hands, and was dashed in pieces. Those near the  
boy, observing the cause of the accident, felt specially  
interested, and for a few moments the meeting was  
discomposed by the occurrence. Some fourteen years  
afterwards, Mr. Whitefield, on his fifth visit to this  
country, was visiting St. George’s, in Delaware. He  
was one day riding out with the Rev. Dr. John Rodg-  
ers, then settled as the minister at St. George’s, in  
the closed carriage in which Whitefield generally

rode. Mr. Rodgers asked him whether he recollected  
the occurrence of the little boy who was so affected  
with his preaching as to let his lantern fall. Mr.  
Whitefield replied, “ 0 yes, I remember it well; and  
have often thought I would give almost anything in  
my power, to know who that little boy was, and what  
had become of him.” Mr. Rodgers replied with a  
smile, “I am that little boy.” Mr. Whitefield, with  
tears of joy, started from his seat, took him in his  
arms, and with strong emotion remarked, that he was  
the fourteenth person then in the ministry whom he  
had discovered in the course of that visit to America,  
in whose conversion he had, under God, been instru-  
mental.

From Philadelphia, Whitefield was invited by Mr.  
Noble to New York; this gentleman being the only  
person with whom he then had an acquaintance in  
that city. Upon his arrival, he waited with his  
friend on the commissary, but he refused to White-  
field the use of the church. This commissary of the  
bishop, he says, “was full of anger and resentment,  
and denied me the use of his pulpit before I asked for  
it. He said they did not want my assistance. I re-  
plied, that if they preached the gospel, I wished them  
good luck: I will preach in the fields; for all places  
are alike to me.” The undaunted evangelist there-  
fore preached in the fields; and on the evening of the  
same day, to a very thronged and attentive audience,  
in the Rev. Mr. Pemberton’s meeting-house, in Wall-  
street; and continued to do so twice or three times  
a day, with apparent success.

Of this visit to New York, and of Whitefield’s

labors there, we have a graphic account, furnished by  
one of his hearers, for “Prince’s Christian History.”  
Of the first sermon in the fields, the writer says, “I  
fear curiosity was the motive that led me and many  
others into that assembly. I had read two or three  
of Mr. Whitefield’s sermons and part of his Journal,  
and from them had obtained a settled opinion, that he  
was a good man. Thus far was I prejudiced in his  
favor. But then having heard of so much opposition,  
and many clamors against him, I thought it possible  
he might have carried matters too far; that some en-  
thusiasm might have mixed itself with his piety, and  
that his zeal might have exceeded his knowledge.  
With these prepossessions I went into the fields.  
When I came there, I saw a great number of people,  
consisting of Christians of all denominations, some  
Jews, and a few, I believe, of no religion at all.  
When Mr. Whitefield came to the place designated,  
which was a little eminence on the side of a hill, he  
stood still and beckoned with his hand, and disposed  
the multitude upon the descent, before, and on each  
side of him. He then prayed most excellently, in the  
same manner, I suppose, that the first ministers of the  
Christian church prayed. The assembly soon appear-  
ed to be divided into two companies, the one of which  
I considered as God’s church, and the other the devil’s  
chapel. The first were collected round the minister,  
and were very serious and attentive; the last had  
placed themselves in the skirts of the assembly, and  
spent most of their time in giggling, scoffing, talking,  
and laughing. I believe the minister saw them, for  
in his sermon, remarking on the cowardice and shame-

facedness in Christ's cause, he pointed towards this  
assembly, and reproached the former, those who  
seemed to be Christians, with the boldness and zeal  
with which the devil's vassals serve him. Towards  
the last prayer the whole assembly appeared more  
united, and all became hushed and still; a solemn  
awe and reverence appeared in the faces of most, a  
mighty energy attending the word. I heard and felt  
something astonishing and surprising, but I confess I  
was not at that time fully rid of my scruples. But as  
I thought I saw a visible presence of God with Mr.  
Whitefield, I kept my doubts to myself.

“Under this frame of mind, I went to hear him in  
the evening at the Presbyterian church, where he ex-  
pounded to above two thousand people within and  
without doors. I never in my life saw so attentive  
an audience. All he said was demonstration, life, and  
power. The people's eyes and ears hung on his lips.  
They greedily devoured every word. I came home  
astonished. Every scruple vanished; I never saw  
nor heard the like; and I said within myself, ‘Surely  
God is with this man, of a truth.' He preached and  
expounded in this manner twice every day for four  
days, and his evening assemblies were continually  
increasing.

“On Sunday morning at eight o'clock, his congre-  
gation consisted of about fifteen hundred people; but  
at night several thousands came together to hear him;  
and the place being too strait for them, many were  
forced to go away, and some, it is said, with tears  
lamented their disappointment. After sermon he left  
New York at ten at night, to fulfil a promise that he

had made to preach at Elizabethtown, at eleven a. m.  
the next day.”

We give a few paragraphs from the same vigorous  
pen, relating to the personal manners and the doc-  
trines of our evangelist. “He is a man of a middle  
stature, of a slender body, of a fair complexion, and  
of a comely appearance. He is of a sprightly, cheer-  
ful temper, and acts and moves with great agility and  
life. The endowments of his mind are very uncom-  
mon; his wit is quick and piercing; his imagination  
lively and florid; and as far as I can discern, both  
are under the direction of an exact and solid judg-  
ment. He has a most ready memory, and I think  
speaks entirely without notes. He has a clear and  
musical voice, and a wonderful command of it. He  
uses much gesture, but with great propriety. Every  
accent of his voice, every motion of his body speaks,  
and both are natural and unaffected. If his delivery  
is the product of art, it is certainly the perfection of  
it, for it is entirely concealed. He has a great mas-  
tery of words, but studies much plainness of speech.

“His doctrine is right sterling. I mean, perfectly  
agreeable to the Articles of the church of England, to  
which he frequently appeals for the truth of it. He  
loudly proclaims all men by nature to be under sin, and  
obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God. He maintains  
the absolute necessity of supernatural grace to bring  
men out of this state. He asserts the righteousness  
of Christ to be the only cause of the justification of  
the sinner; that this is received by faith; that this  
faith is the gift of God; that where faith is wrought,  
it brings the sinner under the deepest sense of his

guilt and unworthiness to the footstool of sovereign  
grace, to accept of mercy as the free gift of God, only  
for Christ’s sake. He denies that good works have  
any share in our justification: that indeed they do  
justify our faith, and necessarily flow from it, as  
streams from the fountain; but Christ’s external  
righteousness imputed to us, and his inherent right-  
eousness wrought in us, is the only cause of man’s sal-  
vation. He asserts the absolute necessity of the new  
birth, where a principle of new life is ingenerated in  
the heart of man, and an entire change is produced in  
the temper and disposition of the soul; and that this  
new production is the work only of God’s blessed  
Spirit. That wherever this change is wrought, it is  
permanent and abiding, and that the gates of hell  
shall never prevail against it. He asserts that the  
special influence and indwelling of the Spirit, was not  
peculiar to the first Christians, but that it is the com-  
mon privilege of believers in all ages of the church;  
that the Holy Spirit is the author of the sanctification  
and comfort of all God’s people; and that, even in  
these days, if any man have not the spirit of Christ,  
he is none of his. He said, that to many of his hear-  
ers, he feared he spoke in an unknown tongue; that  
he preached great mysteries; that true Christians  
knew what he meant, and that all his hearers, if they  
are saved, must be brought to understand them. These  
are some of the doctrines which have been attended  
with such mighty power in this city. This is the doc-  
trine of the martyrs. This they sealed with their  
blood; notwithstanding that so many in our days  
have departed from it.

“Mr. Whitefield speaks much of the language of  
the New Testament; and has an admirable faculty in  
explaining the Scriptures. He strikes out of them  
such lights, and unveils those excellencies which sur-  
prise his hearers, when he expounds them. He ex-  
presses the highest love and concern for the souls of  
men; and speaks of Christ with the most affectionate  
appropriation—‘My Master! My Lord’ He is no  
enemy to the innocent freedoms and liberties of the  
gospel; nor does he affect singularity in indifferent  
things. He spends not his zeal in trifles, but says,  
‘The kingdom of God consists not in meats and  
drinks; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the  
Holy Ghost.’ He breathes a most catholic spirit, and  
prays most earnestly that God would destroy all that  
bigotry and party zeal which has divided Christians.  
He supposes some of Christ’s flock are to be found  
under every denomination, and upbraids the uncharit-  
ableness of those who confine the church to their own  
communion. He professes a most sincere love to all  
those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,  
and declares that he has no design to make a party  
in religion. He professes that his whole design in  
preaching the gospel is to bring men to Christ, to  
deliver them from their false confidences, to raise  
them from their dead formalities, and to revive prim-  
itive Christianity among them; and if he can obtain  
this end, he will leave them to their liberty, and they  
may go to what church, and worship God in what  
form they like best.”

While going from Philadelphia to New York, or  
on his return. Whitefield appears to have preached at

Maidenhead, Abington, Neshaminy, Freehold, Bur-  
lington, Elizabethtown, and New Brunswick, to many  
thousands, gathered from various parts, among whom  
there had been a considerable awakening under the  
ministry of Mr. Frelinghuysen, a Reformed Dutch  
minister, and the Rev. Messrs. Tennent, Blair, and  
Rowland. It was no less pleasing to him than  
strange to see such congregations in a foreign land;  
ministers and people shedding tears, sinners struck  
with awe, and religious persons who had been much  
persecuted, filled with joy. The old Tennent church  
at Freehold, where preached Whitefield, Brainerd,  
Davies, and other “famous men” of that day, still  
echoes with the same gospel. In size the building is  
forty feet by sixty, with three entrances on the larger  
side. The pulpit is on the north side of the house,  
immediately opposite the central door, so that the  
minister faces the width of the church instead of its  
length. The pulpit is very narrow, and is surmounted  
with a sounding-board, according to the custom of our  
fathers. In the middle aisle lie buried the remains of  
the sainted William Tennent, whose death took place  
about seven years after that of Whitefield, at the age  
of seventy-two years. A handsome monumental tablet  
records the leading dates of his pilgrimage.

Some of our readers may inquire as to the local-  
ities honored by Whitefield’s preaching in and about  
the city of New York. We find many records of his  
discoursing in the open fields of the surrounding coun-  
try; the old City Exchange, which stood at the foot of  
Broad-street, near Water-street, and which was built  
on large arches, was a favorite spot for itinerant

preachers, and for Whitefield among the rest. Dur-  
ing his various visits to New York, from 1745 to  
1760, he generally preached in the Presbyterian church  
in Wall-street, which was then the only church of that  
denomination in the city, and of which the Rev. Dr.  
Pemberton, from Boston, was the minister. After-  
wards, a few years before his death, he was accus-  
tomed to preach in the Brick church in Beekman-  
street; which was then familiarly called the “Brick  
meeting,” and in common parlance, said to be “in the  
fields so little was the city extended at that period.  
So prosperous was his ministry in New York, that it  
was found necessary immediately to enlarge the Pres-  
byterian church in Wall-street, by the erection of  
galleries; and a year or two afterwards it was again  
enlarged about one-third, in order to accommodate  
the stated worshippers.

When Whitefield was preaching before a very  
large number of the seamen of New York, he intro-  
duced the following bold apostrophe into his sermon:  
“Well, my boys, we have a cloudless 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 the distant thunder?  
Don’t you see those flashes of lightning? There is a  
storm gathering. Every man to his duty. How the  
waves rush and dash against the ship! The air is  
dark. The tempest rages. Our masts are gone!  
What next?” The unsuspecting tars, reminded of  
former perils on the deep, as if struck by the power

of magic, arose, and with united voices exclaimed,  
“Take to the longboat, sir!” The reader may well  
imagine how this very natural answer would be used  
by the preacher.

While at New York, Whitefield wrote, “God will-  
ing, in about seven months I hope to see New Eng-  
land on my return to Europe. An effectual door is  
there opened, and no wonder there are many adver-  
saries. Shortly I expect to suffer for my dear Mas-  
ter.” And after his return to Philadelphia, he showed  
his piety and meekness by writing to the Rev. Dr.  
Pemberton, of New York, “I have been much con-  
cerned since I saw you, lest I behaved not with that  
humility towards 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 be puffed  
up with it; and therefore, if any such thing was dis-  
cernible in my conduct, 0 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 be meek and lowly in  
heart: but my corruptions are so strong, and my em-  
ploy so dangerous, that I am sometimes afraid.”

One of the most important incidents of this journey  
to New York, was the meeting of Whitefield with Gil-  
bert Tennent. Two powerful preachers could hardly  
resemble each other less; and the great strength of  
each lay in characteristics in which the other was de-  
ficient. In one point, especially, Whitefield felt and  
recorded his new friend’s superiority. He heard Ten-  
nent preach. “Never before heard I such a searching  
sermon. He went to the bottom indeed, and did not

‘daub with untempered mortar.’ He convinced me,

more and more, that we can preach the gospel of  
Christ no farther than we have experienced the power  
of it in our hearts. I found what a babe and novice  
I was in the things of God.” These men, as Tracy  
says, having once met, could not but be friends and  
allies for life; and the effects of their alliance could  
not fail to be felt by thousands.

Both at Philadelphia and New York, printers ap-  
plied to Whitefield for copies of his sermons for pub-  
lication, and two were so issued, in the influence of  
which their author had cause to rejoice. In an after-  
period, the celebrated Benjamin Franklin printed  
Whitefield’s “Journal in New England,” still extant;  
a copy of which was sold at auction in Philadelphia  
in 1855, for about thirty times its original price. His  
journals, indeed, and his sermons became considerable  
articles in commerce, and did not a little, amid the  
comparatively sparse population of the country, to  
extend both his fame and his usefulness.

But the time was now come when it became im-  
portant that Whitefield should pursue his course tow-  
ards Savannah. He could not, however, regret his  
stay so long on the road. “It is unknown,” he says,  
“what deep impressions have been made on the hearts  
of hundreds. Many poor sinners have, I trust, been  
called home, and great numbers are under strong con-  
victions. An opposer told me I had unhinged many  
good sort of people. I believe it.”

Nor was this the only good he had done. No  
small sympathy had been excited among Christian  
people in favor of his orphan family, and a spirit of  
liberality and of prayer was extensively cherished.

“They sent me,” says the grateful evangelist, “butter,  
sugar, chocolate, pickles, cheese, and flour, for my or-  
phans; and indeed, I could almost say, they would  
pluck out their own eyes and give me. O that what  
God says of the church of Philadelphia may now be  
fulfilled in the city called after her name— ‘I know  
thy works.”

The ready liberality which everywhere met White-  
field, determined him to pursue his journey by land.  
He therefore procured a vessel, in which he sent on  
his family and their supplies to Savannah. Of this  
sloop, Captain Gladman was master; and a young man  
who had recently been converted by the preaching of  
the great evangelist, willingly offered himself as mate.  
We have already seen that he was accompanied south-  
ward as far as Chester by a very large company of  
gentlemen of Philadelphia; and on his arrival at that  
place, a court was about to open, but the judges sent  
him word that they would not commence their busi-  
ness until the sermon, which they expected from him,  
was over. Nearly a thousand people had travelled  
from Philadelphia to hear it, and it was thought that  
those collected from places many miles around, com-  
posed an assembly of not less than seven thousand  
persons. A platform was erected, and it was believed  
that many of his hearers obtained something infinitely  
better than the mere gratification of their curiosity.

Among other places at which he preached on this  
journey, was White Clay creek, endeared to him not  
only as the place where he first met with his beloved  
friend William Tennent, but as the residence of a  
Welsh family who had heard him preach at Cardiff

Whitefield. 6

and Kingswood before they emigrated, and who bore,  
what was to him a fact of endearing interest, the  
name of Howell. But during this tour Whitefield had  
to endure considerable privations and peril in riding  
through the woods. On one occasion, he heard the  
wolves “howling like a kennel of hounds” near to the  
road; on another, he had a narrow escape in trying  
to cross the Potomac in a storm. Here also he had  
once to swim his horse, owing to the floods; for it  
was now the depth of winter. One night, Seward  
and he lost their way in the woods of South Carolina,  
and were much alarmed at seeing groups of negroes  
dancing around large fires. Notwithstanding all the  
hardships, however, of the journey, no real injury was  
sustained from it.

Our evangelist at length arrived at Charleston in  
good health and spirits. But he could not obtain  
admittance to St. Philip’s church; Garden, the com-  
missary, who had once promised to “defend him with  
life and fortune,” was absent, and the curate would  
not open the doors without his leave. The people,  
however, had not forgotten him, and the Rev. Josiah  
Smith, the congregational minister, and the pastor of  
the French church, at once threw open their houses  
and pulpits, and rich indeed were the blessings they  
enjoyed.

The congregations during his present visit to  
Charleston were large and polite; but he says they  
presented “an affected finery and gayety of dress and  
deportment, which I question if the court-end of Lon-  
don could exceed.” Before he left, however, there  
was what he called “a glorious alteration in the audi-

ence.” Many of them wept; and the hitherto light  
and airy had visibly strong feelings, as shown in their  
countenances. Such was their extreme anxiety to hear  
more from him, that after he had gone to the shore to  
sail for Georgia, they prevailed on him to preach  
again.

On the next morning, Whitefield and his compan-  
ions left Charleston in a canoe for Savannah and on  
their way lay on the ground in the woods, surrounded  
by large fires to keep off the wild beasts. On this fact  
he makes the reflection, “An emblem, I thought, of the  
divine love and presence keeping off evils and corrup-  
tions from the soul.” On his arrival at Savannah, Jan-  
uary 11, 1740, he was very happy to meet his family,  
who had arrived there three weeks before him and  
to find, by letters from England, New York, etc., that  
the work of the Lord prospered. One thing, however,  
greatly distressed him. The colony of Georgia was  
reduced even to a much lower state than when he left  
it, and was deserted by nearly all who could get away.  
He thought that to employ those who were left, would  
render them an important service, and that the money  
thus expended might be the means of keeping them in  
the colony.

During the absence of Mr. Whitefield from Geor-  
gia, Mr. Habersham had fixed on a plot of ground of  
five hundred acres, about ten miles from Savannah, on  
which the orphan-house should stand, and had already  
commenced to clear and stock it. The orphans, in  
the meantime, were accommodated in a hired house.  
Whitefield afterwards regretted the course pursued.  
He found the condition of the orphans so pitiable, and

the inhabitants so poor, that he immediately opened  
an infirmary, hired a large house at a great rent, and  
took in, at different times, twenty-four orphans.

In the March following, "Whitefield was again at  
Charleston, where he went to meet his brother, the  
captain of a ship, from England. Here he was re-  
quested by many of the inhabitants to give some  
account of his poor orphans, which he did in the house  
of worship occupied by his friend the Rev. Josiah  
Smith, the first native of South Carolina who received  
a literary degree. Such was the spirit excited, that  
the collection amounted to seventy pounds sterling.  
This was no small encouragement, especially as he  
had reason to believe that most of it came from those  
who had received spiritual benefit from his ministry.

But if Whitefield now had his joys in Charles-  
ton, so he had also his sorrows. We have seen that  
in a previous visit to this city, he had considered  
himself “set for the defence of the gospel.” He had  
remarked, in reference to the twelfth article of the  
church of England, “Observe, my dear brethren, the  
words of the article, ‘Good works are the fruit of  
faith, and follow after justification.’ How can they  
then precede, or be in any way the cause of it? No,  
our persons must be justified, before our performances  
can be accepted.” Commissary Garden, of whom we  
have already spoken, now seized the opportunity of  
Whitefield’s visit to Charleston, to write him a letter,  
dated March 17, attacking his doctrine of justifica-  
tion, and challenging him to defend what he had said  
concerning the bishop of London and his clergy. In  
this letter, he urged in reply to what the evangelist

had said, “If good works do necessarily spring out of  
a true and lively faith, and a true and lively faith  
necessarily precedes justification, the consequence is  
plain, that good works must not only follow after, but  
precede justification also.” Whitefield replied the  
next day, “I perceive that you are angry overmuch.  
Was I never so much inclined to dispute, I would  
stay till the cool of the day. Your letter more and  
more confirms me, that my charge against the clergy  
is just and reasonable. It would be endless to enter  
into such a private debate as you, reverend sir, seem  
desirous of. You have read my sermon: be pleased  
to read it again; and if there be any thing contrary  
to sound doctrine, or the Articles of the church of  
England, be pleased to let the public know it from  
the press; and then let the world judge whether you  
or my brethren the clergy have been rashly slandered.”  
This was but the commencement of a controversy, in  
which were concerned Garden of Charleston, and the  
Rev. Messrs. Croswell and Gee of Boston, portions of  
which are preserved in the Old South church library,  
in the latter city; and which was afterwards resumed  
between Garden and Smith, of Charleston, in the  
“South Carolina Gazette,” as may be seen in the  
library of the American Antiquarian Society at Wor-  
cester, Massachusetts.

In the meantime, Whitefield had returned to Sa-  
vannah, and on March 25, he laid the first brick of  
the main building of the orphan-house, which he called  
Bethesda, that is, a house of mercy. It was built of  
wood, and measured seventy feet by forty. By this  
time nearly forty children had been received, to be

provided for with food and raiment; and counting  
the workmen with these, he had nearly one hundred  
persons to feed day by day. To do all this he had  
very little money in the bank; still he was not dis-  
couraged, being persuaded that his present duty was  
to advance the interests of the colony by carrying on  
his work. “As yet,” says he, “I am kept from the  
least doubting. The more my family increases, the  
more enlargement and comfort I feel. Set thy al-  
mighty fiat to it, 0 gracious Father, and for thine  
own name’s sake convince us more and more, that thou  
wilt never forsake those who put their trust in thee.”  
On reviewing this passage fifteen years afterwards,  
he wrote, “Hitherto, blessed be God, I have not been  
disappointed of my hope.”

We close our present chapter with a very short  
visit to Charleston. In this city Whitefield had as-  
suredly produced a very extraordinary excitement,  
and very opposite opinions were entertained in refer-  
ence to his character and doctrines. On the day  
after he had laid the first stone of Bethesda, Mr. Smith  
undertook at Charleston to defend the conduct and  
character of his beloved friend, in a sermon from Job  
32:17: “I said, I will answer also my part; I also  
will show mine opinion.” As this discourse was pub-  
lished during the following June, with a commenda-  
tory preface by the Rev. Drs. Colman and Cooper  
of Boston, and is still highly valued as a piece of con-  
temporary history, we give an extract, particularly as  
to the manner of the preaching of the great evangelist.

“He is certainly a finished preacher. A noble  
negligence ran through his style. The passion and

flame of his expressions will, I trust, be long felt by  
many. My pen cannot describe his action and ges-  
tures, in all their strength and decencies. He appear-  
ed to me, in all his discourses, to be very deeply affect-  
ed and impressed in his own heart. How did that  
burn and boil within him, when he spake of the things  
which he had ‘made touching the King.’ How was  
his tongue like the pen of a ready writer, touched as  
with a coal from the altar. With what a flow of  
words, what a ready profusion of language, did he  
speak to us upon the great concerns of our souls. In  
what a flaming light did he set our eternity before us.  
How earnestly he pressed Christ upon us. How did  
he move our passions with the constraining love of  
such a Redeemer. The awe, the silence, the attention  
which sat upon the face of the great audience, was an  
argument how he could reign over all their powers.  
Many thought he spake as never man spake before  
him. So charmed were the people with his manner  
of address, that they shut up their shops, forgot their  
secular business, and laid aside their schemes for the  
world; and the oftener he preached, the keener edge  
he seemed to put upon their desires to hear him again.

“How awfully, with what thunder and sound, did  
he discharge the artillery of heaven upon us. And  
yet, how could he soften and melt even a soldier of  
Ulysses with the mercy of God. How close, strong,  
and pungent were his applications to the conscience;  
mingling light and heat; pointing the arrows of the  
Almighty at the hearts of sinners, while he poured in  
the balm upon the wounds of the contrite, and made  
broken bones rejoice. Eternal themes, the tremendous

solemnities of our religion, were all dim upon his  
tongue. So, methinks—if you will forgive the figure—  
St. Paul would look and speak in a pulpit. In some  
such manner, I am tempted to conceive of a seraph,  
were he sent down to preach among us, and to tell us  
what things he had seen and heard above.

How bold and courageous did he look. He was  
no flatterer; he would not suffer men to settle on their  
lees; and did not prophesy smooth things, nor sew  
pillows under their arms. He taught the way of God  
in truth, and regarded not the persons of men. He  
struck at the politest and most modish of our vices,  
and at the most fashionable entertainments, regardless  
of every one’s presence, but His in whose name he  
spoke with this authority. And I dare warrant, if  
none should go to these diversions until they have  
answered the solemn questions he put to their con-  
sciences, our theatre would soon sink and perish. I  
freely own he has taken my heart.”

CHAPTER V.

**CONTINUATION OF WHITEFIELD’S SECOND VISIT TO  
 AMERICA.**

**1740.**

At the period when Whitefield laid the corner-  
stone of his Bethesda, his health was much impair-  
ed, and his spirits depressed. But it was necessary  
that funds should be obtained, to meet the claims now  
daily made upon him. He had received handsome  
donations from Charleston, New York, and Phila-  
delphia, yet the urgent demand was for more. He  
therefore embarked from Charleston for Newcastle,  
Delaware, in a sloop, and arrived there in about ten  
days. Passing on from thence to Philadelphia, he  
found the churches closed against him. The commis-  
sary told him that he would lend the church to him  
no more. The laconic answer of Whitefield was,  
“The fields are open;” and eight thousand people  
assembled to hear him the same evening, and ten thou-  
sand on the following day. On the following Lord’s  
day morning, he collected one hundred and ten pounds  
sterling for his “poor orphans,” and then went to the  
Episcopal church, where the commissary preached a  
sermon on justification by works. As Whitefield was  
recognized at church, it was naturally expected that  
in the evening he would answer the sermon; nor was  
the public expectation disappointed. After his ser-  
mon, he collected eighty pounds more for Bethesda.

6\*

But far higher success than this attended his labors.  
Societies for worship were commenced in different  
parts of the town; not a few began seriously to in-  
quire after the way of salvation many negroes came  
to the evangelist with the inquiry, “Have I a soul?”  
and a church was formed, of which the distinguished  
Gilbert Tennent was the eminently useful pastor. No  
less than one hundred and forty, who had undergone  
a previous strict examination as to their personal  
piety, were received as constituent members of the  
church, and large additions were from time to time  
made to their number.

Several events of special interest occurred during  
this visit to Philadelphia. Tennent had to tell a series  
of delightful facts as to the usefulness of Whitefield’s  
former labors. He began to deliberate on a plan for  
a negro school in Pennsylvania, as he did afterwards  
also in Virginia, but unexpected difficulties intervened,  
and both in the end were abandoned. Mr. Jones, the  
Baptist minister of the city, told Whitefield of the  
change produced by his former preaching on the minds  
of two ministers; one of whom stated to his congre-  
gation that he had hitherto been deceiving both him-  
self and them, and added, that he could not preach to  
them at present, but requested them to unite in prayer  
with him; and the other resigned his charge, to itin-  
erate among the unenlightened villages of New Jersey  
and elsewhere. Another fact was, that an Indian  
trader became so impressed with the preaching of  
Whitefield, that he had given up his business, and  
was gone to teach the Indians with whom he used to  
trade. Nor had his usefulness stopped here: he heard

of a drinking club, which had attached to it a negro  
boy remarkable for his powers of mimicry. This boy  
was directed by the gentlemen who composed the  
club to exercise his powers on Mr. Whitefield: he did  
so, but very reluctantly; at length 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 had such an effect as to break up the club,  
which met no more.

We add a few paragraphs from Seward’s journal,  
who soon after sailed for England to promote the  
interests of Georgia, and who died in the parent coun-  
try. They date from the 24th to the 26th of April.  
“Came to Christopher Wigner’s plantation in Skip-  
pack, where many Dutch people are settled, and  
where the famous Mr. Spalemburg lately resided. It  
was surprising to see such a multitude of people gath-  
ered together in such a wilderness country, thirty  
miles distant from Philadelphia. Mr. Whitefield was  
exceedingly carried out, in his sermon, to press poor  
sinners to come to Christ by faith, and claim all their  
privileges; namely, not only righteousness and peace,  
but joy in the Holy Ghost; and after he had done,  
our dear friend Peter Bohler preached in Dutch, to  
those who could not understand Mr. Whitefield in  
English.”

“Before Mr. Whitefield left Philadelphia, he was  
desired to visit one who was under a deep sense of sin,  
from hearing him preach. In praying with this person,  
he was so carried beyond himself, that the whole  
company, about twenty, seemed to be filled with the  
Holy Ghost, and magnified the God of heaven.”

“Arose at three o’clock, and though Mr. White-  
field was very weak in body, yet the Lord enabled  
him to ride nearly fifty miles, and to preach to about  
five thousand people at Amwell, with the same power  
as usual. Mr. Gilbert Tennent, Mr. Rowland, Mr.  
Wales, and Mr. Campbell, four godly ministers, met  
us here.”

“Came to New Brunswick. Met Mr. Noble from  
New York, a zealous promoter of our Lord’s king-  
dom. He said their society at New York was en-  
larged from seventy to one hundred and seventy, and  
was daily increasing; and that Messrs. Gilbert and  
William Tennent, Mr. Rowland, and several others,  
were hard laborers in our Lord’s vineyard.”

It will be readily supposed that by this time  
Whitefield and his movements had become so much a  
matter of interest as to be frequently discussed in the  
newspapers of the day.

The “New England Weekly Journal” of April 29,  
1740, copies from a Philadelphia paper of April 17:  
“The middle of last month the Rev. Mr. Whitefield  
was at Charleston, and preached five times, and col-  
lected at one time upwards of £70 sterling for the  
benefit of the orphan-house in Georgia; and on Sun-  
day last, after ten days’ passage from Georgia, he  
landed at Newcastle, where he preached morning and  
evening. On Monday morning he preached to about  
three thousand at Wilmington, and in the evening  
arrived in this city. On Tuesday evening he preached  
to about eight thousand on Society hill, and preached  
at the same place yesterday morning and evening.”  
Then follows a list of his appointments daily to April

29, during which time he was to preach at White-  
marsh, Germantown, Philadelphia, Salem, N. J., Ne-  
shaminy, Skippack, Frederick township, Amwell, New  
Brunswick, Elizabethtown, and New York. On May  
6th, the Journal copied a Philadelphia notice of April  
24th, that he had preached on the previous Sabbath to  
fifteen thousand hearers, and on Monday at Green-  
wich and Gloucester, and that he would return to  
Georgia before visiting New England.

The Journal of May 20th, contains a letter from  
Whitefield to a friend in England, dated New Bruns-  
wick, N. J., April 27. Of his visit to Charleston  
he says, “A glorious work was begun in the hearts of  
the inhabitants, and many were brought to cry out,

‘What shall we do to be saved?’ A fortnight ago,  
after a short passage of ten days, I landed in Penn-  
sylvania, and have had the pleasure of seeing and  
hearing that my poor endeavors for promoting Christ’s  
kingdom, when here last, were not altogether in vain  
in the Lord. I cannot tell you how many have come  
to me laboring under the deepest convictions, and  
seemingly truly desirous of finding rest in Jesus Christ.  
Several have actually received him into their hearts  
by faith, and have not only righteousness and peace,  
but joy in the Holy Ghost. In short, the word has  
run and been much glorified, and many negroes also  
are in a fair way of being brought home to God.  
Young ones I intend to buy, and do not despair of  
seeing a room full of that despised generation, in a  
short time, singing and making melody with grace in  
their hearts to the Lord.

“An effectual door is opened for preaching, the

everlasting gospel, and I daily receive fresh and most  
importunate invitations to preach in all the counties  
round about. God is pleased to give a great blessing  
to my printed sermons. They are in the hands of  
thousands in these parts, and are a means of enlight-  
ening and building up many in their most holy faith.  
The clergy, I find, are most offended at me. The  
commissary of Philadelphia, having gotten a little  
stronger than when I was here last, has thrown off  
the mask, denied me the pulpit, and last Sunday  
preached up an historical faith, and justification by  
works. But the people only flock the more. The  
power of God is more visible than ever in our assem-  
blies, and more and more are convinced that I preach  
the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Some of the bigoted,  
self-righteous Quakers now also begin to spit out a  
little of the venom of the serpent. They cannot bear  
the doctrine of original sin, and of an imputed right-  
eousness as the cause of our acceptance with God.  
I have not yet met with much opposition from the  
dissenters; but when I come to tell many of them,  
ministers as well as people, that they hold the truth  
in unrighteousness, that they talk and preach of justi-  
fying faith, but never felt it in their hearts, as I am  
persuaded numbers of them have not, then they no  
doubt will shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.”  
While on his voyage from Charleston to Newcas-  
tle, Whitefield seems to have devoted the 4th of April,  
1740, to correspondence on the subject of marriage.  
“I find,” said he, “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.” His letters were ad-  
dressed to a young lady and her parents, connected  
with a family much devoted to piety. Here, as every-  
where else, his heart is transparent. He says to the

parents of Miss E---, “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 for me. He knows my  
heart; I would not marry but for him, and in him, for  
ten thousand worlds.”

The next year, having returned to England, White-  
field, like his eminent friend John Wesley, was mar-  
ried, and, like him also, was unhappy in his domestic  
relation. In each case, the husband exacted a previ-  
ous pledge that the wife should never prevent the  
delivery of a single sermon; and this was followed  
by separation from the wife for weeks, months, or  
even years, in the prosecution of their arduous labors.  
In the case of Whitefield, his marriage in Wales, with  
a widow lady, in 1741, was followed by the birth of  
a son; previous to which event he had said, in the  
joy of his heart, that his name should be John, and  
that he should be a preacher of the everlasting gos-  
pel. The first prediction was realized, and when his  
child was a week old, the good man told his people in  
the Tabernacle, London, that he would live to preach,  
and “be great in the sight of the Lord.” But alas,  
at the end of four months John died, and his father  
very wisely wrote in his journal: “I hope what hap-  
pened before his birth, and since at his death, has  
taught me such lessons as, if duly improved, may ren-  
der his mistaken parent more sober-minded, more ex-

perienced in Satan’s devices, and consequently more  
useful in his future labors in the church of God.”

On the death of his wife somewhat suddenly, Au-  
gust 9, 1768, Mr. Whitefield himself preached her  
funeral sermon, from Romans 8: 28: “And we know  
that all things work together for good to them that  
love God, to them that are the called according to his  
purpose.” In describing her character, he particular-  
ly mentioned her fortitude and courage, and suddenly  
exclaimed, “Do you remember my preaching in those  
fields by the stump of the old tree? The multitude  
was great, and many were disposed to be riotous. At  
first I addressed them with firmness; but when a gang  
of desperate banditti drew near, with the most fero-  
cious looks, and horrid imprecations and menaces,  
my courage began to fail. My wife was then stand-  
ing behind me, as I stood on the table. I think I  
hear her now. She pulled my gown”—himself suiting  
the action to the word, by placing his hand behind  
him and touching his robe—“and looking up, said,  
‘George, play the man for your God.’ My confidence  
returned. I again spoke to the multitude with bold-  
ness and affection; they became still; and many were  
deeply affected.”

Before we leave Philadelphia, we may relate an  
instance or two as to the power of his eloquence. Dr.  
Franklin says, “He had a loud and clear voice, and  
articulated his words so perfectly that he might be  
heard and understood to a great distance; especially  
as his auditors observed the most profound silence.  
He preached one evening from the top of the court-  
house steps, which are in the middle of Market-street,

SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA 137

and on the west side of Second-street, which crosses  
it at right angles. Both streets were filled with his  
hearers to a considerable distance. Being among the  
hindmost in Market-street, I had the curiosity to learn  
how far he might be heard by setting backwards down  
the street towards the river; and I found his voice  
distinct till I came near Front-street, where some  
noise in that street obstructed it. Imagine, then, a  
semicircle of which my distance should be a 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 people.”  
But not only does Franklin bear witness of White-  
field’s eloquence as to his voice, but still more strong-  
ly as to its persuasiveness, of which, it seems, he was  
himself a striking illustration. He says, “I refused  
to contribute to his orphan-house in Georgia, think-  
ing it injudiciously located. Soon after, I happened  
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 mon-  
ey, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in  
gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and de-  
termined 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 at 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, however, he felt a strong inclination  
to give, and applied to a neighbor, 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 Hodgkinson, I would lend to thee freely; but  
not now, for thee seems to be out of thy right  
senses.’”

Whitefield, much as he loved Philadelphia, had  
now again to leave it. Thus writes the correspond-  
ent of the “New England Weekly Journal,” at New-  
castle, May 15.: “This evening Mr. Whitefield went  
on board his sloop here, to sail for Georgia. On Sun-  
day he preached twice in Philadelphia, and in the  
evening, when he preached his farewell sermon, it is  
supposed he had twenty thousand hearers. On Mon-  
day he preached at Darby and Chester; on Tuesday,  
at Wilmington and White Clay creek; on Wednes-  
day, twice at Nottingham; on Thursday, at Fog’s  
Manor and Newcastle. The congregations were much  
increased since his being here last. The presence of  
God was much seen in the assemblies, especially at  
Nottingham and Fog’s Manor, where the people were  
under such deep soul distress, that their cries almost  
drowned his voice. He has collected in this and the  
neighboring provinces, about £450 sterling for his  
orphans in Georgia.”

He arrived at Savannah June 5, and most inter-  
esting was the manner of his reception. He says, “0  
what a sweet meeting I had with my dear friends!

SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA 139

What God has prepared for me, I know not; but  
surely I cannot well expect a greater happiness, till  
I embrace the saints in glory. When I parted, my  
heart was ready to break with sorrow; but now it  
almost bursts with joy. 0 how did each in turn  
hang upon my neck, kiss, and weep over me with  
tears of joy! And my own soul was so full of a sense  
of God’s love when I embraced one friend in particu-  
lar, that I thought I should have expired in the place.  
I felt my soul so full of a sense of the divine goodness,  
that I wanted words to express myself. Why me,  
Lord; why me? When we came to public worship,  
young and old were all dissolved in tears. After  
service, several of my parishioners, all my family, and  
the little children, returned home, crying along the  
streets, and some could not avoid praying very loud.

“Being very weak in body, I laid myself upon a  
bed; but finding so many weeping, I rose and betook  
myself to prayer again. But had I not lifted up my  
voice very high, the groans and cries of the children  
would have prevented my being heard. This con-  
tinued for near an hour; till at last, finding their  
concern rather increase than abate, I desired all to re-  
tire. Then some or other might be heard praying ear-  
nestly, in every corner of the house. It happened at  
this time to thunder and lighten, which added very  
much to the solemnity of the night. Next day the  
concern still continued, especially among the girls. I  
mention the orphans in particular, that their bene-  
factors may rejoice in what God is doing for their  
souls.”

On the 7th of June, he wrote, “I have brought

with me a Latin master, and on Monday laid the  
foundation, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for a uni-  
versity in Georgia.” On the 28th of the same month,  
he wrote to a Mr. W. D——, in a style admirably  
corresponding with the meek spirit we have already  
seen in his letter to the Rev. Dr. Pemberton, of New  
York. “I thank you for your kind letters and friend-  
ly cautions; and I trust I shall always reckon those  
my choicest friends, who, in simplicity and meekness,  
tell me the corruptions of my heart. It is that faith-  
fulness which has endeared J. S-—— to me. I think  
I never was obliged to any one so much before. 0  
my dear brother, still continue faithful to my soul;  
do not hate me in your heart; in any wise reprove  
me. Exhort all my brethren to forgive my past, I  
fear, too imperious carriage; and let them pray that  
I may know myself to be, what I really am, less than  
the least of them all.”

Whitefield’s family at Bethesda had now increased  
to not less than one hundred and fifty persons, and to  
advance their interests, it was needful that he should  
again visit Charleston, where he arrived on the third  
of July, and immediately commenced preaching, as on  
former visits. On the following Sabbath, three days  
after his arrival, he attended the Episcopal church,  
where, he says, “I heard the commissary preach as  
virulent and unorthodox, inconsistent a discourse, as  
ever I heard in my life. His heart seemed full of  
choler and resentment. Out of the abundance thereof,  
he poured forth so many bitter words against the  
Methodists, as he called them, in general, and me in  
particular, that several who intended to receive the

**SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA 141**

sacrament at his hands, withdrew. Never, I believe,  
was such a preparation sermon preached before. Af-  
ter sermon, he sent his clerk to desire me not to come  
to the sacrament till he had spoken with me. I im-  
mediately retired to my lodgings, rejoicing that I was  
accounted worthy to suffer this further degree of con-  
tempt for my dear Lord’s sake.”

The next day, the commissary of the bishop of  
London issued against Whitefield the following eccle-  
siastical writ:

“Alexander Garden, lawfully constituted Commis-  
sary of the Right Reverend Father in Christ, Ed-  
mund, by divine permission Lord Bishop of London,  
supported by the royal authority underwritten:

“Alexander Garden, To all and singular clerks,  
and literate persons whomsoever, in and throughout  
the whole province of South Carolina, wheresoever  
appointed, Greeting:

“To you, conjunctly and severally, we commit, and  
strictly enjoining, command, that you do cite, or cause  
to be cited, peremptorily, George Whitefield, clerk,  
and presbyter of the Church of England, that he law-  
fully appear before us, in the parish church of St.  
Philip, Charleston, and in the judicial place of the  
same, on Tuesday, the fifteenth day of this instant  
July, ’twixt the hours of nine and ten in the forenoon,  
then and there injustice to answer to certain articles,  
heads, or interrogatories, which will be objected and  
ministered unto him concerning the mere health of  
his soul, and the reformation and correction of his  
manners and excesses, and chiefly for omitting to use  
the form of prayers prescribed in the Communion-

Book; and further to do and receive what shall he  
just in that behalf, on pain of law and contempt. And  
what you shall do in the premises, you shall duly cer-  
tify us, together with these presents.

“Given under our hands and seals of our office, at  
Charleston, this seventh day of July, in the year of our  
Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty.”

Justice to all parties requires it should be said,  
that the phrase as to the health of Whitefield’s soul  
was used by Garden not of choice, but in conformity  
with the forms of English ecclesiastical law; the  
theory of which is, that ecclesiastical courts are only  
held to promote the spiritual health or welfare of  
those who are cited into them. The principal sin of  
Whitefield was “omitting to use the form of prayer  
prescribed in the Common Prayer Book.” The un-  
disputed matter of fact, as Tracy says, was, that he  
always used that form when he could obtain an Epis-  
copal church to preach in; but when he was shut out  
of such pulpits, and was preaching to Baptists, Pres-  
byterians, and Congregationalists, in their own houses  
of worship, where none of the congregations had  
prayer books, or knew how to use them, and where  
the introduction of unaccustomed forms would not  
have promoted the devotion of the worshippers, he  
prayed extempore.

On the day this writ was issued, Whitefield preach-  
ed for Mr. Chanler, “a gracious Baptist minister,  
about fourteen miles from Charleston;” and twice on  
the next day “to a large audience in Mr. Osgood’s  
meeting-house, a young Independent minister,” at Dor-  
chester; the next day at Dorchester again, and at

**SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA 143**

Charleston in the evening; the next day preached and  
read prayers in Christ's church, and twice at Charles-  
ton the next day, with great success. And now, on  
July 11th, a citation was served upon him to appear  
on the fifteenth, as required in the writ.

On the 12th, he preached and read prayers twice  
on John's island; and on the 13th, which was the  
Sabbath, he again listened to a sermon from the com-  
missary. Of this sermon Whitefield says, “Had some  
infernal spirit been sent to draw my picture, I think  
it scarcely possible that he could paint me in more  
horrid colors. I think, if ever, then was the time that  
all manner of evil was spoken against me falsely for  
Christ's sake. The commissary seemed to ransack  
church history for instances of enthusiasm and abused  
grace. He drew a parallel between me and all the  
Oliverians, Ranters, Quakers, French prophets, till he  
came down to a family of Dutartes, who lived not  
many years ago in South Carolina, and were guilty  
of the most notorious incests and murders."

The next day Whitefield again preached twice;  
and on Tuesday appeared before the commissary, ac-  
cording to his citation. This is said to have been  
the first court of the kind ever attempted to be held  
in any of the colonies. It consisted of the reverend  
commissary A. Garden, and the Rev. Messrs. Guy,  
Mellichamp, Roe, and Orr, who, as well as Whitefield  
himself, and his able advocate, Mr. Andrew Rutledge,  
respectively showed their want of familiarity with  
such business, and, after a series of blunders on both  
sides, the court adjourned to nine o'clock the next  
morning, to afford Whitefield time to ascertain the

extent of the jurisdiction of the bishop and his com-  
missary. How little, however, he studied the subject  
may be inferred from the fact, that he preached twice  
during the remainder of the day. The next day, a  
Mr. Graham appeared as a prosecuting attorney, and  
Mr. Rutledge as counsel for the respondent. White-  
field made some mistakes, but hints from his quick-  
sighted advocate and his own adroitness saved him  
from their consequences; though he contrived to give  
the court a lecture on the meanness of catching at a  
word as soon as it was out of his lips, without allow-  
ing him time to correct it. He now filed his objec-  
tion against being judged by the commissary, who, he  
alleged, was prejudiced against him. This gave rise  
to new questions: the court adjourned; and the  
evangelist went to James’ island, read prayers, and  
preached. The next day he again appeared in court,  
and found that his exceptions were repelled, and that  
the arbitrators he had asked for would not be ap-  
pointed. He now appealed to the high Court of  
Chancery in London, declaring all further proceed-  
ings in this court to be null and void. He then re-  
tired and read letters which refreshed his spirit, by  
informing him how “mightily grew the word of God  
and prevailed ” at Philadelphia; and that Mr. Bol-  
ton, in Georgia, had nearly fifty negroes learning to  
read. On the 18th he preached twice, and on the  
19th again appeared before the commissary, and  
bound himself, in a penalty of ten pounds, to prosecute  
his appeal in London within twelve months. The  
appeal was never tried, as the ecclesiastical author-  
ities allowed it to die of neglect.

“The court being ended,” says Whitefield, in his  
journal, “the commissary desired to speak with me.  
I asked him to my lodgings. He chose to walk on a  
green near the church. His spirit was somewhat  
calmer than usual; but after an hour’s conversation,  
we were as far from agreeing as before.” “All his  
discourse was so inconsistent and contrary to the gos-  
pel of our Lord, that I was obliged to tell him that I  
believed him to be an unconverted man, an enemy to  
God, and of a like spirit with the persecutor Saul.  
At this he smiled; and, after we had talked a long  
while, we parted, and God gave me great satisfaction  
that I had delivered my soul in my private conversa-  
tion with the commissary.”

The next day, July 20, was the Sabbath. The  
commissary preached in his usual style, and White-  
field preached his farewell sermon to the people of  
Charleston. By his recommendation two or three of  
the dissenting ministers had instituted a weekly lec-  
ture; and the evangelist “advised the people, as the  
gospel was not preached in church, to go and hear it  
in the meeting-house.” On leaving the city, he sum-  
med up, in his journal, the results of his labors in this  
manner:

“What makes the change more remarkable in the  
Charleston people is, that they seemed to me, at my  
first coming, to be a people wholly devoted to pleas-  
ure. One well acquainted with their manners and  
circumstances, told me more had been spent on polite  
entertainments, than the poor’s-rate came to; but now  
the jewellers and dancing-masters begin to cry out  
that their craft is in danger. A vast alteration is dis-

Whitefield.

cernible in the ladies’ dresses. And some, while I  
have been speaking, have been so convinced of the sin  
of wearing jewels, that I have seen them with blushes  
put their hands to their ears, and cover them with  
their fans. But I hope the reformation has gone far-  
ther than externals. Many moral, good sort of men,  
who before were settled on their lees, have been glo-  
riously awakened to seek after Jesus Christ; and  
many a Lydia’s heart hath been opened to receive the  
things that were spoken. Indeed, the word came like  
a hammer and a fire. And a door, I believe, will be  
opened for teaching the poor negroes. Several of  
them have done their usual work in less time, that  
they might come to hear me. Many of their owners,  
who have been awakened, resolved to teach them  
Christianity. Had I time, and proper schoolmasters,  
I might immediately erect a negro school in South  
Carolina, as well as in Pennsylvania. Many would  
willingly contribute both money and land.”

The Baptist church in Charleston at this time was  
nearly extinct, being reduced to five or six communi-  
cants, but Whitefield’s success greatly increased their  
number, and it thus gained strength which it has never  
lost. It is also gratefully mentioned even now by the  
church of that denomination at Eutaw, that Whitefield  
during this visit to South Carolina preached the dedi-  
cation-sermon, of their house of worship.

Whitefield left Charleston on July 21, visiting and  
preaching on his way homeward, which he reached  
towards the close of the same week. He preached on  
the Sabbath in extreme weakness of body, but “with  
the Holy Ghost from above,” and several were hope-

**SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA 147**

fully converted to God. On the 18th of August, he  
again left Savannah for Charleston, where he was  
able, for want of bodily strength, to preach but once  
a day, but he thought that his sermons were attended  
with more power and success than ever before. In a  
few days after, having preached a farewell sermon to  
four thousand hearers, he sailed for New England,  
where he had been very cordially invited by leading  
ministers and others in Boston and many other places.

CHAPTER VI.

**WHITEFIELD’S FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND.**

**SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER, 1740.**

The religions state of New England in the early  
part of the eighteenth century, was little better than  
the description we have already given of the state  
of Great Britain and its other dependencies at that  
period. Dr. Prince tells us, that the first age of  
New England was one of an almost continual revival.  
Preaching was attended with so much power in some  
places, “that it was a common inquiry, by such mem-  
bers of a family as were detained at home on a Sab-  
bath, whether any had been visibly awakened in the  
house of God that day.” And he adds, “Few Sab-  
baths did pass without some being evidently convert-  
ed, and some convincing proof of the power of God  
accompanying his word.”

Dr. Increase Mather, writing towards the close of  
the seventeenth century, while he confirms the state-  
ments we have already given, bears farther testimony  
which is of a very painful character. He says, “Pray-  
er is necessary on this account, that conversions have  
become rare in this age of the world. They that have  
their thoughts exercised in discerning things of this  
nature, have sad apprehensions that the work of con-  
version has come to a stand. During the last age  
scarcely a sermon was preached without some being  
apparently converted, and sometimes hundreds were

converted by one sermon. Who of us now can say  
that we have seen anything such as this? Clear,  
sound conversions are not frequent in our congrega-  
tions; the great bulk of the present generation are  
apparently poor, perishing, and if the Lord prevent  
not, undone; many are profane, drunkards, lascivious,  
scoffers at the power of godliness, and disobedient;  
others are civil and outwardly conformed to good or-  
der, because so educated, but without knowing aught  
of a real change of heart.” The same estimable writer  
says, in 1721, “I am now in my eighty-third year, and  
having had an opportunity of conversing with the first  
planters of this country, and having been for sixty-five  
years a preacher of the gospel, I feel as did the ancient  
men who had seen the former temple, and who wept  
aloud as they saw the latter. The children of New  
England are, or once were, for the most part, the chil-  
dren of godly parents. What did our fathers come  
into this wilderness for? Not to gain estates as men  
do now, but for religion, and that they might have  
their children in a hopeful way of being truly relig-  
ious. There was a famous man who preached before  
one of the greatest assemblies that ever was address-  
ed; it was about seventy years ago; and he said to  
them, ‘I lived in a country seven years, and all that  
time I never heard a profane oath, or saw a man  
drunk.’ And where was that country? It was New  
England. Ah, degenerate New England! What art  
thou come to at this day? How are those sins become  
common that were once not even heard of!”

Passing over, for the present, indications of a re-  
vival of religion, which had appeared in other parts

of the country, we speak now only of New England.  
In 1734, a very extraordinary work of grace appeared  
at Northampton, Massachusetts, under the ministry of  
the distinguished Jonathan Edwards, the elder, the  
history of which is given in his admirable “Narrative  
of the surprising Work of God” at that period, in  
Northampton and the vicinity.

It is important to remark here, that the preaching  
which led to such delightful results was of the most  
faithful and pungent character. We will give one in-  
stance, as illustrative of many, as will be distinctly seen  
by those who have read Edwards’ sermon, “Sinners in  
the hands of an angry God” or his “Justice of God in the  
damnation of Sinners” Perhaps, however, no sermon  
in New England has ever acquired greater celebrity,  
or accomplished more good, than the one preached  
by President Edwards at Enfield, July 8, 1741, from  
the words, “Their feet shall slide in due time.” Deut.  
32:35. “When they went into the meeting-house,

the appearance of the assembly was thoughtless and  
vain; the people scarcely conducted themselves with  
common decency.” But as the sermon proceeded, the  
audience became so overwhelmed with distress and  
weeping, that the preacher was “obliged to speak to  
the people and desire silence, that he might be heard.”  
The excitement soon became intense; and it is said  
that a minister who sat in the pulpit with Mr. Ed-  
wards, in the agitation of his feelings, caught the  
preacher by the skirt of his dress, and said, “Mr.  
Edwards, Mr. Edwards, is not God a God of mercy?”  
Many of the hearers were seen unconsciously holding  
themselves up against the pillars, and the sides of the

pews, as though they already felt themselves sliding  
into the pit. This fact has often been mentioned as  
a proof of the strong and scriptural character of Presi-  
dent Edwards’ peculiar eloquence—the eloquence of  
truth as attended by influence from heaven; for his  
sermons were read, without gestures.

But there was another element which must be  
taken into account when we look at the result of this  
sermon, as well as others delivered in like circum-  
stances, and one which we fear has been often over-  
looked. “While the people of the neighboring towns  
were in great distress about their souls, the inhabitants  
of Enfield were very secure, loose, and vain. A lec-  
ture had been appointed there, and the neighboring  
people were so affected at the thoughtlessness of the  
inhabitants, and had so much fear that God would, in  
his righteous judgment, pass them by, that many of  
them were prostrate before him a considerable part  
of the previous evening, supplicating the mercy of  
heaven in their behalf. And when the time appointed  
for the lecture came, a number of the surrounding  
ministers were present, as well as some from a dis-  
tance”—a proof of the prayerful interest felt on be-  
half of the town. In all this we see much of the  
secret of the powerful impression produced by that  
sermon, and are taught that in seasons when God  
seems about to pour out his Spirit on a community,  
Christians should be found “continuing instant in  
prayer.”

In this more hopeful state of things than had long  
before existed in New England, Whitefield, who was  
now the second time in America, was most urgently

entreated to visit the descendants of the Pilgrim fa-  
thers. He complied with the request, and arrived at  
Newport on the evening of the Sabbath, September  
14, 1740. We furnish an account, written chiefly by  
himself, in his journal, published in London, 1741, a  
copy of which may be found in the library of Harvard  
University, to which we have had a kind access, and  
which is rich in what we may term Whitefieldian lore.  
He writes,

“Was sick part of the passage, but found after-  
wards the sea-air, under God, much improved my  
health. Arrived at Newport, in Rhode Island, just  
after the beginning of evening service. We came  
purposely thither first with our sloop. I think it the  
most pleasant entrance I ever yet saw. Almost all  
the morning the wind was contrary, but I found a  
very strong inclination to pray that we might arrive  
time enough to be present at public worship. Once I  
called the people; but something prevented their com-  
ing. At last, finding my impression increase upon me,  
I desired their attendance immediately. They came.  
With a strong assurance that we should be heard, we  
prayed that the Lord would turn the wind, that we  
might give him thanks in the great congregation;  
and also that he would send such to us as he would  
have us to converse with, and who might show us a  
lodging. Though the wind was ahead when we be-  
gan, when we had done praying, and came up out of  
the cabin, it was quite fair.

“With a gentle gale we sailed most pleasantly  
into the harbor; got into public worship before they  
had finished the psalms; and sat, as I thought, undis-

covered. After service was over, a gentleman asked  
me whether my name was not Whitefield. I told  
him ‘yes;’ he then desired me to go to his house, and  
he would take care to provide lodgings and necessa-  
ries for me and my friends. I went, silently admir-  
ing God’s goodness in answering my prayer so mi-  
nutely. Several gentlemen of the town soon came to  
pay their respects to me, among whom was one Mr.  
Clap, an aged dissenting minister, but the most vener-  
able man I ever saw. He looked like a good old  
Puritan, and gave me an idea of what stamp those men  
were who first settled New England. His counte-  
nance was very heavenly; he rejoiced much in spirit  
at the sight of me, and prayed most affectionately for  
a blessing on my coming to Rhode Island.”

In the evening, in company with Mr. Clap and  
other friends, Whitefield visited Mr. Honeyman, the  
minister of the church of England, and requested the  
use of his pulpit. “At first he seemed a little unwill-  
ing, being desirous to know ‘what extraordinary call  
I had to preach on week-days,’ which he said was  
disorderly. I answered, ‘St. Paul exhorted Timothy  
to ‘be instant in season and out of season;’ that if the  
orders of the church were rightly complied with, our  
ministers should read public prayers twice every day,  
and then it would not be disorderly at such times to  
give them a sermon. As to an extraordinary call, I  
claimed none otherwise than upon the apostle’s injunc-  
tion, ‘As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all  
men.’ He still held out, and did not give any positive  
answer; but at last, after he had withdrawn and con-  
sulted with the gentlemen, he said, ‘If my preaching

7\*

would promote the glory of God, and the good of  
souls, I was welcome to his church as often as I  
would, during my stay in town.’ We then agreed to  
make use of it at ten in the morning, and three in the  
afternoon. After this, I went to wait on the governor,  
who seemed to be a very plain man, and had a very   
plain house, which much pleased me. By profession,  
I think he is a Seventh-day Baptist; he is a man of  
good report as to his conduct and dealing with the  
world.” As might have been expected, the evening  
was spent in exposition and prayer, with a crowded  
company, in the house of his friend Bowers, the gen-  
tleman who first addressed him when coming out of  
church.

On Monday morning, he breakfasted with “old  
Mr. Clap, and was much edified by his conversation.” Of this venerable servant of Christ he says, “I could  
not but think, while at his table, that I was sitting  
with one of the patriarchs. He is full of days, a  
bachelor, and has been minister of a congregation in  
Rhode Island upwards of forty years. People of all  
denominations, I find, respect him. He abounds in  
good works; gives all away, and is wonderfully tender  
of little children; many of different persuasions come  
to be instructed by him. Whenever he dies, I am  
persuaded, with good old Simeon, he will be enabled  
to say, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in  
peace.’” Whitefield preached, according to appoint-  
ment, morning and afternoon, “in the church. It is  
very commodious, and I believe will contain three  
thousand people. It was more than filled in the after-  
noon. Persons of all denominations attended. God

assisted me much. I observed numbers affected, and  
had great reason to believe the word of the Lord had  
been ‘sharper than a two-edged sword,’ in some of the  
hearers’ souls.”

On the evening of the same day he received the  
following note:

Reverend Sir and beloved Brother—Although  
mine eyes never saw your face before this day, yet my  
heart and soul have been united to you in love, by  
the bond of the Spirit. I have longed and expected  
to see you for many months past. Blessed be God,  
mine eyes have seen the joyful day. I trust, through  
grace, I have some things to communicate to you that  
will make your heart glad. I shall omit writing any-  
thing, and only hereby present my hearty love, and  
let you know that I am waiting now at the post of  
your door for admission. Though I am unworthy,  
my Lord is worthy, in whose name, I trust, I come. I  
am your unworthy brother,

“JONATHAN BARBER.”

“On reading it,” says Whitefield, “I could not but  
think this was one of those young ministers whom  
God had lately made use of in such a remarkable  
manner, at the east end of Long Island. I sent for  
him, and found he was the man. My heart rejoiced.  
We walked out, and took sweet counsel together and  
among other things, he told me that he came to  
Rhode Island under a full conviction that he should  
see me there, and had been waiting for me about a  
week. . . . What rendered this more remarkable was,  
I had no intention of sailing to Rhode Island till

about three days before I left Carolina; and I had a  
great desire to put in, if I could, at the east end of  
Long Island, to see this very person, whom the great  
God now brought unto me. Lord, accept our thanks,  
sanctify our meeting, and teach us both what we shall  
do for thine own name’s sake. In the evening I went  
to the venerable Mr. Clap’s, and exhorted and prayed  
with a great multitude, who not only crowded into the  
house, but thronged every way about it. The dear  
old man rejoiced to see the things which he saw; and  
after my exhortation was over, dismissed me with his  
blessing.”

Tuesday, we scarcely need remark, was spent by  
Whitefield in the work of his great Master. He  
preached to a vast congregation, including the mem-  
bers of the House of Assembly, who adjourned to  
attend the service; and he had very delightful evi-  
dence that his labors had already been useful. On  
Wednesday he left Newport, and about noon preached  
at Bristol, at the request of the court, which was then  
in session, and slept that night at a hotel on the road  
to Boston. On Thursday morning he set out early,  
and as he passed on with his friends, he says, “Found  
that the people were apprized of my coming, and were  
solicitous for my preaching; but being resolved under  
God, if possible, to reach Boston, we travelled on for  
near fifty miles, and came to Boston about eight in the  
evening. When we were within four miles of the  
city, the governor’s son, several other gentlemen, and  
one or two ministers, waited at a gentleman’s house  
to give me the meeting. They received me with great  
gladness, and told me many more would have come,

had not a large funeral been in the town, or if there  
had been more certain notice of my arriving. This  
rejoiced me; for I think I can stand anything better  
than this. It savors too much of human grandeur.  
But I must be tried every way; the Lord be my  
helper. After stopping a while, we went together to  
Boston, to the house of one Mr. Sandiford, brother-in-  
law to the Rev. Dr. Colman, who long since had  
sent me an invitation. . . . My heart was but low, and  
my body weak; but, at the request of one of the min-  
isters, I gave thanks to our gracious God for bringing  
me in safety, and prayed that my coming might be in  
the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.”

He slept well that night, and the next morning, he  
says, “I perceived fresh emanations of divine light  
break in upon and refresh my soul.” He was visited  
by several gentlemen, including Josiah Willard, Esq.,  
the secretary of the province, a man who feared God,  
and with whom Whitefield had for some time been in  
correspondence. The governor, Belcher, received him  
with the utmost respect, and requested frequent visits.  
He attended public worship at the church of England,  
and waited on the commissary home, who received  
him very courteously. As it was a day on which the  
clergy of that body had a meeting, he came into the  
company of five of them assembled- together. They  
soon attacked him “for calling that Tennent and his  
brethren faithful ministers of Christ.” He answered,  
that he believed they were so. They questioned the va-  
lidity of Presbyterian ordination, and quoted from his  
journal his own words against him. He replied, that  
perhaps his. sentiments were altered. They then went

into a doctrinal discussion, which continued till White-  
field, finding how inconsistent they were, took his  
leave, resolving that they should not have the oppor-  
tunity of denying him their pulpits. However, they  
treated him, on the whole, with more courtesy than  
he had lately been accustomed to receive from the  
ministers of his own church.

In the afternoon of the same day, he preached to  
a vast congregation in the Rev. Mr. Colman’s meeting-  
house, in Brattle-street, and in the evening exhorted  
and prayed with such as came to his lodgings. On  
Saturday, in the forenoon, he discoursed to a crowded  
audience at the Old South church, where Mr. Sewall  
was pastor, the only church edifice in Boston with  
which Whitefield was connected which is still stand-  
ing as it then was. In the afternoon he preached on  
the Common to about eight thousand persons, and at  
night to a thronged company at his own lodgings.

On the morning of the next day, which was the  
Sabbath, he heard Mr. Colman preach; in the after-  
noon, he preached at Mr. Foxcroft’s meeting-house to  
a vast auditory. This gentleman was the senior pas-  
tor of the First church, meeting in Chauncy place, and  
the Rev. Charles Chauncy was his colleague. The  
church edifice was in Cornhill-square, not far from  
the old state-house, and was usually called the “Old  
Brick meeting.” As this house was by far too small  
to contain his auditory, he almost immediately after-  
wards preached on the Common, to about fifteen thou-  
sand hearers; and again at night at his lodgings.  
He says, “Some afterwards came into my room. I  
felt much of the divine presence in my own soul, and

FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND. 159

though hoarse was enabled to speak with much power,  
and could have spoke, I believe, till midnight.”

On Monday morning, Whitefield preached at Mr.  
Webb's meeting-house, the “New North,” on the cor-  
ner of Clark and Hanover streets. “The presence of  
the Lord,” he says, “was among us. Look where I  
would around me, visible impressions were made upon  
the auditory. Most wept for a considerable time.”  
In the afternoon he meant to have preached at Mr.  
Checkley's, in Summer-street, but was prevented by  
an accident. Just before the time for the commence-  
ment of the service, a person broke a board in one of  
the galleries, of which to make a seat; the noise  
alarmed some who heard it, and they imprudently  
cried out that the galleries were giving way. The  
house being much crowded, the whole congregation  
were thrown into the utmost alarm and disorder;  
some jumped from the gallery into the seats below,  
others fell from the windows, and those below press-  
ing to get out of the porch, were many of them thrown  
over each other and trodden upon. Many, as might  
be expected, were seriously bruised; others had bones  
broken; and within two days five persons died from  
the injuries they had received. Mr. Whitefield's pres-  
ence of mind did not fail him; he immediately led  
the anxious throng to the Common, and preached to  
them from the text, “Go ye out into the highways  
and hedges, and compel them to come in.” He says,  
“The weather was wet, but above eight thousand fol-  
lowed into the fields."

On Tuesday morning, Whitefield visited Mr. Wal-  
ter, at Roxbury. This gentleman had been the col-

league, and was now the successor of John Eliot,  
“the apostle of the Indians.” These two men had  
been pastors of that church one hundred and six years.  
Whitefield was much pleased with Walter, who, in  
return, was glad to hear that he, like old Bishop Bev-  
eridge, called man “half a devil and half a beast.”  
He preached that forenoon at Mr. Gee’s meeting-  
house, the “Old North,” of which church the celebrat-  
ed Dr. Cotton Mather had formerly been pastor. The  
house stood in the North square, and was taken down  
by the British army and burned for fuel at the siege  
of Boston, in 1776. The auditory Whitefield preach-  
ed to that morning was not very crowded, as the peo-  
ple were in doubt where he would preach. After  
dining with the secretary of the province, he says, “I  
preached in the afternoon at Dr. Sewall’s to a thronged  
congregation, and exhorted and prayed as usual at  
my own lodgings; at neither place without some man-  
ifestations of a divine power accompanying the word.”  
Wednesday was not lost. Whitefield himself shall  
describe its proceedings. “Went this morning to see  
and preach at Cambridge, the chief college for train-  
ing up the sons of the prophets in all New England.   
It has one president, I think four tutors, and about a  
hundred students. It is scarce as big as one of our  
least colleges in Oxford, and as far as I could gather  
from some who well knew the state of it, not far su-  
perior to our universities in piety and true godliness.  
Tutors neglect to pray with, and examine the hearts  
of their pupils. Discipline is at too low an ebb. Bad  
books are become fashionable. Tillotson and Clarke  
are read instead of Sheppard, Stoddard, and such like

FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND. 161

evangelical writers; and therefore I chose to preach  
on these words: ‘We are not as many, who corrupt the  
word of God;’ and in the conclusion of my sermon I  
made a close application to tutors and students. A  
great number of neighboring ministers attended, as  
indeed they do at all other times, and God gave me  
great boldness and freedom of speech. The president  
of the college and minister of the parish treated me  
very civilly. In the afternoon I preached again in  
the court, without any particular application to the  
students. I believe there were, about seven thousand  
hearers. The Holy Spirit melted many hearts. The  
word was attended with a manifest power; and a  
minister soon after wrote me word, that he believed  
one of his daughters was savingly wrought upon at that  
time.’ Paid my respects to the lieutenant-governor, who  
lives at Cambridge, and returned in the evening to Bos-  
ton, and prayed with and exhorted many people who  
were waiting round the door for a spiritual morsel.  
I believe our Lord did not send them empty away.”

An elm under which Whitefield preached in Cam-  
bridge became distinguished; it being under its shade  
that Washington, thirty-one years after, first drew his  
sword in the cause of the Revolution, on taking the  
command of the American army. From this circum-  
stance, it has been called the “Washington elm.” The  
last time the late distinguished Dr. Holyoke, of Salem,  
Mass., was in Cambridge, then nearly a hundred years  
old, while passing this tree with a friend, he said that  
he heard Whitefield’s sermon, being at the time a stu-  
dent in college.

On Thursday he preached the weekly lecture at

Mr. Foxcroft's, the First church. But he says, “I  
was so oppressed with a sense of my base ingratitude  
to my dearest Saviour, that Satan would fain have  
tempted me to hold my tongue, and not invite poor  
sinners to Jesus Christ, because I was so great a sin-  
ner myself. But God enabled me to withstand the  
temptation, and since Jesus Christ had shown such  
mercy to, and had not withdrawn his Holy Spirit from  
me, the chief of sinners, I was enabled more feelingly  
to talk of his love; and afterwards found that one  
stranger, in particular, was in all probability effectu-  
ally convinced by that morning's sermon. After pub-  
lic worship, I went, at his excellency's invitation, and  
dined with the governor. Most of the ministers of  
the town were invited with me. Before dinner, the  
governor sent for me up into his chamber. He wept,  
wished me ‘good luck in the name of the Lord,' and  
recommended himself, ministers, and people to my  
prayers. Immediately after dinner, I prayed explic-  
itly for them all, and went in his coach to the end of  
the town; but had such a sense of my vileness upon  
my soul, that I wondered people did not stone me.  
Crossed a ferry, and preached at Charlestown, a town  
lying on the north side of Boston. The meeting-house  
was very capacious, and quite filled. A gracious melt-  
ing was discernible through the whole congregation,  
and I perceived much freedom and sweetness in my  
own soul, though the damp I felt in the morning was  
not quite gone off. In the evening I exhorted and  
prayed as usual at my lodgings; and blessed be God,  
I found a great alteration in my hearers. They now

began to melt and weep under the word."

On Friday, the following day, he preached in the  
morning at Roxbury, from a little ascent, to many  
thousands of people, with much of the divine presence.  
Several came to him afterwards telling him how they  
were struck with the word. Having dined with Judge  
Dudley, he preached to a still larger congregation  
from a scaffold erected outside Mr. Byles’ meeting-  
house in Hollis-street. Wrote to several friends in  
England; gave a short exhortation to a large crowd  
of hearers; and then spent the evening with several  
ministers in edifying conversation, singing, and prayer.

Saturday, he preached in the morning at Mr. Wel-  
steed’s meeting-house, and in the afternoon to about  
fifteen thousand people on the Common. “ But Oh,  
how did the word run! It rejoiced me to see such  
numbers greatly affected, so that some, I believe, could  
scarcely abstain from crying out. That place was no  
other than a Bethel, and a gate of heaven.” After  
he had gone home to his lodgings he says, “The power  
and presence of the Lord accompanied and followed  
me. Many now wept bitterly, and cried out under  
the word like persons that were really hungering and  
thirsting after righteousness; and after I left them,  
God gave me to wrestle with him in my chamber, in  
behalf of some dear friends then present, and others  
that were absent from us. The Spirit of the Lord  
was upon them all. It made intercession with groan-  
ings that cannot be uttered.”

On the day following, being the Sabbath, in the  
morning he preached at the Old South church, Dr.  
Sewall’s, to a very, crowded auditory, “with almost as  
much power and visible appearance of God as yester-

day. Collected £555 currency for my little lambs;  
was taken very ill after dinner; vomited violently,  
but was enabled to preach at Dr. Colman’s in the  
afternoon to as great, if not a greater congregation  
than in the morning. Here also £470 were collected  
for the orphan-house in Georgia. In both places all  
things were carried on with decency and order. Peo-  
ple went slowly out, as though they had not a mind  
to escape giving and Dr. Colman said ‘it was the  
most pleasant time he ever enjoyed in that meeting-  
house through the whole course of his life.’ Blessed  
be God, after sermon I perceived myself somewhat  
refreshed. Supped very early. Had the honor of a  
private visit from the governor, who came full of affec-  
tion to take his leave of me for the present. Went,  
at their request, and preached to a great company of  
negroes, on the conversion of the Ethiopian, Acts the  
eighth; at which the poor creatures, as well as many  
white people, were much affected; and at my return,  
gave an exhortation to a crowd of people who were  
waiting at my lodgings. My animal spirits were  
almost exhausted, and my legs, through expense of  
sweating and vomiting, almost ready to sink under  
me; but the Lord visited my soul, and I went to bed  
greatly refreshed with divine consolations.” Even at  
this early period such sufferings of his bodily system  
frequently followed his herculean labors.

Early on Monday morning, Sept. 29, Whitefield  
left Boston on an excursion to the eastward. At  
Marblehead, he “preached to some thousands in a  
broad place in the middle of the town, but not with  
much apparent effect.” At Salem, he “preached to

about seven thousand people. Here the Lord mani-  
fested forth his glory. One man was, I believe, struck  
down by the power of the word. In every part of the  
congregation, persons might be seen under great con-  
cern.” He went on to Ipswich, where he was kindly  
“entertained at the house of Mr. Rogers, one of the  
ministers of the place.” Of this family our evangelist  
was soon to know more than he had hitherto done.  
At about this period, John Rogers, aged 77, and  
Nathanael Rogers, were joint pastors of the First  
church at Ipswich; both of them were ardent pro-  
moters of the revival, as was also Daniel Rogers, of  
the same family. Whitefield learned with deep inter-  
est that his host was a descendant of the celebrated  
martyr, John Rogers. The next day he preached  
there to some thousands. “The Lord,” says he, “gave  
me freedom, and there was a great melting in the con-  
gregation.” At Newbury, in the afternoon, the Lord  
accompanied the word with power. The meeting-  
house was very large, many ministers were present,  
and the people were greatly affected. Blessed be  
God, his divine power attends us more and more.”  
"Wednesday, he preached at Hampton, in the open air,  
to some thousands. He was here very highly grati-  
fied with the conversation of Mr. Colton, the minister,  
and with the Christian simplicity of his excellent  
wife. The high wind prevented his being heard so  
well as he usually was, and he did not enjoy his accus-  
tomed freedom; still, “some, though not many, were  
affected.” At Portsmouth, he “preached to a polite  
auditory, but so very unconcerned, that I began to  
question whether I had been speaking to rational or

brute creatures. Seeing no immediate effects of the  
word preached, I was a little dejected; but God, to  
comfort my heart, sent one young man, crying out in  
great anguish of spirit, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’”  
From Portsmouth, our evangelist proceeded to  
York, in Maine, “to see one Mr. Moody, a worthy,  
plain, and powerful minister of Jesus Christ, though  
now much impaired by old age. He has lived by  
faith for many years, would have no settled salary,  
and has been much despised by bad men, and as much  
respected by the true lovers of the blessed Jesus.”  
The next morning he was much comforted to hear,  
from Mr. Moody, that he would preach that morning  
to a hundred new creatures; “and indeed,” says he,  
“I believe I did; for when I came to preach, I could  
speak little or no terror, but most consolation.” He  
preached morning and evening. “The hearers looked  
plain and simple, and the tears trickled apace down  
most of their cheeks.” He returned to Portsmouth  
that night, and the next morning preached to a far  
greater congregation, and with much better effect than  
before. “Instead of preaching to dead stocks, I now  
had reason to believe I was preaching to living men.  
People began to melt soon after I began to pray;  
and the power increased more and more during, the  
whole sermon.” This was still more clearly evinced  
after Mr. Whitefield’s departure from the town.

Returning to Boston, through Salem, Marblehead,  
and Malden, in each of which places he preached, and  
being now in improved health, he preached, October 7,  
both morning and evening, “with much power,” at  
Brattle-street. There had been for several days a

report in circulation, that he had died suddenly, or  
was poisoned, and the people greatly rejoiced again  
to see him alive. At Mr. Webb’s, the New North  
church, on the following Wednesday, he thought there  
was more of the presence of God through the whole  
ministration, than he had before, known at one time  
in the course of his life. He went there with the  
governor, in his coach, and preached morning and  
evening. “Jesus Christ manifested forth his glory;  
many hearts melted within them; and I think I was  
never drawn out to pray for and invite little children  
to Jesus Christ, as I was this morning. A little be-  
fore, I had heard of a child who was taken sick just  
after it had heard me preach, and said he would go  
to Mr. Whitefield’s God, and died in a short time.  
This encouraged me to speak to the little ones. But  
O, how were the old people affected when I said, ‘Lit-  
tle children, if your parents will not come to Christ,  
do you come, and go to heaven without them.’ There  
seemed to be but few dry eyes, look where I would.  
I have not seen a greater commotion since my preach-  
ing at Boston. Glory be to God, who has not for-  
gotten to be gracious.” He collected, after this ser-  
mon, £440 for his orphan-house, which was now more  
generally supported than ever before.

The interesting fact we have just related of the  
impression produced on the mind of a little child by  
the preaching of Mr. Whitefield, may afford the oppor-  
tunity to introduce one or two other facts bearing on  
the same general topic, and suggesting some practical  
lessons.

Whitefield could indeed descend to talk with chil·

dren. Here is a specimen which, at once impresses us  
with a lively idea of his spirit, and of the adaptation  
of the religion of Jesus to the young as well as the  
old. A little girl seven years of age, when on her  
death-bed, desired an interview with him; he came, and  
thus they conversed:

Whitefield. For what purpose, my dear child,  
have you sent for me?

Girl. I think I am dying, and I wished very  
much to see you.

Whitefield. What can I do for you ?

Girl. You can tell me about Christ, and pray  
for me.

Whitefield. My dear girl, what do you know  
about Christ?

Girl. I know he is the Saviour of the world.

Whitefield. My dear child, he is so.

Girl. I hope he will be my Saviour also.

Whitefield. I hope, my dear, that this is the  
language of faith out of the mouth of a babe; but tell  
me what ground you have for saying this?

Girl. Oh, sir, he bids little children, such as I,  
to come unto him, and says, “Of such is the kingdom  
of heaven;” and besides, I love Christ, and am always  
glad when I think of him.

Whitefield. My dear child, you make my very  
heart to rejoice; but are you not a sinner?

Girl. Yes, I am a sinner, but my blessed Re-  
deemer takes away sin, and I long to be with him.

Whitefield, My dear girl, I trust that the desire  
of your heart will be granted; but where do you  
think you will find your Redeemer?

Girl. 0, sir, I think I shall find him in heaven.

Whitefield. Do you think you will get to heaven?  
Girl. Yes, I do.

Whitefield. But what if you do not find Christ  
there?

Girl. If I do not find Christ there, I am sure it is  
not heaven; for where he dwells must be heaven, for  
there also dwells God, and holy angels, and all that  
Christ saves.

Who can tell the results of a single sermon, or  
trace the consequences of one conversion? When  
Mr. Whitefield was preaching in New England, a  
lady became the subject of divine grace, and her spirit  
was peculiarly drawn out in prayer for others. But  
in her Christian exercises she was alone; she could  
persuade no one to pray with her but her little daugh-  
ter, about ten years of age. She took this dear child  
into her closet from day to day, as a witness of her  
cries and tears. After a time, it pleased God to  
touch the heart of the child, and to give her the hope  
of salvation by the remission of sin. In a transport  
of holy joy she then exclaimed, “0, mother, if all the  
world knew this! I wish I could tell everybody. Pray,  
mother, let me run to some of the neighbors and tell  
them, that they may be happy and love my Saviour  
too.” “Ah, my dear child,” said the mother, “that  
would be useless, for I suppose that were you to tell  
your experience, there is not one within many miles  
who would not laugh at you, and say it was all delu-  
sion.” “Oh, mother,” replied the dear girl, “I think  
they would believe me. I must go over to the shoe-  
maker and tell him; he will believe me.” She ran

Whitefield. 8

over, and found him at work in his shop. She began  
by telling him that he must die, and that he was a  
sinner, and that she was a sinner, but that her blessed  
Saviour had heard her mother’s prayers, and had for-  
given all her sins; and that now she was so happy  
that she did not know how to tell it. The shoemaker  
was struck with surprise, his tears flowed down like  
rain; he threw aside his work, and by prayer and sup-  
plication sought for mercy. The neighborhood were  
awakened, and within a few months more than fifty  
persons were brought to the knowledge of Jesus, and  
rejoiced in his power and grace.

But to return to our narrative of Whitefield’s la-  
bors in Boston. On Thursday, October 9, he preached  
the public lecture at the Old South church. He had  
selected another text, but it was much impressed on  
his heart that he should preach from our Lord’s con-  
ference with Nicodemus. A large number of minis-  
ters were present, and when he came to the words,  
“Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these  
things?” he says, “The Lord enabled me to open my  
mouth boldly against unconverted ministers, to caution  
tutors to take care of their pupils, and also to advise  
ministers particularly to examine into the experiences  
of candidates for ordination. For I am verily per-  
suaded the generality of preachers talk of an unknown  
and unfelt Christ; and the reason why congregations  
have been so dead is, because they have had dead men  
preaching to them. 0 that the Lord may quicken  
and revive them, for his own name’s sake. For how  
can dead men beget living children? It is true, indeed,  
God may convert men by the devil, if he pleases, and

so he may by unconverted ministers; but I believe  
he seldom makes use of either of them for this pur-  
pose. No; the Lord will choose vessels made meet  
by the operations of the blessed Spirit for his sacred  
use: and as for my own part, I would not lay hands  
on an unconverted man for ten thousand worlds. Un-  
speakable freedom God gave me while treating on  
this head. After sermon, I dined with the governor,  
who seemed more kindly affected than ever, and par-  
ticularly told me, of the minister who has lately begun  
to preach extempore, that ‘he was glad he had found  
out a way to save his eyes. ‘In the afternoon I preach-  
ed on the Common to about fifteen thousand people,  
and collected upwards of two hundred pounds for the  
orphan-house. Just as I had finished my sermon, a  
ticket was put up to me, wherein I was desired to  
pray for a person just entered upon the ministry, but  
under apprehension that he was not converted. God  
enabled me to pray for him with my whole heart; and  
I hope that ticket may teach many others not to run  
before they can give an account of their conversion.  
If they do, they offer to God strange fire.” The same  
day and evening, Whitefield attended the funeral of  
one of the provincial council, preached at the alms-  
house, exhorted a great number of persons at the  
workhouse, who followed him there, and conversed  
with many who waited at his lodgings for spiritual  
advice. From the time of his return from the east,  
he had been thronged, morning and evening, with  
anxious inquirers. His friends cried, “Spare thyself;”but he says, “I went and ate bread very comfortably  
at a friend’s house, where I was invited, and soon

after retired to my rest. Oh, how comfortable is  
sleep after working for Jesus.”

On Friday he preached at Charlestown and at  
Reading to many thousands, and on Saturday from  
the meeting-house door at Cambridge, on Noah as a  
preacher of righteousness; a great number of persons  
were present, who stood very attentively during a  
shower of rain, and were at the latter part of the  
sermon much affected. On the same afternoon he  
returned to Boston, and again preached, and was en-  
gaged till midnight, chiefly in conversation and prayer  
with persons anxious for their salvation.

Sunday, October 12, he rose with body and soul  
greatly refreshed, and spent its early hours in con-  
versing with those who came for spiritual counsel.  
He then “preached with great power and affection”  
at the Old South church, which was so exceedingly  
thronged, that he was obliged to get in at one of the  
windows. He dined with the governor, who came to  
him after dinner weeping, and desired his prayers.  
He heard Dr. Sewall in the afternoon. Both during  
the exercises and after them he was sick, but went  
with the governor in his coach, and preached his fare-  
well sermon on the Common, Gillies says, to twenty  
thousand, and Tracy to nearly thirty thousand people,  
though the whole population of Boston did not at that  
time exceed twenty thousand. Great multitudes were  
melted into tears when he spoke of leaving them.  
The governor then went with him to his lodgings.  
He stood in the passage and spoke to a great com-  
pany, both within and without the doors; but they  
were so deeply affected, and cried out so loud, that

he was compelled to leave off praying. The remain-  
ing part of the evening was chiefly spent in conversa-  
tion with inquirers.

In closing his account of this day’s work, he ex-  
claims, “Blessed be God for what things he has done  
in Boston! I hope a glorious work is now begun,  
and that the Lord will stir up some faithful laborers  
to carry it on. Boston is a large, populous place,  
very wealthy. Has the form kept up, but has lost  
much of the power of religion. I have not heard of  
any remarkable stir for these many years. Ministers  
and people are obliged to confess, that the love of many  
is waxed cold. Both, for the generality, seem to be  
too much conformed to the world. There is much of  
the pride of life to be seen in their assemblies. Jewels,  
patches, and gay apparel are commonly worn by the  
female sex; and even the common people, I observed  
dressed up in the pride of life. There are nine meet-  
ing-houses of the Congregational persuasion, one Bap-  
tist, one French, and one belonging to the Scotch-Irish.  
One thing Boston is very remarkable for—the exter-  
nal observance of the Sabbath. Men in civil offices  
have a regard for religion. The governor encourages  
them, and the ministers and magistrates are more  
united than in any other place where I have been.  
Both were exceedingly civil to me during my stay. I  
never saw so little scoffing, never had so little oppo-  
sition. But one might easily see much would here-  
after arise, when I came to be more particular in my  
application to particular persons; for I fear many  
rest in a head-knowledge, are close pharisees, and  
have only a name to live. It must needs be so when

174 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
the power of godliness is dwindled away, and where  
the form only of religion is become fashionable among  
people. Boston people are dear to my soul. They  
were greatly affected by the word, followed me night  
and day, and were very liberal to my dear orphans.  
I promised, God willing, to visit them again, and in-  
tend to fulfil my promise when it shall please God to  
bring me again from my native country. In the mean-  
while, dear Boston, adieu. The Lord be with thy  
ministers and people, and grant that the remnant  
which is still left according to the election of grace,  
may take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards,  
and fill the land.”

On the morning following these solemn services,  
Whitefield left Boston on his way to Northampton.  
To detail his four days’ progress, would be almost to  
repeat what we have already written. At Concord,  
where he arrived on Monday about noon, he preached  
twice to some thousands in the open air, “and a com-  
fortable preaching it was. The hearers were sweetly  
melted down.” Mr. Bliss, the minister of the town,  
of whose subsequent labors it has been well said, more  
perfect accounts ought to have been preserved, wept  
abundantly. On Tuesday he “preached at Sudbury  
to some thousands with power, and observed a consid-  
erable commotion in the assembly;” as was also the  
case the same afternoon at Marlborough. At the lat-  
ter place he was met by Governor Belcher, who went  
with him through the rain that night to Worcester.  
Here, on Wednesday, he “preached in the open air to  
some thousands. The word fell with weight indeed.  
It carried all before it. After sermon, the governor

said to me, ‘I pray God I may apply what has been  
said to my own heart. Pray, Mr. Whitefield, that I  
may hunger and thirst after righteousness.’” Pass-  
ing on, he preached at Leicester, Brookfield, and Cold-  
Spring, on his way to Hadley, where he arrived on  
Friday, and preached about noon. In this place he  
says, “A great work was begun, and carried on some  
years ago; but lately the people of God have complain-  
ed of deadness and losing their first love. However,  
as soon as I mentioned what God had done for their  
souls formerly, it was like putting fire to timber. The  
remembrance of it quickened them, and caused many  
to weep sorely.” On the same afternoon he crossed  
the ferry to Northampton.

Of the great revival of religion in New England,  
which commenced at Northampton about 1734, and is  
the subject of President Edwards’ “Narrative,” we  
have already briefly spoken; its importance will justify  
a more extended notice. It began without any extra-  
ordinary circumstances to awaken the attention of the  
people, or any uncommon arrangements or efforts by  
the minister. The young people of the place had for  
two or three years shown an increased measure of  
thoughtfulness, and a growing disposition to receive  
religious instruction. There had been, from time to  
time, instances of strong religious impression and of  
hopeful conversion. But in the latter end of Decem-  
ber, 1734, five or six persons, one after another, be-  
came very suddenly the subjects of the grace of God  
which newly creates the soul. Among these was a  
young woman distinguished for her gayety in youthful  
society, “one of the greatest company-keepers in the

176 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

whole town,” who came to the pastor with a broken  
heart and a contrite spirit, and with faith and hope in  
the Saviour of sinners, before anyone had heard of  
her being at all impressed with serious things. The  
sudden, though, as time proved, the real conversion of  
this young woman, was the power of God striking the  
electric chain of religious sympathies which had im-  
perceptibly, but effectually encircled all the families  
of Northampton. Mr. Edwards’ “Narrative” says,  
“The news of it seemed to be almost like a flash of  
lightning upon the hearts of young people all over the  
town, and upon many others. . . . Presently a great  
and earnest concern about the great things of religion  
and the eternal world became universal in all parts  
of the town, and among persons of all degrees and all  
ages. All talk but about spiritual and eternal things  
was soon thrown by; all the conversation in all com-  
panies was upon these things only, except so much as  
was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary  
secular business. The minds of people were wonder-  
fully taken off from the world; it was treated among  
us as a thing of very little consequence. All would  
eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls, and  
were wont very often to meet together in private  
houses for religious purposes. And such meetings,  
when appointed, were generally thronged. Those  
who were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and  
those who had been most disposed to think and speak  
lightly of vital and experimental religion, were now  
generally subject to great awakening. And the work  
of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing  
manner, and increased more and more. From day to

day, for many months together, might be seen evident  
instances of sinners brought out of darkness into mar-  
vellous light. In the spring and summer following,  
the town seemed to be full of the presence of God; it  
was never so full of love, and yet so full of distress,  
as it was then. It was a time of joy in families, on  
account of salvation being brought to them; parents  
rejoicing over their children as new-born, and hus-  
bands over their wives, and wives over their hus-  
bands. The goings of God were then seen in his  
sanctuary, God’s day was a delight, and his taberna-  
cles were amiable. Our public assemblies were then  
beautiful; the congregation was alive in God’s ser-  
vice, every one eagerly intent on the public worship,  
every hearer eager to drink in the words of the min-  
ister as they came from his mouth. The assembly  
were, from time to time, in tears, while the word was  
preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress,  
others with joy and love, others with pity and con-  
cern for their neighbors.”

In December, 1743, nine years after this blessed  
work had begun, Edwards writes, “Ever since the  
great work of God that was wrought here about nine  
years ago, there has been a great, abiding alteration  
in this town, in many respects. There has been vastly  
more religion kept up in the town, among all sorts of  
persons, in religious exercises, and in common conver-  
sation, than used to be before. There has remained  
a more general seriousness and decency in attending  
the public worship. I suppose the town has been in  
no measure so free from vice, for any long time to-  
gether, for these sixty years, as it has these nine years

8\*

past. There has also been an evident alteration with  
respect to a charitable spirit to the poor. And though,  
after that great work of nine years ago, there has  
been a very lamentable decay of religious affections,  
and the engagedness of people’s spirits in religion,  
yet many societies for prayer and social religion were  
all along kept up, and there were some few instances  
of awakening and deep concern about the things of  
another world, even in the most dead time. In the  
year 1740, in the spring, before Mr. Whitefield came  
to this town, there was a visible alteration. There  
was more seriousness and religious conversation, espe-  
cially among young people. Those things that were  
of ill tendency among them were more forborne; and  
it was a more frequent thing for persons to visit their  
ministers upon soul accounts. In some particular per-  
sons, there appeared a great alteration about. that  
time. And thus it continued till Mr. Whitefield came  
to town, which was about the middle of October  
following.”

And what thought Whitefield himself on his arri-  
val at Northampton? Let us hear him. “Their pas-  
tor’s name is Edwards, successor and grandson to the  
great Stoddard, whose memory will be always pre-  
cious to my soul, and whose books, entitled,’ “A Guide  
to Christ” and “Safety of appearing in Christ’s right-  
eousness,” I would recommend to all. Mr. Edwards  
is a solid, excellent Christian, but at present weak in  
body. I think I may say I have not seen his fellow  
in all New England. When I came into his pulpit, I  
found my heart drawn out to talk of scarce anything  
besides the consolations and privileges of saints, and

the plentiful effusion of the Spirit upon the hearts of  
believers. And when I came to remind them of their  
former experiences, and how zealous and lively they  
were at that time, both minister and people wept  
much; and the Holy Ghost enabled me to speak with  
a great deal of power. In the evening, I gave a word  
of exhortation to several who came to Mr. Edwards’  
house.”

On the following morning, “At Mr. Edwards’ re-  
quest, I spoke to his little children, who were much  
affected. Preached at Hatfield, five miles from North-  
ampton, but found myself not much strengthened.  
Conversed profitably on the way about the things of  
God with dear Mr. Edwards, and preached about four  
in the afternoon to his congregation. I began with  
fear and trembling, feeling but little power in the  
morning, but God assisted me. Few dry eyes seemed  
to be in the assembly for a considerable time. I had  
an affecting prospect in my own heart of the glories  
of the upper world, and was enabled to speak of them  
feelingly to others. I believe many were filled, as it  
were, with new wine; and it seemed as if a time of  
refreshing was come from the presence of the Lord.”

The day following this was the Sabbath. White-  
field tells us in his journal, that he “felt wonderful  
satisfaction in being at the house of Mr. Edwards.  
He is a son himself, and hath also a daughter of Abra-  
ham for his wife. A sweeter couple I have not yet  
seen. Their children were dressed, not in silks and  
satins, but plain, as becomes the children of those who  
in all things ought to be examples of Christian sim-  
plicity. She is a woman adorned with a meek and

quiet spirit, talked feelingly and solidly of the things  
of God, and seemed to be such a help-mate for her  
husband, that she caused me to renew those prayers,  
which, for some months, I have put up to God, that  
he would be pleased to send me a daughter of Abra-  
ham to be my wife. I find, upon many accounts, it is  
my duty to marry. Lord, I desire to have no choice  
of my own. Thou knowest my circumstances; thou  
knowest I only desire to marry in and for thee.”

Whitefield “preached this morning, and perceived  
the melting begin sooner and rise higher than before.  
Dear Mr. Edwards wept during the whole time of  
exercise. The people were equally, if not more af-  
fected; and my own soul was much lifted up towards  
God. In the afternoon the power increased yet more  
and more. Our Lord seemed to keep the good wine  
till the last. I have not seen four such gracious meet-  
ings together since my arrival. My soul was much  
knit to these dear people of God; and though I had  
not time to converse with them about their expe-  
riences, yet one might see they were for the most  
part, a gracious, tender people; and though their  
former fire might be greatly abated, yet it immedi-  
ately appeared when stirred up.”

Edwards had looked forward to Whitefield’s visit  
to Northampton with interest, for he felt greatly con-  
cerned for his success. He wrote a week before his  
arrival to his friend Dr. Wheelock, then a young min-  
ister of twenty-nine, “I think that those that make  
mention of the Lord, should now be awakened and  
encouraged to call upon God, and not keep silence,  
nor give him any rest, till he establish and till he

make Jerusalem a praise in the earth; and particu-  
larly should be earnest with God, that he would still  
uphold and succeed the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, the in-  
strument that it has pleased him to improve to do  
such great things for the honor of his name, and at  
all times so to guide and direct him under his extra-  
ordinary circumstances, that Satan may not get any  
advantage of him.”

After his visit, Edwards writes, “Mr. Whitefield’s  
sermons were suitable to the circumstances of the  
town; containing just reproofs of our backslidings,  
and in a most moving and affecting manner, making  
use of our great profession and our great mercies as  
arguments with us to return to God, from whom we  
had departed. Immediately after this, the minds of  
the people in general appeared more engaged in relig-  
ion, showing a greater forwardness to make it the  
subject of their conversation, and to meet frequently  
for religious purposes, and to embrace all opportuni-  
ties to hear the word preached. The revival at first  
appeared chiefly among professors, and those who had  
entertained the hope that they were in a state of grace,  
to whom Mr. Whitefield chiefly addressed himself;  
but in a very short time, there appeared an awakening  
and deep concern among some young persons that  
looked upon themselves in a Christless state; and  
there were some hopeful appearances of conversion;  
and some professors were greatly revived. In about  
a month or six weeks, there was a great alteration in  
the town, both as to the revivals of professors, and  
awakenings of others.”

During this visit of Whitefield to Edwards, some

conversation was held between them, of which, several  
years afterwards, as it appears to us, far too much  
was said. Edwards took an opportunity, privately,  
to converse with his friend about impulses, and furnish-  
ed him with some reasons for thinking that he gave  
too much attention to such things. Whitefield did  
not appear offended, neither did he seem inclined to  
converse much on the subject, or to yield to the rea-  
sonings of his friend Edwards. The latter says, “It  
is true, that I thought Mr. Whitefield liked me not so  
well for my opposing these things; and though he  
treated me with great kindness, yet he never made so  
much of an intimate of me, as of some others.” It  
seems also, that they conversed on the strong lan-  
guage which the great evangelist was accustomed to  
employ as to those whom he considered to be uncon-  
verted, and the duty of the people to forsake the  
preaching of ministers whom he did not consider to  
be renewed in the spirit of their minds. Whitefield  
told Edwards also, of the design he had cherished of  
bringing over a number of young men from England,  
to be ordained by the Tennents, in New Jersey; an  
object, however, which he never accomplished.

It appears that after preaching at Northampton  
twice on the Sabbath, Whitefield, accompanied by his  
friend Edwards, rode to the house of the father of the  
last-named gentleman, the Rev. Timothy Edwards, in  
East Windsor, Connecticut. At this place, as also at  
Westfield, Springfield, Suffield, Hartford, Wethers-  
field, Middletown, and Wailingford, he preached to  
large assemblies, generally with his accustomed ani-  
mation and power, and with the happy proofs of suc-

cess which he so frequently witnessed. During this  
week also, he experienced a remarkable deliverance  
from great danger. He says, “A little after I left  
Springfield, my horse, coming over a broken bridge,  
threw me over his head, directly upon my nose. The  
fall stunned me for a while. My mouth was full of  
dust, I bled a little, but falling upon soft sand, got not  
much damage. After I had recovered myself, and  
mounted my horse, God so filled me with a sense of  
his sovereign, distinguishing love, and my own un-  
worthiness, that my eyes gushed out with tears; but  
they were all tears of love. Oh, how did I want to  
sink before the high and lofty One who inhabiteth  
eternity!”

During this week also, on his way to Suffield, he  
met with aminister who said, “It was not absolutely  
necessary for a gospel minister, that he should be con-  
verted meaning, no doubt, that though conversion  
was necessary to his salvation, it was not indispensa-  
ble to his ministerial character and usefulness. This  
gave Whitefield a subject. “I insisted much in my  
discourse upon the doctrine of the new birth, and also  
the necessity of a minister’s being converted, before  
he could preach Christ aright. The word came with  
great power, and a great impression was made upon  
the people in all parts of the assembly. Many minis-  
ters were present. I did not spare them. Most of  
them thanked me for my plain dealing; but one was  
offended; and so would more of his stamp be, if I  
were to continue longer in New England. For un-  
converted ministers are the bane of the Christian  
church; and though I honor the memory of that great

and good man Mr. Stoddard, yet I think he is much  
to be blamed for endeavoring to prove that uncon-  
verted men might be admitted into the ministry. How  
he has handled the controversy, I know not. I think  
no solid arguments can be brought to defend such a  
cause. A sermon lately published by Mr. Gilbert  
Tennent, entitled, ‘The Danger of an Unconverted Minis-  
try,’ I think unanswerable. Tracy truly says, that  
Stoddard, in his ‘Appeal to the Learned,’ assumes that  
an unconverted minister is bound to continue in the  
performance of ministerial duties, and infers that uncon-  
verted men may therefore be admitted to the church.  
This opinion at one period extensively prevailed,  
though all held it desirable that a minister should be  
a converted man. By his attacks on this opinion, and  
especially by thus endorsing Tennent’s Nottingham  
sermon, Whitefield gave great offence.”

On Wednesday afternoon, he preached at East  
Windsor, and spent the night with Mr. Edwards, sen-  
ior, “I believe,” he says, “a true disciple and minis-  
ter of the Lord Jesus Christ. After exercise, we sup-  
ped at the house of old Mr. Edwards. His wife was  
as aged, I believe, as himself, and I fancied that I was  
sitting in the house of a Zacharias and Elisabeth.” On  
the following day, he “preached to many thousands,  
and with much freedom and power,” at Hartford in  
the morning, and at Wethersfield in the afternoon.  
Here he met Messrs. Wheelock and Pomeroy, “two  
young, faithful, and zealous ministers of Jesus Christ.”From this place he had intended to go eastward as  
far as Plymouth, and return by another route to Prov-  
idence, and notice had been given in the newspapers

of about twenty sermons which he proposed to preach  
at the times and places specified. He was afterwards  
blamed for making these appointments without first  
consulting the pastors of the several churches; thus  
giving countenance, it was said, to the practice of itin-  
erants intruding into other men’s parishes without  
their consent. The proceeding was certainly some-  
what irregular, but Whitefield was not much to be  
blamed for it. The details were settled, and the pub-  
lication made, by men in whose judgment and know-  
ledge of the customs of the country he had a right to  
confide; and the appointments were believed, in all  
cases, and doubtless known in some, to be agreeable  
to the parties concerned. At Wethersfield, however,  
the evangelist ascertained the necessity of his hasten-  
ing on to New York, and immediately, therefore, pub-  
lished a note recalling these appointments.

On Friday, October 24, Whitefield arrived at New  
Haven, and was entertained at the house of Mr. James  
Pierpont, the brother-in-law of Mr. Edwards, and of  
Mr. Noyes, the minister of the First Congregational  
church. The Legislature of the colony being in ses-  
sion, he remained till after the Lord’s day; and “had  
the pleasure of seeing numbers daily impressed,” un-  
der his ministrations in the old polygonal meeting-  
house. Several ministers of the vicinity visited him,  
“with whose pious conversation he was much refresh-  
ed.” Good old Governor Tallcott, on whom with  
due politeness he waited to pay his respects, said to  
him, “Thanks be to God for such refreshings in our  
way to heaven.” Among others who heard his glow-  
ing appeals to the congregations that listened to

him during this visit, was young Samuel Hopkins,  
still well known as an eminent divine. Hopkins was  
now nineteen, and was a student at college; his biog-  
rapher tells us, that “he was much interested in the  
man, and much impressed by his solemn warnings.”

The testimony of Hopkins himself may here be  
introduced. He says, speaking of Whitefield, “The  
attention of the people in general was greatly awak-  
ened upon hearing the fame of him, that there was a  
remarkable preacher from England travelling through  
the country. The people flocked to hear him when  
he came to New Haven. Some travelled twenty miles  
out of the country to hear him. The assemblies were  
crowded, and remarkably attentive; people appeared  
generally to approve, and their conversation turned  
chiefly upon him and his preaching. Some disap-  
proved of several things, which occasioned consid-  
erable disputes. I heard him when he preached in  
public, and when he expounded in private in the  
evening, and highly approved of him, and was im-  
pressed by what he said in public and in private. He  
preached against mixed dancing and the frolicking  
of males and females together, which practice was  
then very common in New England. This offended  
some, especially young people. But I remember I  
justified him in this in my own mind, and in conver-  
sation with those who were disposed to condemn him.  
This was in October, 1740, when I had entered on  
my last year in college.”

On this visit, Whitefield dined with the Rev. Mr.  
Clap, the rector of the college. Of the college he  
says, “It is about one-third part as big as Cam-

bridge. It has one rector, three tutors, and about a  
hundred students. But I hear of no remarkable con-  
cern among them concerning religion.” Mr. Clap, it  
is well known, afterwards became the public opponent  
of Whitefield; and it would seem that his dislike to  
him commenced with this first interview; for he  
“spoke very closely to the students, and showed the  
dreadful consequences of an unconverted ministry.”In his journal of the day he says, “0 that God may  
quicken ministers! 0 that the Lord may make them a  
flaming fire!” On the two days following, he preached  
at Milford, Stratford, and Fairfield, on his way to New  
York. On Wednesday, when at Stamford, he thus  
speaks of New England and his labors in it:

“I give God thanks for sending me to New Eng-  
land. I have now had an opportunity of seeing the  
greatest and most populous parts of it and take it  
all together, it certainly on many accounts exceeds  
all other provinces of America, and for the establish-  
ment of religion, perhaps all other parts of the world.  
Never, surely, was so large a spot of ground settled  
in such a manner, in so short a space of one hundred  
years. The towns all through Connecticut and east-  
wards towards York in the province of Massachusetts,  
[Maine,] near the river-side, are large, well peopled,  
and exceedingly pleasant to travel through. Every  
five miles, or perhaps less, you have a meeting-house,  
and I believe there is no such a thing as a pluralist,  
or non-resident minister in both provinces. Many,  
nay, most that preach, I fear do not experimentally  
know Christ; yet I cannot see much worldly advan-  
tage to tempt them to take, upon them the sacred

function. Few country ministers, as I have been in-  
formed, have sufficient allowed them in money to  
maintain a family. God has remarkably, in sundry  
times and in divers manners, poured out his Spirit in  
several parts of both provinces; and it often refreshes  
my soul to hear of the faith of the good forefathers  
who first settled in these parts. Notwithstanding  
they had their foibles, surely they were a set of right-  
eous men. They certainly followed our Lord's rule,  
sought first the kingdom of God and his righteous-  
ness; and behold, all other things God added unto  
them. Their seed are now blessed, in temporal things  
especially, and notwithstanding the rising generation  
seem to be settled on their lees, yet I believe the Lord  
hath more than seven thousand who have not bowed  
the knee to Baal. The ministers and people of Con-  
necticut seem to be more simple than those that live  
near Boston, especially in those parts where I went.  
But I think the ministers' preaching almost universally  
by notes, is a certain mark they have in a great meas-  
ure lost the old spirit of preaching. For though all  
are not to be condemned that use notes, yet it is a sad  
symptom of the decay of vital religion when reading  
sermons becomes fashionable, where extempore preach-  
ing did once almost universally prevail. As for the  
universities, I believe it may be said, their light is  
become darkness, darkness that may be felt, and is  
complained of by the most godly ministers. I pray  
God these fountains may be purified, and send forth  
pure streams to water the cities of our God. ... 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. The  
negroes I think better used, both in soul and body,  
than in any other province I have yet seen. In short,  
I like New England exceedingly well; and when a  
spirit of reformation revives, it certainly will prevail  
here more than in other places, because they are sim-  
ple in their worship, less corrupt in their principles,  
and consequently easier to be brought over to the  
form of sound words, into which so many of their  
pious ancestors were delivered. Send forth, 0 Lord,  
thy light and thy truth, and for thine infinite mercy's  
sake, show thou hast a peculiar delight in these hab-  
itable parts of the earth. Amen, Lord Jesus, amen,  
and amen.”

Among many who became the subjects of divine  
grace, during this visit of Whitefield to New England,  
was Daniel Emerson, who was educated at Harvard  
college, where he received his first degree in 1739,  
and where he continued to reside for some time as a  
graduate. While at college, he is said to have been  
very fond of the gay pleasures of this life, until his  
attention was effectually called to religion by the  
preaching of Whitefield, whom he followed from place  
to place for several days. He was ordained at Hollis,  
New Hampshire, in 1743, where, in a ministry of fifty  
years, he was a worthy follower of his spiritual father.  
The chief excellences of his preaching were sound doc-  
trine, deep feeling, and zeal at times almost over-  
whelming. He was truly a son of thunder, and a  
flaming light. He was almost incessantly engaged in  
labors, preaching, attending funerals, etc., far and

near. His efforts were greatly blessed, especially  
among his own people, who under his ministry en-  
joyed extensive revivals of religion, and where also a  
large number of ministers have been called to their  
work. He died in 1801, aged eighty-five.

It may be appropriate to introduce here a sketch  
of Whitefield’s doctrines and labors at this time, as  
given us by the eminent Dr. Thomas Prince, in his  
“Christian History,” under date of January 26, 1744-5,  
but having reference to Whitefield’s first visit to New  
England, which we have just described:

“He spoke with a mighty sense of God, eternity,  
the immortality and preciousness of the souls of his  
hearers, of their original corruption, and of the ex-  
treme danger the unregenerate are in; with the nature  
and absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy  
Ghost; and of believing in Christ, in order to our  
pardon, justification, yielding an acceptable obedience,  
and obtaining salvation from hell and an entrance  
into heaven. His doctrine was plainly that of the  
reformers; declaring against our putting our good  
works or morality in the room of Christ’s righteous-  
ness, or their having any hand in our justification, or  
being indeed pleasing to God while we are totally  
unsanctified, acting upon corrupt principles, and un-  
reconciled enemies to him; which occasioned some to  
mistake him, as if he opposed morality. But he in-  
sisted on it, that the tree of the heart is by original  
sin exceedingly corrupted, and must be made good by  
regeneration, that so the fruits proceeding from it may  
be good likewise ; that where the heart is renewed, it  
ought and will be careful to maintain good works,

FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND 191

that if any be not habitually so careful who think  
themselves renewed, they deceive their own souls;  
and even the most improved in holiness, as well as  
others, must entirely depend on the righteousness of  
Christ for the acceptance of their persons and services.  
And though now and then he dropped some expres-  
sions that were not so accurate and guarded as we  
should expect from aged and long-studied ministers,  
yet I had the satisfaction to observe his readiness with  
great modesty and thankfulness to receive correction  
as soon as offered.

“In short, he was a most importunate wooer of  
souls to come to Christ for the enjoyment of him, and  
all his benefits. He distinctly applied his exhorta-  
tions to the elderly people, the middle-aged, the young,  
the Indians, and negroes, and had a most winning  
way of addressing them. He affectionately prayed  
for our magistrates, ministers, colleges, candidates for  
the ministry, and churches, as well as people in gen-  
eral; and before he left us, in a public and moving  
manner, he observed to the people how sorry he was  
to hear that the religious assemblies, especially on  
lectures, had been so thin, exhorted them earnestly to  
a more general attendance on our public ministra-  
tions for the time to come, and told them how glad he  
should be to hear of the same.

“Multitudes were greatly affected, and many awak-  
ened with his lively ministry. Though he preached  
every day, the houses were crowded; but when he  
preached on the Common, a vaster number attended;  
and almost every evening the house where he lodged  
was thronged to hear his prayers and counsels.

“On Mr. Whitefield's leaving us, great numbers in  
this town [Boston] were so happily concerned about  
their souls, as we had never seen anything like it be-  
fore, except at the time of the general earthquake;[[1]](#footnote-1)  
and, their desires excited to hear their ministers more  
than ever. So that our assemblies, both on lectures  
and Sabbaths, were surprisingly increased, and now  
the people wanted to hear us oftener. In conse-  
quence of which a public lecture was proposed to be  
set up at Dr. Column's church, near the midst of the  
town, on every Tuesday evening."

In reference to the work of grace which was con-  
nected with Whitefield's preaching in New England,  
the Rev. Dr. Baron Stow, in his “Centennial Dis-  
course," says, “The result, by the blessing of God, was  
a powerful revival, such as New England had never  
witnessed. The work was opposed with great vehe-  
mence; and no impartial reader of the history of those  
extraordinary scenes can question that much of the  
hostility was provoked by improprieties of both speech  
and action, that would at any time be, offensive to  
those who love good order and Christian decorum.  
But after making liberal allowance for all that was  
truly exceptionable, it is cheerfully admitted by the

FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND 193

candid Christian, that the excitement was, in the  
main, the product of the Holy Spirit, and that its  
fruits Were eminently favorable to the advancement  
of true religion. A torpid community was aroused,  
as by the trump of God, from its long and heavy slum-  
ber; ministers and people were converted; the style  
of preaching, and the tone of individual piety were  
improved; a cold, cadaverous formalism gave place  
to the living energy of experimental godliness; the  
doctrines of the gospel were brought out from their  
concealment, and made to reassert their claims to a  
cordial, practical credence, and all the interests of  
truth and holiness received new homage from regen-  
erated thousands.”

One or two other facts connected with Whitefield’s  
usefulness in New England are too important to be  
omitted. During this visit he was much gratified by  
an interview with a colored man, who had been his  
chaise-driver when he first visited Cambridge. The  
negro had heard him preach in the college a sermon  
especially addressed “to those who labor and are  
heavy-laden.” It took such a hold on the poor man,  
that he repeated it in the kitchen when he reached  
home. Mr. Cooper of Boston was so well satisfied,  
as was Whitefield also, with his account of his con-  
version, that he was admitted to the Lord’s table.

Another “brand plucked from the burning” was a  
son of Mackintosh, an English rebel, who had been  
condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and had been  
allowed by George the First to settle in New Eng-  
land. One of his daughters, a lady of fortune, had  
heard Whitefield preach in Dr. Prince’s church at

Whitefield. 9

Boston, and had been won by the word to Christ.  
She was soon after smitten by sickness, and ripened  
rapidly for heaven. On her death-bed she cried out  
for her “soul friend.” Mr. Whitefield; but checking  
her own impatience, she asked, “Why should I do so?  
He is gone about his Master’s work, and in a little  
time we shall meet to part no more.” The distin-  
guished evangelist had a very high opinion of her  
piety, and his interest in her was increased by the  
fact that she had a very remarkable escape from some  
ruffians who had been bribed to convey her and her  
sister to Scotland, that their uncle might seize on an  
estate worth a thousand pounds a year.

There were at this time not less than twenty min-  
isters in the neighborhood of Boston who unhesitat-  
ingly spoke of Whitefield as their spiritual father,  
directly tracing their conversion to his ministry. Of  
one of these we have an account by Collins, The jour-  
nalist of South Reading. Speaking of 1741, he says,  
“Mr. Whitefield preached upon our Common in the  
open air. Mr. Hobby the minister went with the mul-  
titude to hear him. It is said that Mr. Hobby after-  
wards remarked, he came to pick a hole in Mr. White-  
field’s coat, but that Whitefield picked a hole in his  
heart. Mr. Hobby afterwards wrote and published  
a defence of Mr. Whitefield in a letter to Mr. Hench-  
man, the minister of Lynn, who had written against  
him.”

The letters of Whitefield, during his journeys of  
eleven hundred miles in New England, were few and  
brief; but they clearly indicated that at this time he  
was inclined “to return no more to his native coun-

try.” New England, notwithstanding his trials there,  
had evidently won his heart, and for a time almost  
weaned him from Great Britain. When he left it, as  
he was now about to do, for the south, he wrote,  
“God only knows what a cross it was to me to leave  
dear New England so soon. I hope death will not  
be so bitter to me as was parting with my friends.  
Glad shall I be to be prayed thither again before I see  
my native land. I would just be where He would  
have me, although in the uttermost parts of the earth.  
I am now hunting for poor lost sinners in these ungos-  
pelized wilds.”

Is there not an awfully retributive providence con-  
nected with the rejection of the gospel and its minis-  
ters? Do we not see this principle at work in the  
history and present state of the Jews; and has it not  
often appeared also in the history of Christianity?  
There was a beautiful village, now a city, in Massa-  
chusetts, from which Whitefield was driven with such  
rancorous abuse, that he shook off the dust of his feet,  
and proclaimed that the Spirit of God would not  
visit that spot till the last of those persecutors was  
dead. The good man’s language had a fearful truth  
in it, though he was not divinely gifted with the  
prophet’s inspiration. A consciousness of desertion  
paralyzed the energies of the church; for nearly a  
century it was nurtured on the unwholesome food of  
unscriptural doctrine. In the very garden of natural  
loveliness, it sat like a heath in the desert, upon  
which there could be no rain; and not till that whole  
generation had passed from the earth, did Zion appear  
there in her beauty and strength.

CHAPTER VII.

LABORS IN NEW YORK AND THE MIDDLE AND  
 SOUTHERN STATES.

1740, **1741.**

Whitefield was now again on his way to New  
York, preaching at Rye and King’s Bridge on the  
road. At the latter place he was met by several  
friends from the city, with whom he pleasantly talked,  
“and found,” he says, “an inexpressible satisfaction in  
my soul when I arrived at the house of my very dear  
friend Mr. Noble. After supper the Lord filled my  
heart, and gave me to wrestle with him for New York  
inhabitants and my own dear friends.” He was also  
cheered by meeting Mr. Davenport from Long Island,  
whose labors as an evangelist were then exciting much  
interest. Here too he met with a violent pamphlet  
published against him. “Met also with two volumes  
of sermons published in London as delivered by me,  
though I never preached on most of the texts. But  
Satan must try all ways to bring the work of God  
into contempt.”

On the morning after his arrival, Whitefield  
preached in Mr. Pemberton’s meeting-house, and says  
concerning the service, “Never saw the word of God  
fall with such weight in New York before. Two or  
three cried out. Mr. Noble could scarce refrain him-  
self. And look where I would, many seemed deeply  
wounded. At night the word was attended with  
great power. One cried out; and the Lord enabled

me at the latter end of my sermon to speak with  
authority. Alas, how vain are the thoughts of men!  
As I came along yesterday, I found my heart some-  
what dejected, and told Mr. Noble I expected but  
little moving in New York; but he bid me ‘expect  
great things from God,’ and likewise told me of sev-  
eral who were, as he hoped, savingly wrought upon  
by my ministry when I was there last.”

On the following day he finished his answer to  
the pamphlet already referred to, and says, “God  
enabled me to write it in the spirit of meekness.”  
He adds, “Preached twice as yesterday to very crowd-  
ed auditories, and neither time without power. In  
the evening exercise some fainted, and the Lord  
seemed to show us more and more that a time for  
favoring New York was near at hand. Oh, where-  
fore did I doubt? Lord, increase my faith.”

The following day, November 2, was the Sabbath.  
“Preached this morning with freedom and some  
power, but was much dejected before the evening ser-  
mon. For near half an hour before I left Mr. Noble’s  
house, I could only lie before the Lord, and say I was  
a poor sinner, and wonder that Christ would be gra-  
cious to such a wretch. As I went to meeting I grew  
weaker and weaker, and when I came into the pulpit  
I could have chosen to be silent rather than speak.  
But after I had begun, the Spirit of the Lord gave me  
freedom, till at length it came down like a mighty  
rushing wind, and carried all before it. Immediately  
the whole congregation was alarmed. Shrieking,  
crying, weeping, and wailing were to be heard in  
every corner; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and

many falling into the arms of their friends. My soul  
was carried out till I could scarcely speak any more.  
A sense of God’s goodness overwhelmed me.”

After narrating two or three pleasing incidents as  
to the effect of his preaching even on the minds of  
children, and describing his feelings on his return  
home, he gives an account of the wedding of two  
young persons who were going as his assistants to  
Georgia. “Never,” he says, “did I see a more solemn  
wedding. Jesus Christ was called, and he was pres-  
ent in a remarkable manner. After Mr. Pemberton  
had married them, I prayed. But my soul, how was  
it enabled to wrestle with and lay hold on God! I  
was in a very great agony, and the Holy Ghost was  
so remarkably present, that most, I believe, could say,  
‘Surely God is in this place.’ After this, divine man-  
ifestations flowed in so fast, that my frail tabernacle  
was scarce able to sustain them. My dear friends sat  
round me on the bedsides. I prayed for each of them  
alternately with strong cries, and pierced by the eye  
of faith even within the veil. I continued in this con-  
dition for about half an hour, astonished at my own  
vileness and the excellency of Christ, then rose full of  
peace and love and joy.”

On Monday, the 3d, he preached both morning  
and afternoon to increasing congregations, and says,  
“There was a great and gracious melting both times,  
but no crying out. Nearly £110 currency were col-  
lected for the orphans and in the evening many came  
and took an affectionate leave. About seven we took  
boat; reached Staten Island about ten, greatly re-  
freshed in my inner man. A dear Christian friend

received us gladly, and we solaced ourselves by sing-  
ing and praying. About midnight retired to sleep,  
still longing for that time .when I shall sleep no  
more.”

On Tuesday he preached on Staten Island from a  
wagon, to three or four hundred people. “The Lord  
came among them,” and several inquired after the  
way of salvation. Here he met Gilbert Tennent and  
Mr. Cross. The former of these excellent ministers  
had recently lost his wife, and though he was ardently  
attached to her, he calmly preached her funeral ser-  
mon with the corpse lying before him. Tennent had  
lately been preaching in New Jersey and Maryland,  
and had a delightful account to give his friend of the  
progress of the good work. Nor was the account  
given by Mr. Cross of less interest. After sermon he  
rode to Newark, where he preached till dark, as he  
thought with but little good effect. “However, at  
night the Lord manifested forth his glory; for, com-  
ing down to family prayer where I lodged, and per-  
ceiving many young men around me, my soul was, as  
it were, melted down with concern for them. After  
singing, I gave a word of exhortation; with what  
power none can fully express but those that saw it.  
Oh, how did the word fall like a hammer and like a  
fire. What a weeping was there!”

We must stay a moment to give a fact or two  
in reference to the Rev. Aaron Burr, then quite a  
young man, who two or three years before had been  
ordained at Newark, and whose ministry had been  
attended with a delightful revival the year preced-  
ing Whitefield’s visit. During the period of this re-

vival, the neighboring village of Elizabethtown had  
been remarkable for its insensibility, even Whitefield  
had preached there, “and not a single known conver-  
sion,” says Dr. Stearns, “ followed his ministrations.”Afterwards the pastor, the well-known Jonathan Dick-  
inson, saw happy results from very plain preaching.  
Newark caught a new flame from its neighboring altar,  
and Mr. Burr, who had lately been to New England  
in quest of health, had heard the devoted evangelist  
again and again, and invited him to visit his flock,  
which he did about a month afterwards with happy  
results. The account given by Mr. Burr of White-  
field’s preaching in New England was precisely what  
we should expect from the man who was afterwards  
the first president of Princeton college, and who, four-  
teen years after this, accompanied his eloquent friend  
to New England, “and saw at Boston, morning after  
morning, three or four thousand people hanging in  
breathless silence on the lips of the preacher, and  
weeping silent tears.”

The Rev. Stephen Dodd of East Haven, Conn.,  
relates that an old lady told him that when Mr.  
Whitefield came to preach in the old meeting-house at  
Newark, she was twelve years old, and as he entered  
the pulpit she looked at him with distrust, but before  
he got through his prayers herself and all the congre-  
gation were melted down, and the sermon filled the  
house with groans and tears. The next time he came,  
the congregation was so large that the pulpit window  
was taken out, and he preached through the opening  
to the people in the burying-ground.

On Wednesday, the 5th, he went to Baskinridge,

Mr. Cross’ parish, where he found Mr. Davenport,  
who, according to appointment, had been preaching to  
about three thousand people. He writes, “As I went  
along, I told a friend my soul wept for them, and I  
was persuaded within myself that the Lord would  
that day make his power to be known among them.  
In prayer, I perceived my soul drawn out, and a  
stirring of affections among the people. I had not  
discoursed long before the Holy Ghost displayed his  
power. In every part of the congregation somebody  
or other began to cry out, and almost all melted into  
tears. This abated for a few moments, till a little  
boy about seven or eight years of age cried out ex-  
ceeding piteously indeed, and wept as though his little  
heart would break. Mr. Cross having compassion on  
him, took him up into the wagon, which so affected  
me, that I broke from my discourse, and told the peo-  
ple the little boy should preach to them, and that God,  
since old professors would not cry after Christ, had  
displayed his sovereignty, and out of an infant’s mouth  
was perfecting praise. God so blessed this, that a  
universal concern fell on the congregation again.  
Fresh persons dropped down here and there, and the  
cry increased more and more.”

In the evening, Gilbert Tennent preached excel-  
lently in Mr. Cross’ barn, two miles off. His subject  
was the necessity and benefit of spiritual desertions, a  
remarkable subject, as has been said, at such a time,  
in a barn, and at night. “A great commotion,” says  
Whitefield, “was soon observed among the hearers.  
I then gave a word of exhortation. The Lord’s pres-  
ence attended it in a surprising manner. One, in

9\*

about six minutes, cried out, ‘He is come, He is come!’and could scarcely sustain the discovery that Jesus  
Christ made of himself to his soul. Others were so  
earnest for a discovery of the Lord to their souls, that  
their eager crying obliged me to stop, and I prayed  
over them as I saw their agonies and distress increase.  
At length my own soul was so full that I retired, and  
was in a strong agony for some time, and wept before  
the Lord under a deep sense of my own vileness, and  
the sovereignty and greatness of God’s everlasting  
love. Most of the people spent the remainder of the  
night in prayer and praise. Two or three young min-  
isters spoke alternately, and others prayed as the Lord  
gave them utterance.”

The next morning Whitefield exhorted, sung, and  
prayed with the people in the barn, and had some de-  
lightful conversation with a lad of thirteen, a poor  
negro woman, and several others. In company with  
several Christian friends, he then rode to the house of  
Gilbert Tennent in New Brunswick. Here he found  
letters from Savannah saying that great mortality ex-  
isted in the neighborhood, but that the family at the  
orphan-house continued in health, and that a minister  
was about coming from England to take his church at  
Savannah. “This last,” says he, “much rejoiced me,  
being resolved to give up the Savannah living as soon  
as I arrived in Georgia. A parish and the orphan-  
house together are too much for me; besides, God seems  
to show me it is my duty to evangelize, and not to fix  
in any particular place.” Here he was met by William  
Tennent also, and after much conversation and prayer,  
it was settled that Gilbert Tennent should go to Bos-

ton to carry on the work so happily begun there.  
After preaching, exhortation, and prayer, Whitefield  
went with Davenport to Trenton, and so on to Phila-  
delphia. On their way, they were twice remarkably  
preserved from drowning in creeks much swollen by  
the rains; and late on a very dark Saturday night  
arrived in the city, which had been already honored  
by his usefulness.

On the following day, he twice preached in the  
house which his friends were now building for him,  
and in which Gilbert Tennent labored for many years  
with great success. He says, “It is one hundred feet  
long and seventy feet broad. A large gallery is to  
be erected all around in it. Many footsteps of Provi-  
dence have been visible in beginning and carrying it on.  
Both in the morning and evening God’s glory filled  
the house, for there was great power in the congrega-  
tion. The roof is not yet up, but the people raised a  
convenient pulpit and boarded the bottom. The joy  
of most of the hearers when they saw me was inex-  
pressible. Between services, I received a packet of  
letters from England, dated in March last. May the  
Lord heal, and bring good out of the divisions which  
at present seem to be among the brethren there. God  
giving me freedom, and many friends being in the  
room, I kneeled down and prayed with and exhorted  
them all. But Oh, how did they melt under both; my  
soul was much rejoiced to look round on them.”

A fact in connection with the building of this  
church edifice illustrates the practical philosophy of  
Dr. Franklin. Tennent waited on him for aid in the  
erection of the house, which was cheerfully afforded;

the philosopher was asked by Tennent as to the best  
method of raising the necessary funds, who instantly  
recommended him to call at every house in the town  
to solicit help. He argued thus: “Many are really  
desirous to give, and will be glad to see you; others  
are inclined to be friendly, and will give if they are  
urged; a third will be sure, if they are omitted, to  
say they would have given had they been asked;  
and a fourth class will give you, rather than have  
it said they refused.” Tennent acted on the doc-  
tors counsel, and the funds were raised without diffi-  
culty.

Two instances of the happy influence of the truth  
in the conversion of sinners, in connection with this  
visit, must be given from Whitefield’s own pen. The  
first related to a Mr. Brockden, a lawyer eminent in  
his profession, and the recorder of deeds for the city.  
For many years this gentleman had been distinguished  
for Deism. Whitefield writes, “In his younger days  
he had some religious impressions, but going into  
business, the cares of the world so choked the good  
seed, that he not only forgot his God in some degree,  
but at length began to doubt of and to dispute his  
very being. In this state he continued many years,  
and has been very zealous to propagate his deistical,  
I could almost say atheistical principles among moral  
men; but he told me he never endeavored to make  
proselytes of vicious, debauched people. When I  
came to Philadelphia, this time twelvemonth, he told  
me he had not so much as a curiosity to hear me.  
But a brother Deist, his choicest friend, pressed him  
to come and hear me. To satisfy his curiosity, he at

length complied with the request. I preached at the  
court-house stairs, upon the conference which the Lord  
had with Nicodemus. I had not spoken much before  
the Lord struck his heart. ‘For,’ said he, ‘I saw your  
doctrine tended to make people good.’ His family  
knew not that he had been to hear me. After he  
came home, his wife, who had been at sermon, came  
in also, and wished heartily that he had heard me.  
He said nothing. After this, another of his family  
came in, repeating the same wish; and, if I mistake  
not, after that another; till at last, being unable to  
refrain any longer, with tears in his eyes, he said,  
‘Why, I have been hearing him;’ and then expressed  
his approbation. Ever since he has followed on to  
know the Lord; and I verily believe Jesus Christ  
has made himself manifest to his soul. Though up-  
wards of threescore years old, he is now, I believe,  
born again of God. He is as a little child, and often,  
as he told me, receives such communications from  
God, when he retires into the woods, that he thinks  
he could die a martyr for the truth.”

The other instance was that of the captain of a  
ship, “as great a reprobate,” says Whiteheld, “as  
ever I heard of.” This man used to go on board the  
transport ships, and offer a guinea for a new oath,  
that he might have the honor of making it. “To the  
honor of God’s grace,” says our evangelist, “let it be  
said, he is now, I believe, a Christian; not only re-  
formed, but renewed. The effectual stroke, he told  
me, was given when I preached last spring at Penne-  
pack. Ever since he has been zealous for the truth;  
stood like a lamb when he was beaten, and in danger

of being murdered by some of my opposers, and, in  
short, shows his faith by his works.”

The stay of Mr. Whitefield in Philadelphia at this  
time was about a week, during which he preached in  
the new house twice every day to large and deeply  
interested congregations. He says, “It would be  
almost endless to recount all the particular instances  
of God’s grace which I have seen this week past.  
Many that before were only convicted, now plainly  
proved that they were converted, and had a clear evi-  
dence of it within themselves. My chief business was  
now to build up and to exhort them to continue in the  
grace of God. Notwithstanding, many were convicted  
almost every day, and came to me under the greatest  
distress and anguish of soul. Several societies are  
now in the town, not only of men and women, but of  
little boys and little girls. Being so engaged, I could  
not visit them as I would, but I hope the Lord will  
raise up some fellow-laborers, and that elders will be  
ordained in every place.”

Perhaps no man was ever more free from secta-  
rianism than George Whitefield. It is true, that he  
was ordained a clergyman of the church of England,  
and never manifested any degree of reluctance to  
officiate within its walls; but it is equally true, that  
the vast majority of his sermons were delivered in  
connection with other bodies of Christians. When  
he was once preaching from the balcony of the court-  
house, Market-street, Philadelphia, he delivered an  
impressive apostrophe: “Father Abraham, who have  
you in heaven? any Episcopalians?” “No.” “Any  
Presbyterians?” “No.” “Any Baptists?” “No.”

“Have yon any Methodists, Seceders,or Independents  
there?” “No, no!” “Why, who have you there?”

“We don’t know those names here. All who are  
here are Christians, believers in Christ—men who  
have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the  
word of his testimony.” “Oh, is that the case? then  
God help me, God help us all, to forget party names,  
and to become Christians, in deed and in truth.” It  
might be well for the different bodies of Christians  
to think of the propriety of following this example of  
the holy man. The peculiarities of each Christian  
denomination may have their importance, but they  
ought not to keep good men in a state of separation,  
much less of alienation from each other.

On Monday, November 17, Whitefield left Phila-  
delphia. He says, “Was much melted at parting from  
my dear friends. Had it much impressed upon my  
mind, that I should go to England, and undergo trials  
for the truth’s sake. These words,‘The Jews sought  
to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?’ with our  
Lord’s answer, have been for some time lying upon  
me; and while my friends were weeping round me,  
St. Paul’s words darted into my soul, ‘What mean  
you to weep and break my heart? I am willing not  
only to be bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus.’  
After fervent prayer, I took my leave of some, but  
being to preach at Gloucester in the West Jerseys,  
others accompanied me in boats over the river. We  
sung as we sailed, but my heart was low. I preached  
at Gloucester, but found myself weighed down, and  
was not able to deliver my sermon with my usual  
vigor. However, there was an affecting melting, and

several, as I heard afterwards, who had been in bond-  
age before, at that time received joy in the Holy  
Ghost. I rode on in company with several to Green-  
wich, and preached to a few, with scarce any power.  
In the evening we travelled on a few miles, but my  
body was more and more out of order, and I thought  
God was preparing me for future blessings. It is  
good to be humbled. I am never better than when  
I am brought to lie at the foot of the cross. It is a  
certain sign God intends that soul a greater crown.  
Lord, let me always feel myself a poor sinner.” On  
Tuesday he preached at Pilesgrove to about two thou-  
sand people, but saw only a few affected. “At night,”  
he says, “God was pleased so abundantly to refresh  
my soul as to make me forget the weakness of my  
body; I prayed and exhorted with great power in the  
family where I lodged.” On Wednesday, at Cohan-  
sey, where Gilbert Tennent had prepared the way  
for him, he says, “Preached to some thousands both  
morning and afternoon. The word gradually struck  
the hearers, till the whole congregation was greatly  
moved, and two cried out in the bitterness of their  
souls after a crucified Saviour, and were scarcely  
able to stand. My soul was replenished as with new  
wine, and life and power flew all around me.” At  
Salem, on the 20th, he preached in the morning at the  
court-house, and in the afternoon in the open air be-  
fore the prison, to about two thousand persons. “Both  
times God was with us.” On Friday, November 21,  
he got with some difficulty to Newcastle, where he  
preached in the court-house, and “observed some few  
affected, and some few scoffing.” Here he was joined

by Mr. Charles Tennent, who had lately married a  
young lady awakened under Whitefield’s ministry.  
They went on to White Clay creek, “and God,” says  
he, “was pleased to appear for me in an extraordinary  
manner. There were many thousands waiting to hear  
the word. I have not seen a more lovely sight. I  
sang the twenty-third psalm, and these words gave my  
soul unspeakable comfort:

“‘In presence of my spiteful foes,

He does my table spread.’

“The Lord Jesus assisted me in preaching. The  
melting soon began, and the power increased more  
and more, till the greatest part of the congregation  
was exceedingly moved. Several cried out in differ-  
ent parts; and others were to be seen wringing their  
hands and weeping bitterly. The stir was ten times  
greater than when I was here last.” At Fagg’s Manor,  
on Saturday afternoon, he preached “to many thou-  
sands, and God was pleased mightily to own his word.  
There was a wondrous powerful moving, but it did  
not rise to such a degree as when I preached here  
last spring. I was taken ill after preaching.” After  
still farther labors, he retired to rest, and he says,  
“The Lord gave me sweet sleep, and in the morning I  
arose with my natural strength much renewed.” This  
was the Sabbath, and he preached at Nottingham “to  
a large congregation, who seemed in no wise to re-  
gard the rain, so they might be watered with the dew  
of God’s blessing.”

On the following afternoon, at Bohemia, in Mary-  
land, he says, “Preached to about two thousand, and  
have not seen a more solid melting, I think, since my

arrival. Some scoffers stood on the outside, but the  
Holy Spirit enabled me to lay the terrors of the Lord  
before them, and they grew more serious. My soul  
much rejoiced in the Lord to see salvation brought to  
Maryland;” On Tuesday, November 25, “came to

Reedy Island, and had the wonderful presence of God  
in the assembly in the afternoon. Several of my dear  
Philadelphia friends came to take their last farewell.”

On Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, he preached  
again. “The Lord was with us every time. I was  
greatly delighted to see the captains of the ships, and  
their respective crews, come constantly to hear the  
word of God on shore, and join with us in religious  
exercises on board.”

On December 1, when they sailed from Reedy  
Island to Charleston, he wrote in his journal, “But  
before I go on, stop, 0 my soul, and look back a little  
on the great things the Lord hath done for thee dur-  
ing 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 ex-  
horting very frequently in private. I have travelled  
upwards of eight hundred miles, and gotten upwards  
of £700 sterling in goods, provisions, and money for  
my poor orphans. Never did God vouchsafe me such  
great assistances. Never did I perform my journeys  
with so little fatigue, or see such a continuance of the  
divine presence in the congregations to whom I have  
preached. All things concur to convince me that  
America is to be my chief scene for action.”

In about eight days, he arrived at Charleston,  
where he found there had recently been a large fire,  
and to improve the sad event he preached a sermon,  
and passed on to his own home, where he found all  
well, and where he made arrangements for his voyage  
to England, leaving on the 29th of December. On  
that day he narrowly escaped death. A laborer was  
walking behind him with a gun under his arm, which  
went off unawares happily its muzzle was towards  
the ground, “otherwise,” says Whitefield, “I and one  
of my friends, in all probability, should have been  
killed; for we were directly before, and not above a  
yard or two distant from it. How ought we to live  
in such a state as we would not fear to die in; for in  
the midst of life we are in death!” In the evening he  
preached his farewell sermon as pastor of Savannah.

On Mr. Whitefield’s arrival at Charleston, in com-  
pany with two gentlemen named Bryan, who had been  
called to suffer persecution for Christ’s sake, he had  
the happiness of meeting his brother, the captain of a  
vessel from England, who gave him much interesting  
intelligence of the Christians in that country. Com-  
mencing with the Sabbath, he preached twice every  
day, in addition to expounding the Scriptures almost  
every evening, and expresses his gratitude for divine  
assistance. But though he had much to rejoice in, he  
had also more than one source of sorrow. Some pro-  
fessors of religion, of whom he had hoped well, had  
fallen away, and not a few of his enemies were even  
more enraged than formerly. Hugh Bryan had writ-  
ten a letter, in which, among other matters, “It was  
hinted that the clergy break their canons.” At the

request of Jonathan Bryan, Whitefield had corrected  
it for the press, and it was published while he was  
now in the city. Hugh Bryan was apprehended, and  
on his examination, being asked, frankly confessed  
that Whitefield had corrected and made some altera-  
tions in it. Writing on January 10, he says, “This  
evening a constable came to me with the following  
warrant:

“‘South Carolina SS. By B— W —, etc.

Whereas I have received information upon oath that  
George Whitefield, Clerk, hath made and composed a  
false, malicious, scandalous, and infamous Libel against  
the Clergy of this Province, in contempt of His Majesty  
and His Laws, and against the King’s Peace: These  
are therefore, in His Majesty’s Name, to charge and  
command you and each of you forthwith to apprehend  
the said George Whitefield, and to bring him before  
Me to answer the premises. Hereof fail not, at your  
peril. And for your so doing this shall be your and  
each of your sufficient Warrant. Given under my  
hand and seal this tenth day of January, in the four-  
teenth year of His Majesty’s Reign, Anno Domini one  
thousand seven hundred and forty [one.]

“‘B- W ’”

Whitefield gave security to appear by his attorney  
at the next quarter sessions, under penalty of one hun-  
dred pounds proclamation money. “Blessed be God,”  
he says in his journal, “for this further honor. My  
soul rejoices in it. I think this may be called perse-  
cution. I think it is for righteousness’ sake.” The  
next morning he preached on Herod sending the wise  
men to find out Christ, professing a desire to worship

him, but intending to kill him; persecution under pre-  
tence of religion, being his theme. The afternoon ser-  
mon was on the murder of Naboth, from which he dis-  
coursed on the abuse of power by men in authority. He  
says, “My hearers, as well as myself, made the appli-  
cation. It "Was pretty closed no doubt it was. In  
the evening he expounded the narrative of Orpah and  
Ruth, and exhorted his hearers to follow the Lord  
Jesus Christ, though his cause be never so much per-  
secuted and spoken against.

On the following Thursday, he received several  
highly gratifying letters from his friends at Boston.  
Mr. Secretary Willard said to him, “Divers young  
men in this town, who are candidates for the ministry,  
have been brought under deep convictions by your  
preaching, and are carried off from the foundation of  
their false hopes to rest only upon Christ for salva-  
tion.”

The Rev. Mr. Cooper wrote, “I can inform you  
that there are many abiding proofs that you did not  
run in vain, and labor in vain among us in this place.  
I can only say now in general, some have been awak-  
ened who were before quite secure, and I hope a good  
work begun in them. Others, who had been under  
religious impressions, are now more earnestly pressing  
into the kingdom of heaven, and many of the children  
of God are stirred up to give diligence for the full  
assurance of faith. There is a greater flocking to all  
the lectures in the town, and the people show such a  
disposition to the new Tuesday evening lecture, that  
our large capacious house cannot receive all that  
come. I am sure your visit to us has made a large

addition, to the prayers that are going up for you in  
one place and another, and I hope also unto the jew-  
els that are to make up your crown in the day of the  
Lord.”

In addition to these statements, Mr. Welch, a pious  
merchant, wrote, “I fear I am tedious, but I cannot  
break off till I just mention, to the glory of the grace  
of God, and for your comfort and encouragement, the  
success your ministry of late has had among us. Im-  
pressions made seem to be abiding on the minds of  
many. The doctrines of grace seem to be more the  
topic of conversation than ever I knew them. Nay,  
religious conversation seems to be almost fashionable,  
and almost everyone seems disposed to hear or speak  
of the things of God. Multitudes flock to the evening  
lecture, though it has sometimes been the worst of  
weather. Ministers seem to preach with more life,  
and the great auditories seem to hear with solemn  
attention, and I hope our Lord Jesus is getting to  
himself the victory over the hearts of many sinners.”  
These, and other letters of a similar character,  
filled the heart of Whitefield with grateful pleasure;  
and he went on preaching and enjoying the society of  
his friends till Friday, January 16. He says, “I never  
received such generous tokens of love, I think, from  
any people before, as from some in Charleston. They  
so loaded me with sea-stores, that I sent many of them  
to Savannah.” He now went on board, and was fully  
engaged in preparations for the voyage, which how-  
ever was not entered on till the 24th. On that day  
the Minerva sailed over Charleston bar, and after a  
generally pleasant.voyage, they landed at Falmouth,

March 11. “This,” says he, “was a profitable voyage  
to my soul, because of my having had many sweet op-  
portunities for reading, meditation, and prayer.”

The impartiality of history requires us, however  
reluctantly, here to notice the separation which to  
some extent now took place between Whitefield, and  
his old friends Messrs. John and Charles Wesley.  
Their mutual attachment in early life we have already  
seen, as also Whitefield’s anxiety in Georgia to defend  
Mr. John Wesley’s conduct against those who opposed  
him. Impartial observers, however, after a while be-  
gan to remark, that on some doctrinal points, espec-  
ially on that of predestination, a difference was spring-  
ing up. On his passage to England, February 1, 1741,  
Whitefield thus wrote to Mr. Charles Wesley: “My  
dear, dear brethren, why did you throw out the bone  
of contention? Why did you print that sermon  
against predestination? Why did you in particular,  
my dear brother Charles, affix your hymn, and join in  
putting out your late hymn-book? How can you say  
you will not dispute with me about election, and yet  
print such hymns? and your brother sent his sermon  
against election, to Mr. Garden and others in Amer-  
ica. Do not you think, my dear brethren, I must be  
as much concerned for truth, or what I think truth,  
as you? God is my judge, I always was, and hope 1  
always shall be desirous that you may be preferred  
before me. But I must preach the gospel of Christ,  
and that I cannot now do, without speaking of elec-  
tion.” He then tells Mr. Charles Wesley, that in  
Christmas-week he had written an answer to his  
brothers sermon, “which,” says he, “is now printing

at Charleston; another copy I have sent to Boston,  
and another I now bring with me, to print in London.  
If it occasion a strangeness between us, it shall not be  
my fault. There is nothing in my answer exciting to  
it, that I know of. 0, my dear brethren, my heart  
almost bleeds within me. Methinks I could be will-  
ing to tarry here on the waters for ever, rather than  
come to England to oppose you.”

Dr. Whitehead, in his “Life of John Wesley,” has  
very wisely said, “Controversy almost always injures  
the Christian temper, much more than it promotes the  
interests of speculative truth. On this question a  
separation took place between Mr. Wesley and Mr.  
Whitefield, so far as to have different places of wor-  
ship; and some warm and tart expressions dropped  
from each. But their good opinion of each other’s  
integrity and usefulness, founded on long and intimate  
acquaintance, could not be injured by such a difference  
of sentiment; and their mutual affection was only ob-  
scured by a cloud for a season.”

The friendship between Mr. Whitefield and the  
Messrs. Wesley was very much increased and perpet-  
uated by the wife of Mr. Charles Wesley. This very  
extraordinary lady, whose original name was Gwinne,  
was equally distinguished for her beauty, talents, and  
piety. She had a very cordial regard for Mr. White-  
field, who as cordially reciprocated it. She was mar-  
ried when the controversy among these eminent men  
was at its height, and stipulated that she should  
always be allowed to hear the preaching of Whitefield  
and his friends. In her latter years especially, and  
she lived till ninety-six, she expressed her pleasure in

the belief that she promoted the continuance of that  
endearing intercourse which subsisted between White-  
held and her husband. She softened all parties, and  
was on all occasions a blessed peacemaker.

One fact relating to this eminently excellent  
woman may be mentioned. She was nearly twenty  
years younger than her husband, and four years after  
her marriage, and at the age of twenty-six, she was  
seized with small-pox, of which at that time her eldest  
child died. She lay twenty-two days in imminent  
danger of death, and when she recovered she was so  
much altered in features that no one could recognize  
her; but never did woman before lose her beauty  
with so little regret. She used sportively to say, that  
the change in her appearance “afforded great satis-  
faction to her dear husband, who was glad to see her  
look so much older, and better suited to be his com-  
panion.”

On Whitefield’s arrival at Falmouth, he immedi-  
ately set off in a post-chaise to London, in order to  
preach on the following Sabbath. But he now found  
occasion for all the patience he had acquired. He  
had, he says, “written two well-meant, though ill-  
judged letters against England’s two great favorites,  
‘The Whole Duty of Man,’ and Archbishop Tillotson,  
who, I said, knew no more about religion than Moham-  
med. The Moravians had made inroads on our socie-  
ties besides which, the controversy with the Messrs.  
Wesley injured him. His congregations on the Sab-  
bath were still large, but on week-days he had not  
more than two or three hundred hearers. He says,  
“Instead of having thousands to attend me, scarcely

Whitefield. 10

one of my spiritual children come to see me from  
morning to night. Once, on Kennington Common, I  
had not above a hundred to hear me.”

Even this was not all. He says, “One that got  
some hundreds of pounds by my sermons, refused to  
print for me anymore. And others wrote to me, that  
God would destroy me in a fortnight, and that my fall  
was as great as Peter’s.” Still other sorrows attended!  
him. He writes, “I was much embarrassed in my out-  
ward circumstances. A thousand pounds I owed for  
the orphan-house. Two hundred and fifty pounds  
drawn on Mr. Seward, [who was now dead,] were re-  
turned upon me. I was also threatened to be arrested  
for two hundred pounds more.” Besides all this, he  
had “a family of one hundred persons to be maintain-  
ed, four thousand miles off, in the dearest part of his  
majesty’s dominions.” He now began to preach in  
Moorfields on week-days, under one of the trees;  
where he saw numbers of his spiritual children run-  
ning by him without looking at him, and some of them  
putting their fingers in their ears, that they might not  
hear one word he said. “A like scene,” he says,  
“opened at Bristol, where I was denied preaching in  
the house I had founded.” It was the Kingswood  
school-house, built for the children of the colliers.

But Whitefield could not long be kept down. His  
friends built a new house and opened a new school at  
Kingswood. Some “free-grace dissenters,” as Gillies  
calls them, procured the loan of a building lot in Lon-  
don, on which, as we have already seen, they built the  
Tabernacle. Here his congregations immediately in-  
creased, and he addressed them with his usual power

and success. Invitations soon poured in from the  
country, and even from places where he had never  
been. At a common near Braintree, in Essex, he had  
more than ten thousand hearers, and at many other  
places congregations were large and much affected.  
“Sweet,” says he, “was the conversation which I had  
with several ministers of Christ.” Soon again did he  
triumph, even in England.

Among the men who were now invited to aid, and  
who rendered important assistance to Whitefield in  
his houses of worship in London and Bristol, as well  
as in his itinerant labors, was Howel Harris, a native  
of Wales, a gentleman, and a magistrate, to whom we  
have already referred. His name in Wales is yet “a  
household word,” and his labors form a part of the  
history of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism. As soon as  
he had embraced the gospel for himself, he became  
intensely solicitous respecting the condition of his  
neighbors. The scenes of profligacy and vice which  
everywhere presented themselves burdened his heart,  
and he became anxious to be actively employed in  
removing evil and doing good. He determined on  
taking orders in the church of England, and accord-  
ingly entered St. Mary’s Hall, in Oxford university;  
but shocked at the dissolute habits of the collegians,  
and finding what were called his methodistical views  
were in the way of his ordination, he returned to  
Wales, and began to evangelize its towns and villages.  
Wherever there was an opening, there he went, and  
preached Christ to the people; and although defam-  
ed and persecuted, he manfully prosecuted his work,  
and thousands were by his agency brought to repent-

ance. He and Mr. Whitefield were kindred spirits,  
moved by the same impulses, and pursuing the same  
course. Mr. Whitefield spoke of him as “‘a burning  
and shining light,’ a barrier against profaneness and  
immorality, and an indefatigable promoter of the true  
gospel of Jesus Christ. For these years he has preach-  
ed almost twice a day, for three or four hours together.  
He has been in seven counties, and has made it his  
business to go to wakes and fairs to turn people from  
their lying vanities. He has been made the subject  
of numbers of sermons, has been threatened with pub-  
lic prosecutions, and had constables sent to apprehend  
him. But God has blessed him with inflexible cour-  
age; strength has been communicated to him from  
above, and he still goes on from conquering to con-  
quer. God has greatly blessed his pious endeavors;  
many call, and own him as their spiritual father, and  
would, I believe, lay down their lives for his sake.”

In the year 1759, when England was threatened  
with a French invasion, Mr. Harris became a captain  
in the Brecknockshire militia, and into whatever place  
in England the regiment was ordered, he uniformly  
began to preach, and was the means of introducing  
the gospel into many ignorant and depraved districts.  
Thus an unusual act and an undesirable office were  
overruled to doing much good. When the regiment  
was disbanded, he again regularly entered on his min-  
isterial duties with all his former zeal and activity.  
In a word, he may justly be regarded the evangelist  
of Wales.

As an illustration of the spirit of the energetic  
ministers of Christ in those days, we quote a fact or

two from the life of Rowland Hill; the more readily  
as Howel Harris is the principal subject. In 1774,  
four years after the death of Whitefield, Mr. Hill  
travelled through Wales, preaching three or four  
times every day; many conversions took place, which  
greatly sustained him under an attack of illness; and  
led to the remark in his “Journal,” “My body quite  
weak, but my soul was refreshed.” “A like exam-  
ple,” says Sidney, one of the biographers of Hill, “had  
been previously before his eyes in the case of Howel  
Harris, one of Mr. Whitefield’s energetic followers,  
who was a man of extraordinary powers of body and  
mind. Harris used to relate of himself, that being  
once on a journey through Wales, he was subjected to  
great temptation to desert his Master’s cause, when  
he said, ‘Satan, I ’ll match thee for this;’ and ‘so I  
did,’ he used to add; ‘for I had not ridden many miles  
before I came to a revel, where there was a show of  
mountebanks, which I entered, and just as they were  
commencing, I jumped into the midst of them and  
cried out, ‘Let us pray,’ which so thunderstruck them  
that they listened to me quietly, while I preached to  
them a most tremendous sermon, that frightened many  
of them home.’ Mr. Hill greatly delighted in this  
anecdote, and often said that amidst somewhat similar  
scenes, he had been enabled successfully to attack the  
kingdom of Satan.”

CHAPTER VIII.

**FIRST AND SECOND VISITS TO SCOTLAND—LABORS  
 IN ENGLAND AND WALES.**

**1740-1744.**

We have seen the spirit in which Mr. Whitefield  
returned to London, and the cool manner in which he  
was too generally received. It is painful to say that  
this coldness was not confined to enemies of the  
truth; it appeared in some degree in eminent dissent-  
ing ministers, as Watts and Bradbury, Barker, and  
even, to some extent, Doddridge. A plan had a few  
years before been agitated to restore the dissenters  
to the church, usually called the Comprehension scheme,  
and assuredly, under the circumstances, friendship  
with Whitefield was by no means favorable to such a  
plan being accomplished, though it was at this period  
greatly desired by many of both parties. Still, how-  
ever, good was done; Whitefield preached, and God  
was glorified. More union between Christians in ad-  
vancing the cause of Christ would have been exceed-  
ingly desirable, but even the want of this was not  
permitted to stay the progress of this man of God.

One of the most popular and useful ministers em-  
ployed by Whitefield and his friends at this time was  
John Cennick, the author of two well-known hymns,  
beginning,

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness;”  
“Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone.”

He was the preacher who, in Ireland, discoursed from  
the text, “Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swad-  
dling clothes,” which gave occasion for the Method-  
ists in that country to be called “Swaddlers” The  
parents of this excellent man were Quakers, who had  
been imprisoned in Reading jail for the maintenance  
of their religious principles. This persecution re-  
duced them from respectability to want, so that, like  
John Bunyan, they were forced to make shoe-laces in  
prison for their support.

The conversion of the son was very remarkable.  
His first deep and lasting religious convictions flashed  
upon his mind like lightning from heaven, while walk-  
ing in the crowds of Cheapside, in London. The  
effects were soon manifested; he became a new man,  
pursuing a new course,, and entering on a new work.  
His ministry was very efficient, his views of truth  
were evangelical, his public speaking popular, his zeal  
so great as sometimes to lead him to preach six times  
in one day—all which labors were followed with abun-  
dant success.

Mr. Cennick was rather below the middle stature,  
of a fair countenance, and though by no means robust  
in health, he knew little of timidity. The spirit in  
which he discharged his ministry may be seen in a  
letter he wrote to a friend: “We sang a hymn, and  
then the devil led on his servants; they began beat-  
ing a drum, and then made fires of gunpowder: at  
first the poor flock was startled; but while God gave  
me power to speak encouragingly to them, they waxed  
bolder, and very few moved. The mob then fired  
guns over the people’s heads, and began to play a

water engine upon brother Harris and myself, till we  
were wet through. They also played an engine upon  
us with hog’s-wash and grounds of beer-barrels, and  
covered us with muddy water from a ditch; they  
pelted us with eggs and stones, threw baskets of dust  
over us, and fired their guns so close to us that our  
faces were black with the powder; but, in nothing  
terrified, we remained praying. I think I never saw  
or felt so great a power of God as was there. In the  
midst of the confused multitude, I saw a man laboring  
above measure, earnest to fill the buckets with water  
to throw upon us. I asked him, ‘What harm do we  
do? Why are you so furious against us? We only  
come to tell you that Christ loved you, and died for  
you.’ He stepped back a little for room, and threw a  
bucket of water in my face. When I had recovered  
myself, I said, ‘My dear man, if God should so pour  
his wrath upon you, what would become of you? Yet  
I tell you that Christ loves you.’ He threw away  
the bucket, let fall his trembling hands, and looked  
as pale as death; he then shook hands with me, and  
parted from me, I believe under strong convictions.”

Mr. Cennick had heretofore labored with White-  
field and Wesley, but now adhered to the former, and  
labored very successfully in the Tabernacle. After  
some years he united with the Moravian brethren,  
and died in triumph at thirty-five.

In the summer of 1741, some three or four months  
after his arrival from America, Whitefield paid his  
first visit to Scotland. The state of religion in that  
country at the commencement of the ministry of this  
distinguished evangelist, has been already glanced at.

It is here important to remark, that in 1740 an indi-  
cation of better things began to appear in several  
places, especially in Cambuslang, under the ministry  
of the Rev. Mr. M’Culloch. This excellent man, for  
nearly a year before the revival began, had been  
preaching to his people on those subjects which tend  
most directly to explain the nature and prove the  
necessity of regeneration, according to the different  
aspects in which it is represented in the holy Scrip-  
tures. The church edifice had become too small  
for the congregation, and the minister, in favorable  
weather, frequently conducted the public worship on  
a green brae on the east side of a deep ravine near the  
church, scooped out in the form of an amphitheatre.  
In this retired and romantic spot, the worthy pastor  
preached in the most impressive manner to the listen-  
ing multitudes, and not unfrequently, after his ser-  
mons, detailed to them the astonishing effects of  
Whitefield’s preaching in America, which did not a  
little to increase the interest of the people, as well  
as lead them to wish to see such an extraordinary  
preacher.

While on his voyage to Scotland, Whitefield gave  
evidence that he had not forgotten America. In his  
second visit to America, he had become intimately  
acquainted with the Rev. Daniel Rodgers of Exeter,  
New Hampshire, a direct descendant of the seventh  
generation of John Rogers, who was burnt at the  
stake for the testimony of Christ in the days of the  
bloody Mary. It is not surprising that Whitefield’s  
original letter to him, now in the possession of the  
family of the grandson of Daniel Rodgers, is highly  
 10\*

valued. It is dated on board the Mary and Ann,  
bound from London to Scotland, July 25, 1741.

“ My dear Brother Rodgers—How glad was I to  
receive a letter from your bands, having heard noth-  
ing from you or of you particularly since we parted.  
Oh, what great things has the Lord shown us since  
that time! methinks I hear you say; and yet I can tell  
of greater things. And I believe we shall see far  
greater yet before we die. The work is beginning  
afresh here. I sometimes think brother Gilbert [Ten-  
nent] must take a voyage to old England. Most of  
our London ministers too much shun the cross, and do  
not appear boldly for God. Now the Lord has work-  
ed so powerfully in your college, I have less to object  
against your joining Mr. Web. I am glad to hear that  
you speak plain and close. What comfort will this  
afford you in a dying hour. Go on, my dear brother,  
go on; venture daily upon Christ. Go out in his  
strength, and he will enable us to do wonders. He is  
with me more and more. I have sweetly been carried  
through the heat and burning of every day’s labor.  
Jesus bears all my burdens. Jesus enables me to cast  
all my care upon him. Oh then, let us magnify his  
name together. I am now going to Scotland, know-  
ing not what will befall me. What God does, you  
may expect to hear of shortly. In the meanwhile, let  
us pray for and write to each other. As iron sharp-  
eneth iron, so do the letters of a man his friend. Your  
last I have printed. God’s glory called me to it.

“My dear brother, adieu. Dear brother Sims sits  
by and salutes you. My kind love awaits Mr. Web,

and all who love the Lord in sincerity. In hopes of  
receiving another letter from you shortly, I subscribe  
myself, dear Mr. Rodgers, your most affectionate,  
though very unworthy brother and servant in the  
sweetest Jesus,

**“G. W.”**

Among those who were most anxious that Mr.  
Whitefield should visit Scotland, were the Rev.  
Messrs. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine. These two  
excellent brothers had separated themselves from the  
established church, chiefly on the ground of its cold  
formalism, and with some other zealous ministers had  
formed what has since been known as the Associate  
Presbytery. Their wish was, that in coming to Scot-  
land, Whitefield should preach only in connection with  
their body, and so help forward the work in which  
they were engaged. To this he objected, regarding  
himself as an evangelist at large. As he proceeded,  
they rather opposed him, as not sufficiently particular  
and discriminative in his zeal. They wished him not  
to labor in the church from which they had seceded,  
saying, “God had left it.” “Then,” said he, “it is the  
more necessary for me to preach in it, to endeavor to  
bring him back. I’ll preach Christ wherever they’ll  
let me.” On the 30th of July he arrived in Edinburgh,  
where he was urged to preach, but declined till he  
had seen the Messrs. Erskine; and accordingly pro-  
ceeded to Dunfermline. Writing on the 1st of Au-  
gust, he says, “I went yesterday to Dunfermline,  
where dear Mr. Ralph Erskine hath got a large and  
separate, or as it is commonly termed, seceding meet-  
ing-house. He received me very lovingly. I preached

to his and the town’s people—a very thronged assem-  
bly. After I had done prayers 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.”

On the day following, Whitefield returned to  
Edinburgh, accompanied by Mr. Ralph Erskine, and  
preached in the Orphan-house park to a large and  
attentive audience. His text was, “The kingdom of  
God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and  
peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rom. 14:17.  
After the sermon, a large company, including some of  
the nobility, came to bid him God-speed; and among  
others a portly Quaker, a nephew of the Messrs. Er-  
skine who, taking him by the hand, said, “Friend  
George, I am as thou art; I am for bringing all to  
the life and power of the ever-living God; and there-  
fore, if thou wilt not quarrel with me about my hat, I  
will not quarrel with thee about thy gown.” On  
Sabbath evening, he preached in the same place, to  
upwards of fifteen thousand persons; and on the even-  
ings of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, to nearly as  
many; on Tuesday in the Canongate church; on  
Wednesday and Thursday at Dunfermline; and on  
Friday morning at Queensferry. “Everywhere,” says  
he, “the auditories were large and very attentive.  
Great power accompanied the word. Many have  
been brought under convictions, and I have already  
received invitations to different places, which, God  
willing, I intend to comply with.” Writing a week  
later, he says, “It would make your heart leap for joy  
to be now in Edinburgh. I question if there be not

upwards of three hundred in this city seeking after  
Jesus. Every morning I have a constant levee of  
wounded souls, many of whom are quite slain by the  
law. God’s power attends the word continually, just  
as when I left London. At seven in the morning we  
have a lecture in the fields, attended not only by the  
common people, but also by persons of rank. I have  
reason to think that several of the latter sort are  
coming to Jesus. Little children also are much  
wrought upon, God much blesses my letters from  
the little orphans, [girls in the hospital.] He loves  
to work by contemptible means. Oh, my dear broth-  
er, I am quite amazed when I think what God has  
done here in a fortnight. My printed sermons and  
journals have been blessed in an uncommon manner.  
I am only afraid lest people should idolize the instru-  
ment, and not look enough to the glorious Jesus, in  
whom alone I desire to glory. Congregations consist  
of many thousands. Never did I see so many Bibles,  
nor people looking into them, while I am expounding,  
with so much attention. Plenty of tears flow from the  
hearers’ eyes. Their emotions appear in various ways.  
I preach twice daily, and expound at private houses  
at night, and am employed in speaking to souls under  
distress great part of the day. I have just snatched a  
few moments to write to my dear brother. Oh, that  
God may enlarge your heart to pray for me. This  
afternoon I preach out of town, and also to-morrow.  
Next post, God willing, you shall have another letter.  
I walk continually in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.  
The love of Christ quite strikes me dumb. 0 grace,  
grace! let that be my song. Adieu.”

In this manner Whitefield continued to preach  
very extensively over Scotland; and early in Septem-  
ber he arrived at Glasgow. On the eleventh of that  
month he began his labors in the High Church-yard,  
and for five days in succession preached there twice a  
day—at an early hour in the morning, and again in  
the evening. The expectations of the people were  
high, not only in Glasgow, but all around, and crowds  
flocked to hear him preach. Morning after morning,  
and evening after evening, that vast church-yard,  
almost paved as it is with tombstones, was crowded  
with living worshippers, trembling under the word.  
But not satisfied with hearing, the pen of the ready  
writer was from day to day at work, and each sermon  
was printed by itself, and put immediately into circu-  
lation. His sermons were characterized by great  
simplicity, as if the language of the preacher merely  
expressed what he felt, and yet there was so much  
earnestness, and so much closeness of application, as  
to account for the effects they produced. He was in  
the pulpit very much what Baxter was in the press.  
He spoke as a man realizing all that he said, and lay-  
ing open the feelings of his own heart in addressing  
the hearts of others.

Very few men better knew the human heart than  
Whitefield. He seemed to know all the thoughts and  
feelings of his hearers, and the best way in which to  
meet them. He once preached in Scotland from the  
text, “The door was shut.” Matt. 25:10. A respect-  
able lady who heard him sat near the door, a consid-  
erable distance from the pulpit, and observed two  
showy and trifling young men who appeared to turn

the solemn appeals of the preacher into ridicule; she  
heard one of them say in a low tone to the other,  
“Well, what if the door be shut? another will open.”  
In a very few minutes, to the great surprise of the  
lady, Mr. Whitefield said, “It is possible there may  
be some careless, trifling person here to-day, who may  
ward off the force of this impressive subject by lightly  
thinking, ‘What matter if the door be shut? another  
will open.’” The two young men looked at each  
other as though they were paralyzed, as the preacher  
proceeded: “Yes, another door will open; and I will  
tell you what door it will be: it will be the door of  
the bottomless pit, the door of hell!—the door which  
conceals from the eyes of angels the horrors of dam-  
nation.”

After Mr. Whitefleld’s return to England, at the  
close of October, among many letters which followed  
him, detailing the results of his labors, was one from  
Mr. M’Culloch, the excellent minister already re-  
ferred to:

“As it is matter of joy and thankfulness to God,  
who sent you hither, and gave you so much counte-  
nance, and so remarkably crowned your labors with  
success here at Glasgow, so I doubt not but the fol-  
lowing account of the many seals to your ministry in  
and about that city, will be very rejoicing to your  
heart, especially as the kingdom of our glorious Re-  
deemer is so much advanced thereby, and as the ever-  
lasting happiness of souls is promoted. I am well  
informed by some ministers, and other judicious and  
experienced Christians, that there are to the amount  
of fifty persons already known, in and about Glasgow,

who appear to be savingly converted, through the  
blessing and power of God on your ten sermons.  
And there are, besides these, several others appar-  
ently under conviction, but not reckoned, as being  
still doubtful. Several Christians also, of considera-  
ble standing, were much strengthened, revived, and  
comforted by what they heard. They were made to  
rejoice in hope of the glory of God, having attained  
to the full assurance of faith. Among those lately  
converted, there are several young people who were  
before openly wicked and flagitious, or at best but  
very negligent as to spiritual things; and yet they  
are now in the way of salvation. Some young con-  
verts are yet under doubts and fears, but a considera-  
ble number of them have attained to peace and joy in  
believing. Several of those who were lately wrought  
on in a gracious way, seem to outstrip Christians of  
considerable standing, in spiritual-mindedness, and in  
many other good qualifications; particularly in their  
zeal for the conversion of others, in their love to ordi-  
nances, and in their freedom from bigotry and party  
zeal. Those converted by your ministry have not  
been discovered at once, but only from time to time.  
A good many of them have been discovered only of  
late. Their convictions were at first less pungent,  
and through the discouragements they met with in the  
families where they resided, as well as from their own  
feelings, they endeavored for a time to conceal their  
state. These circumstances afford ground for hoping,  
that there are yet others who may afterwards become  
known. Besides such as have been awakened through  
the power of God accompanying your sermons, there

have been others who have been since awakened, and  
who have been discovered in consequence of the change  
observable in their conduct. These, dear brother, are  
a few hints concerning some of the most remarkable  
things, as to the blessing which accompanied your  
labors at Glasgow.”

At Edinburgh, when first visited by Whitefield,  
many persons of the highest rank constantly attended  
his ministry. Among them were the Marquis of Lo-  
thian, the Earl of Leven, Lord Kay, Lady Mary Ham-  
ilton, Lady Erances Gardiner, Lady Jane Nimms, and  
Lady Dirleton; and at some one of their houses he  
expounded almost every evening. Numbers of min-  
isters and students crowded to hear him; and aged  
Christians told him they could set their seal to what  
he preached.

In connection with this first visit to Edinburgh,  
several incidents have been related which show the  
power that accompanied his preaching, and the skill  
with which he could seize upon passing circumstan-  
ces, and apply them to the great purpose which he  
always had in view. A gentleman, on returning from  
one of his sermons, was met on his way home by  
an eminent minister whom he usually heard, and who  
expressed great surprise that he should; go to hear  
such a man. The gentleman replied, “Sir, when I  
hear you, I am planting trees all the time; but dur-  
ing the whole of Mr. Whitefield’s sermon, I could not  
find time to plant one.” A similar instance is related  
of a ship-builder, who usually could “build a ship from  
stem to stern during the sermon; but under Mr. White-

field, could not lay a single plank.”

Another narrative has been thus given. An un-  
happy man who had forfeited his life to the offended  
laws of his country, was executed in that neighbor-  
hood. Mr. Whitefield mingled with the crowd col-  
lected on the occasion, and was much impressed with  
the decorum and solemnity which were observable in  
the awful scene. His appearance, however, drew the  
eyes of all upon him, and produced a variety of opin-  
ions as to the motives which led him to join the mul-  
titude.

The next day, being Sunday, he preached to a very  
large congregation in a field near the city; and in the  
course of his sermon, he adverted to the scenes of the  
preceding day. “I know,” said he, “that many of  
you may find it difficult to reconcile my appearance  
yesterday with my clerical character. Many of you,  
I know, will say that my moments would have been  
better employed in praying for the unhappy man, than  
in attending him to the fatal tree; and that perhaps  
curiosity was the only cause that converted me into a  
spectator on that occasion; but those who ascribe  
that uncharitable motive to me, are under a mistake.  
I went as an observer of human nature, and to see the  
effect that such an occurrence would have on those  
who witnessed it. I watched the conduct of those  
who were present on that awful occasion, and I was  
highly pleased with their demeanor, which has given  
me a very favorable opinion of the Scottish nation.  
Your sympathy was visible on your countenances;  
particularly when the moment arrived that your un-  
happy fellow-creature was to close his eyes on this  
world for ever. Then you all, as if moved by one

impulse, turned your heads aside, and wept. Those  
tears were precious, and will be held in remembrance.  
How different it was when the Saviour of mankind  
was extended on the cross! The Jews, instead of sym-  
pathizing in his sorrows, triumphed in them. They  
reviled him with bitter expressions, with words even  
more bitter than the gall and vinegar which they  
handed him to drink. Not one of all who witnessed  
his pains, turned his head aside, even in the last pang.  
Yes, my friends, there was one—that glorious lumi-  
nary,” pointing to the sun, “veiled his brightness, and  
travelled on his course in tenfold night.”

On another occasion, near the same city, and prob-  
ably in the field to which we have already referred,  
under the shade of a venerable tree, in a lovely mead-  
ow, a poor unhappy man, thinking to turn him into  
ridicule, placed himself on one of the overhanging  
boughs, immediately above the preacher’s head, and  
with monkey-like dexterity mimicking his gestures,  
endeavored to raise a laugh in the audience. Guided  
by the looks of some of his hearers, Whitefield caught  
a glance of him, but without seeming to have noticed  
him, continued his discourse. With the skill of a wise  
orator, he reserved the incident for the proper place  
and time. While forcibly speaking on the power and  
sovereignty of divine grace, with increasing earnest-  
ness he spoke of the unlikely objects it had often  
chosen, and the unlooked for triumphs it had achieved.  
As he rose to the climax of his inspiring theme, and  
when in the full sweep of his eloquence, he suddenly  
paused, and turning round, and pointing slowly to the  
poor creature above him, he exclaimed, in a tone of

deep and thrilling pathos, “Even he may yet be the  
subject of that free and resistless grace.” It was a  
shaft from the Almighty. Winged by the divine  
Spirit, it struck the scoffer to the heart, and realized  
in his conversion the glorious truth it contained.

Yet another fact may be told connected with  
Whitefield and Edinburgh. When he was once there,  
a regiment of soldiers were stationed in the city, in  
which was a sergeant whose name was Forbes, a very  
abandoned man, who, everywhere he could do so, run  
in debt for liquor, with which he was almost at all  
times drunk. His wife washed for the regiment, and  
thus obtained a little money. She was a pious woman,  
but all her attempts to reclaim her husband were un-  
successful. During one of Mr. Whitefield’s visits to  
the city, she offered her husband a sum of money, if  
he would for once go and hear the eloquent preacher.  
This was a strong inducement, and he engaged to go.  
The sermon was in a field, as no building could have  
contained the audience. The sergeant was rather  
early, and placed himself in the middle of the field,  
that he might file off when Mr. Whitefield ascended  
the pulpit; as he only wished to be able to say that  
he had seen him. The crowd, however, increased;  
and when the preacher appeared, they pressed for-  
ward, and the sergeant found it impossible to get  
away. The prayer produced some impression on his  
mind, but the sermon convinced him of his sinfulness  
and danger. He became a changed man, and showed  
the reality of his conversion by living for many years  
in a very penurious manner, till he had satisfied the  
claims of every one of his creditors.

One fact more should be stated in connection with  
this visit. Mr. James Ogilvie was one of the minis-  
ters of Aberdeen. This city was not in that day, nor  
indeed in any part of the eighteenth century, warmly  
attached to a fully-exhibited gospel. At this time,  
however, both Mr. Ogilvie and his colleague, Mr. Bis-  
set, who, as Sir Henry Moncrieff says, was the highest  
of the High church, were evangelical, though other-  
wise very opposite men. “Though colleagues of the  
same congregation,” says Whitefield, “they are very  
different in their natural temper. The one is, what  
they call in Scotland, a sweet-blooded man, the other  
of a choleric disposition. Mr. Bisset is neither a seced-  
er nor quite a true kirkman, 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 pulled out a paper containing a  
great number of insignificant queries, which I had  
neither time nor inclination to answer.” For several  
years Mr. Ogilvie had been corresponding with Mr.  
Whitefield to induce him to visit Aberdeen, hoping  
that some good might be done; and as he was himself  
to preach on Sabbath forenoon in presence of the  
magistrates, he gave Mr. Whitefield his place. The  
congregation was large, and apparently much inter-  
ested. Mr. Bisset, in the afternoon, preached against  
Mr. Whitefield by name. Mr. Ogilvie, without either  
consulting his friend, or noticing the conduct of his  
colleague, stood up, after the sermon, and intimated to  
the congregation that Mr. Whitefield would again  
preach in about half an hour. The magistrates re-  
mained in the session-house, and the people hastened

back, expecting to hear a reply. Mr. Whitefield,  
waiving as much as possible all controversial matter,  
preached Christ. The audience was silent, solemn,  
and deeply impressed. Next day, the magistrates  
apologized for their minister; and as a mark of their  
own respect, presented to Mr. Whitefield the freedom  
of their city. The effect of this visit to Aberdeen  
was great and beneficial.

In 1742, Mr. Whitefield again visited Scotland.  
In the meantime he had heard that his dear friends  
the Erskines had become greatly offended, on account  
of what they considered his lax views of church gov-  
ernment. But notwithstanding this difference with  
the seceders, he was received by great numbers, among  
whom were some persons of distinction, with cordi-  
ality and joy, and had the satisfaction of bearing  
more and more of the happy fruits of his ministry.  
At Edinburgh he again preached twice a day, as  
before, in the Hospital-park, where a number of seats  
and shades, in the form of an amphitheatre, were  
erected for the accommodation of his hearers. On  
the day of his arrival at Cambuslang, he preached  
three times to an immense body of people, although  
he had preached that same morning at Glasgow.  
The last service continued till eleven o’clock; and so  
much were the people interested, that Mr. M’Culloch,  
after preaching till past one in the morning, could  
scarcely persuade them to depart. Mr. Whitefield  
himself thus describes the scene: “Persons from all  
parts flocked to see, and many, from many parts, went  
home convinced and converted to God. A brae, or  
hill, near the manse at Cambuslang, seemed to be

formed by Providence for containing a large congre-  
gation. People sat unwearied till two in the morn-  
ing, to hear sermons, disregarding the weather. You  
could scarcely walk a yard, but you must tread upon  
some either rejoicing in God for mercies received, or  
crying out for more. Thousands and thousands have  
I seen, before it was possible to catch it by sympathy,  
melted down under the word and power of God. At  
the celebration of the holy communion, their joy was  
so great, that, at the desire of many, both ministers  
and people, in imitation of Hezekiah’s passover, they  
had, a month or two afterwards, a second, which was  
a general rendezvous of the people of God. The com-  
munion was in the field; three tents, at proper dis-  
tances, all surrounded with a multitude of hearers;  
above twenty ministers, among whom was good old  
Mr. Bonner, attending to preach and assist, all enli-  
vening and enlivened by one another.”

In addition to his labors at Glasgow and Cambus-  
lang, it is surprising to observe the number of places  
in the west of Scotland which Whitefield visited in  
the course of a few weeks; preaching wherever he  
went, with his usual frequency, energy, and success.  
A gentleman of piety and intelligence thus refers to  
one of them several years afterwards: “When Mr.  
Whitefield was preaching at Kilmarnock, on the  
twenty-third of August, from the words, ‘And of his  
fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,’ I  
thought I never heard such a sermon; and from the  
era above mentioned, I have always looked upon him  
as my spiritual father, and frequently heard him after-  
wards in Edinburgh and Glasgow with much satisfac-

tion. When Cape Breton was taken, I happened to  
be at Edinburgh, and being invited to breakfast with  
Mr. Whitefield, I never, in all my life, enjoyed such  
another breakfast. He gave the company a fine and  
lively descant upon that part of the world, made us all  
join in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, and con-  
cluded with a most devout and fervent prayer.” About  
the end of October, Whitefield returned to London.

Probably few are aware that Mr. Whitefield visit-  
ed Scotland no less than fourteen times. These visits  
extended over a period of twenty-seven years, begin-  
ning in 1741, and ending in 1768. In none of his  
visits after 1742 were there the same extensive awak-  
enings as in his first two visits, yet his coming was  
always refreshing to serious persons, infusing new  
life, and increasing their numbers. Young people,  
too, were much benefited by his ministry, and espec-  
ially young students, who afterwards became zealous  
and evangelical preachers. His morning discourses,  
which were generally intended for sincere but discon-  
solate souls, were peculiarly fitted to direct and en-  
courage such in the Christian life; and his addresses  
in the evening to the promiscuous multitudes who then  
attended him, were powerful and alarming. There  
was great solemnity in his evening congregations in  
the Orphan-house park at Edinburgh and the High  
Church-yard at Glasgow, especially towards the con-  
clusion of his sermons—which were usually long,  
though they seemed short to his hearers—when the  
whole multitude stood fixed, and like one man, hung  
upon his lips with silent attention, and many were  
under deep religious impressions.

His conversation was no less useful and delightful  
than his sermons. Many in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and  
other parts of the land, bore witness of this fact. In  
Glasgow especially, when in company with his excel-  
lent friends M’Laurin, Scott, and others, one might  
challenge the professed sons of pleasure, with all their  
wit, humor, and gayety, to furnish entertainments so  
gratifying; nor was any part of it more agreeable  
than it was useful and edifying.

Mr. Whitefield’s friends in Scotland, among whom  
were many of all ranks, from the highest to the low-  
est, were constant and steady in their great regard  
for him, and his opposers from year to year became  
less violent. Indeed, his whole behavior was so trans-  
parent to the eyes of the world, and his character,  
after it had stood many attacks from all quarters,  
became so thoroughly established, that some of his  
opposers in Scotland seemed to acquire esteem for  
him; at least, they ceased to speak evil of him.

In closing our sketch of Whitefield in Scotland,  
we select a few paragraphs from his letters, which are  
the more interesting as being among the very last  
words he wrote in that country. June 15, 1768, he  
says, “ You would be delighted to see our Orphan-  
house park assemblies, as large, attentive, and affec-  
tionate as ever. Twenty-seven-year-old friends and  
spiritual children remember the days of old; they  
are seeking after their first love, and there seems to  
be a stirring among the dry bones.” Writing on the  
second of July, he says, “Could I preach ten times a  
day, thousands and thousands would attend. I have  
been confined for a few days; but on Monday or

Whitefield. 11

Tuesday next, hope to mount my throne again. 0,  
to die there! too great, too great an honor to be ex-  
pected.” Again, on the ninth of July, “Every thing  
goes on better and better here; but I am so worn  
down by preaching abroad and talking at home almost  
all the day long, that I have determined, God willing,  
to set off for London next Tuesday.”

The respect with which Whitefield was treated in  
Scotland, not only by professing Christians, but in  
general society, was shown by the fact that he was  
presented with the freedom of some of the principal  
cities and towns which he visited. This privilege  
was given him in Stirling, Glasgow, Paisley, and Ab-  
erdeen, in 1741, and at Irvine and Edinburgh some  
years afterwards.

It is difficult, in such a world as this, so to live as  
that “our good” shall not “be evil spoken of.” Mr.  
Whitefield has sometimes been charged with motives  
of a mercenary character, but his whole life showed  
the fallacy of such a charge. Dr. Gillies, his original  
biographer, received from unquestionable testimony  
the knowledge of a fact which ought not to be forgot-  
ten. During his stay in Scotland, in the year 1759,  
a young lady, Miss Hunter, who possessed a consider-  
able fortune, made a full offer to him of her estate in  
money and lands, worth several thousand pounds.  
He promptly refused the offer; and upon his declin-  
ing it for himself, she offered it to him for the benefit  
of his orphan-house. This also he absolutely refused.

Never could Whitefield be accused of moral cow-  
ardice. When the old Scotch Marquis of Lothian  
professed that his heart was impressed with the im-

portance of religion, but wished to be a Christian in  
the dark, Whitefield said to him, “As for praying in  
your family, I entreat you not to neglect it; you are  
bound to do it. Apply to Christ to overcome your  
present fears; they are the effects of pride or infidel-  
ity, or both.”

On his return from Scotland to London in 1741,  
Whitefield passed through Wales, where at Aberga-  
venny he was married to a Mrs. James, a widow,  
some ten years older than himself. Of this marriage,  
as also of the death of his only child, we have already  
spoken. After preaching at Bristol twice a day for  
several days in succession, he returned to London in  
the beginning of December, where he found letters  
from Georgia, which, on account of the temporal cir-  
cumstances of his orphan family, somewhat discour-  
aged him. But to trace his progress, and to report  
all his labors, would be to extend our volume beyond  
its due limits.

He was soon again in the west of England, and  
writing from Gloucester, his native place, December  
23, 1741, he says, “Last Thursday evening the Lord  
brought me hither. I preached immediately to our  
friends in a large barn, and had my Master’s presence.  
Both the power and the congregation increased. On  
Sunday, Providence opened a door formy preaching  
in St. John’s, one of the parish churches. Great num-  
bers came. On Sunday afternoon, after I had preach-  
ed twice at Gloucester, I preached at the hill, six  
miles off, and again at night at Stroud. The people  
seemed to be more hungry than ever, and the Lord to

be more among them. Yesterday morning I preached  
at Painswick, in the parish church, here in the after-  
noon, and again at night in the barn. God gives me  
unspeakable comfort and uninterrupted joy. Here  
seems to be a new awakening, and a revival of the  
work of God. I find several country people were  
awakened when I preached at Tewkesbury, and have  
heard of three or four that have died in the Lord.  
We shall never know what good field-preaching has  
done till we come to judgment. Many who were  
prejudiced against me begin to be of another mind;  
and God shows me more and more that ‘when a man’s  
ways please the Lord, he will make even his enemies  
to be at peace with him.’”

In the following February he was still further  
encouraged by receiving letters from America, inform-  
ing him of the remarkable success of the gospel there,  
and that God had stirred up some wealthy friends to  
assist his orphans in their extremity. He writes,  
“The everlasting God reward all their benefactors.  
I find there has been a fresh awakening among them.  
I am informed that twelve negroes belonging to a  
planter lately converted at the orphan-house, are sav-  
ingly brought home to Jesus Christ.” Nor were these  
things all which afforded him joy. Writing to a  
friend, April 6, he says, “Our Saviour is doing great  
things in London daily. I rejoice to hear that you  
are helped in your work. Let this encourage you;  
go on, go on; the more we do, the more we may do  
for Jesus. I sleep and eat but little, and am con-  
stantly employed from morning till midnight, and yet  
my strength is daily renewed. Oh, free grace! It

fires my soul, and makes me long to do something 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 has work for me.” It was at this pe-  
riod that he first ventured to preach in the fair in  
Moorfields, to which we have already referred. In  
this year he made also his second journey to Scotland,  
the particulars of which have been already given.

On his arrival from Scotland in London, October,  
1742, Whitefield found a new awakening at the Tab-  
ernacle, which in the meantime had been enlarged.  
He says, “I am employed, and, glory to rich grace, I  
am carried through the duties of each day with cheer-  
fulness and almost uninterrupted tranquillity. Our  
society is large, but in good order. My Master gives  
us much of his gracious presence, both in our public  
and private ministrations.”

In March, 1743, he went again into Gloucestershire,  
where the people appeared to be more eager to attend  
on his ministry than ever before. “Preaching,” says  
he, “in Gloucestershire, is now like preaching at the  
Tabernacle in London.” And in a letter, April 7, he  
says, “I preached, and took leave of the Gloucester  
people with mutual and great concern, on Sunday  
evening last. It was past one in the morning before  
I could lay my weary body down. At five I rose  
again, sick for want of rest; but I was enabled to

get on horseback and ride to Mr. T---’s, where I

preached to a large congregation, who came there at  
seven in the morning. At ten, I read prayers and  
preached, and afterwards administered the sacrament

in Stonehouse church. Then I rode to Stroud, and  
preached to about twelve thousand in Mr. G——’s  
field; and about six in the evening, to a like number  
on Hampton common.” Next morning he preached  
near Dursley to some thousands; at about seven  
o’clock he reached Bristol, and preached to a full  
congregation at Smith’s hall; and on the following  
morning, after preaching, set out for Waterford, in  
South Wales, where he opened the association which  
he and his brethren had agreed upon, and was several  
days with them, settling the affairs of the societies.  
The work in Wales, during his absence, had very  
greatly extended itself, not a few of the clergy hav-  
ing become converted, as well as their people. He  
tells us, “The power of God at the sacrament, under  
the ministry of Mr. Rowland, was enough to make a  
person’s heart burn within him. At seven in the morn-  
ing have I seen perhaps ten thousand from different  
parts, in the midst of a sermon, crying, Gugunniaut—·  
bendyth—[glory—blessed]—ready to leap for joy.”He continued in Wales some weeks, preaching with  
great apparent success, and in the latter part of April  
returned to Gloucester, after having, in about three  
weeks, travelled about four hundred miles, spent three  
days in attending associations, and preached about  
forty times. Among the interesting events of this  
journey may be reckoned the fact, that when he was  
at Caermarthen the quarterly sessions were held.  
When he was about to preach, the magistrates sent  
him word, that if he would stay till the court rose,  
they would attend on the service. He acceded to  
their proposal, and they were present, with many

thousands more, including several persons of high  
rank.

After a few weeks spent in London, preaching to  
vast congregations in Moorfields, and exulting in his  
accustomed success, collecting too for his beloved or-  
phans, so as to be able to pay all his debts, and to make  
a remittance to Georgia, we again find him at Bris-  
tol, and in a few days afterwards at Exeter. Among  
the clergymen who met him there was Mr. Cennick.  
As this gentleman was preaching during this visit in  
the High-street of the city, he was eloquently dis-  
coursing on the doctrine of the atonement by the  
blood of Christ, when a profane butcher in the crowd  
exclaimed, “If you love blood, you shall presently  
have enough of it” and ran to obtain some to throw  
on him. A Mr. Saunders, who was employed in con-  
veying persons from one place to another, though an  
entire stranger to religion, from a sense of justice,  
determined to defend the preacher; and when the  
butcher came with a pail nearly filled with blood, he  
quietly took it from him, and poured it over the  
man’s own head. This Mr. Saunders afterwards be-  
came an eminent Christian. He was, till extreme old  
age, the body-coachman of George III., with whom he  
frequently held Christian conversation, and died hap-  
pily in 1799, at the age of eighty-nine.

During this visit to Bristol, Whitefield’s ministry  
was owned of God in the conversion of Thomas Oli-  
vers, a young profligate Welshman. It is said, he  
had so studied profanity and cursing, that he would  
exemplify the richness of the Welsh language by com-  
pounding twenty or thirty words into one long and

horrid blasphemy. He had often sang profane songs  
about Whitefield, and was now induced by curiosity  
to go to hear him. Being too late on the first occa-  
sion, he went on the following evening nearly three  
hours before the time. The text was, “Is not this a  
brand plucked out of the fire?” Zech. 3:2. His  
heart became broken with a sense of his sins, and he  
was soon enabled to trust in the mercy of Christ. He  
became a zealous and successful minister of Christ  
among the followers of Mr. Wesley, and was the author  
of the well-known hymn,

“The God of Abram praise,” etc.

In August, Whitefield returned to London, but not  
to make a long stay there. “I thank you,” he writes  
to a correspondent, “for your kind caution to spare  
myself; but evangelizing is certainly my province.  
Everywhere effectual doors are opened. So far from  
thinking of settling in London, I am more and more  
convinced that I should go from place to place. Ac-  
cordingly, during the three last months of 1743, we  
find him in a large number of places in the central  
and western parts of England. At Birmingham, he  
writes, “I have preached five times this day, and weak  
as I am, through Christ strengthening me, I could  
preach five times more.” At Kidderminster he met  
with a distinguished Christian merchant, a Mr. Will-  
iams, whose published “Memoirs” have been eminently  
useful. Whitefield writes, “I was kindly received by  
Mr. Williams. Many friends were at his house. I  
was greatly refreshed to find what a sweet savor of  
good Baxter's doctrine, works, and discipline remains

to this day.” Nor did he, amidst all his labors, feel  
his health much impaired. He observes, indeed, that  
he had taken a cold, but adds, “The Lord warms my  
heart.”

In the beginning of March, 1744, he was compelled  
to attend the assizes at Gloucester. During the pre-  
ceding summer, the enemies of the Methodists had  
been very violent, especially at Hampton, in that  
county. Forbearance in the case had ceased to be a  
virtue, and Mr. Whitefield was strongly urged to ap-  
peal to law, which in England in such cases is severe.  
At the preceding sessions the rioters had been con-  
victed, but appealed to the assizes, a higher court.  
After a full hearing, a verdict was given in favor of  
Whitefield and his friends, and all the prisoners were  
found guilty. This exposed each to a fine of forty  
pounds, or six months’ imprisonment; the rioters were  
greatly alarmed, public feeling on the subject was  
corrected, and the Methodists readily extended for-  
giveness to the unhappy offenders.

Whitefield was now invited by Mr. Smith, an  
American merchant then in England, in the name of  
thousands, to revisit this country, and took passage  
with that gentleman in a vessel sailing from Portsmouth.  
But the captain refused to take him, “for fear ” as he  
said, “he would spoil the sailors.” On this account  
Mr. Whitefield was compelled to go to Plymouth, an-  
other seaport, to accomplish his purpose. On his way,  
he preached "at Exeter and other places, with delight-  
ful results. “But,” he says, “the chief scene was at  
Plymouth and the Dock, [now called Devonport,]  
where I expected least success.”

While he was at Plymouth, four well-dressed men  
came to the house of one of his particular friends, in  
a kind manner inquiring after him, and desiring to  
know where he lodged. Soon after, Mr. Whitefield  
received a letter informing him that the writer was a  
nephew of Mr. S——, an attorney in New York;  
that he had the pleasure of supping with Mr. White-  
field at his uncle’s house, and requested his company  
to sup with him and a few friends at a tavern. Mr.  
Whitefield replied to him that he was not accustomed  
to sup abroad, at such houses, but he should be glad  
of the gentleman’s company to eat a morsel with him  
at his own lodging. The gentleman accordingly came  
and supped, but was observed frequently to look  
around him, and to be very absent. At length he took  
his leave, and returned to his companions in the tavern,  
and on being asked by them what he had done, he an-  
swered, that he had been treated with so much civility  
and kindness that he had not the heart to touch him.  
One of the company, a lieutenant of a man-of-war, laid  
a wager of ten guineas that he would do his business  
for him. His companions, however, had the precau-  
tion to take away his sword.

It was now about midnight, and Mr. Whitefield  
having that day preached to a large congregation,  
and visited the French prisoners, had retired to rest,  
when he was awoke and told that a well-dressed gen-  
tleman earnestly wished to speak with him. Suppos-  
ing that it was some person under conviction of sin,  
many such having previously called upon him, he de-  
sired him to be brought to his room. The gentleman  
came, sat down by his bedside, congratulated him

upon the success of his ministry, and expressed con-  
siderable regret that he had been prevented from  
hearing him. Soon after, however, he began to utter  
the most abusive language, and in a cruel and cow-  
ardly manner beat him in his bed. The landlady  
and her daughter, hearing the noise, rushed into the  
room and laid hold of the assailant; but disengaging  
himself from them, he renewed his attack on the un-  
offending preacher, who, supposing that he was about  
to be shot or stabbed, underwent all the feelings of a  
sudden and violent death. Soon after, a second per-  
son came into the house, and called from the bottom  
of the stairs, “Take courage, I am ready to help you.”But by the repeated cries of murder the neighborhood  
had become so alarmed, that the villains were glad  
to make their escape. “The next morning,” says Mr.  
Whitefield, “I was to expound at a private house,  
and then to set out for Biddeford. Some urged me to  
stay and prosecute, but being better employed, I went  
on my intended journey, was greatly blessed in preach-  
ing the everlasting gospel; and, upon my return, was  
well paid for what I had suffered, curiosity having  
led perhaps two thousand more than ordinary to see  
and hear a man that had like to have been murdered  
in his bed. And I trust, in the five weeks that I waited  
for the convoy, hundreds were awakened and turned  
unto the Lord.”

As Whitefield was one day preaching in Plymouth,  
a Mr. Henry Tanner, who was at work as a ship-  
builder at a distance, heard his voice, and resolved,  
with five or six of his companions, to go and drive  
him from the place where he stood; and for this pur-

pose they filled their pockets with stones. When,  
however, Mr. Tanner drew near, and heard Mr.  
Whitefield earnestly inviting sinners to Christ, he  
was filled with astonishment, his resolution failed  
him, and he went home with his mind deeply im-  
pressed. On the following evening, he again attend-  
ed, and heard Mr. Whitefield on the sin of those who  
crucified the Redeemer. After he had forcibly illus-  
trated their guilt, he appeared to look intently on Mr.  
Tanner, as he exclaimed, with great energy, “Thou  
art the man!” These words powerfully impressed  
Mr. Tanner; he felt his transgressions of the divine  
law to be awfully great, and in the agony of his soul  
he cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” The  
preacher then proceeded to proclaim the free and  
abundant grace of the Lord Jesus, which he com-  
manded to be preached among the very people who  
had murdered him; a gleam of hope entered the heart  
of the penitent, and he surrendered himself to Christ.  
Mr. Tanner afterwards entered the ministry, and la-  
bored with great success, for many years, at Exeter.

We are not quite certain whether it was on this  
or a subsequent visit to Plymouth, that Whitefield  
had preached on the Sabbath for the Rev. Mr. Kins-  
man, and after breakfast on Monday morning, said to  
him, “Come, let us visit some of your poor people.  
It is not enough that we labor in the pulpit; we must  
endeavor to be useful out of it.” On entering the  
dwellings of the afflicted poor, he administered to  
their temporal as well as their spiritual wants. Mr.  
Kinsman, knowing the low state of his finances, was  
surprised at his liberality, and suggested that he

thought he had been too bountiful. Mr. Whitefield,  
with some degree of smartness, replied, “It is not  
enough, young man, to pray, and put on a serious  
face; true religion, and undefiled, is this, to visit the  
widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to  
supply their wants. My stock, it is true, is nearly  
exhausted; but God, whom I serve, and whose saints  
we have assisted, will, I doubt not, soon give me a  
supply.” His expectation was not disappointed. A  
stranger called on him the same evening, who said,  
“With great pleasure I have heard you preach; you  
are on a journey, as well as myself, and travelling is  
expensive. Do me the honor to accept of this;”  
handing him five guineas, or twenty-five dollars. Re-  
turning to the family, Mr. Whitefield, very pleasantly  
smiling, showed them the money, saying, “There,  
young man, God has very speedily repaid what I lent  
him this morning. Let this in future teach you not to  
withhold what it is in the power of your hand to give.  
The gentleman to whom I was called is a perfect stran-  
ger to me; his only business was to give me the sum  
you see.” It was a singular fact, that this gentleman,  
though rich, was notorious for a penurious disposition.

During his stay in Plymouth, Whitefield’s useful-  
ness daily increased. The ferry-men, who obtained  
their living by carrying persons between Plymouth  
and Dock, refused to take money from his hearers,  
saying, “God forbid that we should sell his word!”  
The evangelist exclaimed, “Oh, the thousands that  
flock to the preaching of Christ’s gospel!” In the  
midst of these scenes, the convoy arrived, and in deli-  
cate health he embarked for America.

CHAPTER IX.

**WHITEFIELD’ S SECOND VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND.**

**1744, 1745.**

Mr. Whitefield commenced his third voyage to  
America in August, 1744. His health while crossing  
the Atlantic became worse, rather than better, the  
voyage lasting eleven weeks. He had set out in  
company with about one hundred and fifty ships,  
attended by several men-of-war as convoys, which,  
however, they lost by storms separating them on the  
way. It was more than six weeks, owing generally  
to want of wind, before they reached any of the west-  
ern islands. When the wind again sprung up, one of  
the vessels, which missed stays, drove upon the ship  
in which Whitefield was, striking her mainsail into  
the bowsprit. The alarm was very great, but no  
lives were lost. He had been singing a hymn on  
deck when the concussion took place; this fact, to-  
gether with that of the concussion itself, was commu-  
nicated to the convoy, and led to the use of much vio-  
lent and wicked language. But the good man was not  
intimidated. He says, “I called my friends together,  
and broke out into these words in prayer: ‘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 thine own immediate protection. Be  
thou our convoy, and make a difference between those  
who fear thee, and those that fear thee not.” A dif-  
ference was soon made. Next day a heavy storm

arose, which “battered and sent away our convoy, so  
that we saw him no more all the voyage.” White-  
field at first did not at all regret the loss, but when  
two strange sails appeared in the distance, and prepara-  
tion was made for action by mounting guns, slinging  
hammocks on, the sides of the ships, and encircling the  
masts with chains, he being, as he says, “naturally a  
coward,” found it formidable to have no convoy. The  
vessels, however, proved to be only a part of their  
own fleet. This was a pleasant discovery to them,  
especially to Whitefield. “The captain, on clearing  
the cabin, said, ‘After all, this is the best fighting.’You may be sure I concurred, praying that all our  
conflicts with spiritual enemies might at last termi-  
nate in a thorough cleansing and an eternal purifica-  
tion of the defiled cabin of our hearts.”

The tediousness of this voyage, in the feeble state  
of his health, seems to have tried Whitefield’s pa-  
tience; so that when he arrived in sight of the port  
of York, in the then territory of Maine, in order to  
land a few hours sooner he went on board a fishing  
smack then in the bay; but darkness coming on, she  
missed her course, and was tossed about all night.  
Unfortunately, too, she had no provisions, and he was  
so hungry that he says he “could have gnawed the  
very boards.” Besides he was suffering from “ner-  
vous colic.” He was greatly discouraged, until a  
man who was lying at his elbow in the cabin began  
to talk of “one Mr. Whitefield, for whose arrival the  
‘New Lights’ in New England” were watching and  
praying. “This,” he says, “made me take courage.  
I continued undiscovered; and in a few hours, in an-

swer, I trust, to new-light prayers, we arrived safe.”  
This was on October 19, 1744. He was quite ill  
when he landed; but was received by Dr. Sherburne,  
an eminent physician at York, who was once a Deist,  
but had been converted under Whitefield’s ministry.  
This gentleman took him to his own house, and after  
a few days he began to recover.

The Rev. Mr. Moody, of York, the aged and excel-  
lent, but eccentric minister of whom we have already  
spoken, took the earliest suitable opportunity of call-  
ing on the great evangelist, and said very character-  
istically, “Sir, you are, first, welcome to America;  
secondly, to New England; thirdly, to all faithful  
ministers in New England; fourthly, to all the good  
people of New England; fifthly, to all the good peo-  
ple of York; and sixthly and lastly, to me, dear sir,  
less than the least of all.” Prince’s “Christian His-  
tory” had announced his arrival, and that his inten-  
tion was “ to pass on to Georgia; and as he goes on,  
to meddle with no controversies, but only to preach  
up the parts of vital piety and the pure truths of the  
gospel, to all who are willing to hear them.”

After giving Whitefield this hearty welcome,  
Moody urged him for a sermon. The preacher hesi-  
tated, on account of his illness, but “good old Mr.  
Moody” did not give him the benefit of his own favor-  
ite maxim, “When you know not what to do, you  
must not do you know not what.” Whitefield preach-  
ed, and immediately went to Portsmouth, where he  
preached the same evening, November 6, for Mr.  
Pitch, and was to have preached again the next morn-  
ing, but was too ill, and deferred it till the afternoon.

In the meantime, as he wrote, “My pains returned;  
but what gave me most concern was, that notice had  
been given of my being engaged to preach. I felt a  
divine life, distinct from my animal life, which made  
me, as it were, laugh at my pains, though everyone  
thought I was taken with death. My dear York  
physician was then about to administer a medicine.

I on a sudden cried out, ‘Doctor, my pains are sus-  
pended; by the help of God, I will go and preach,  
and then come home and die.’ With some difficulty  
I reached the pulpit. All looked quite surprised, as  
though they saw one risen from the dead. I indeed  
was as pale as death, and told them they must look  
upon me as a dying man, come to bear my dying testi-  
mony to the truths I had formerly preached to them.  
All seemed melted, and were drowned in tears. The  
cry after me, when I left the pulpit, was like the cry  
of sincere mourners when attending the funeral of a  
dear departed friend. Upon my coming home, I was  
laid upon a bed on the ground, near the fire, and I  
heard them say, ‘He is gone.’ But God was pleased  
to order it otherwise. I gradually recovered.”

In another account he himself says, “In my own  
‘apprehension, and in all appearance to others, I was  
a dying man. I preached—the people heard me—as  
such. The invisible realities of another world lay  
open to my view. Expecting to launch into eternity,  
and to be with my Master before the morning, I spoke  
with peculiar energy. Such effects followed the word,  
I thought it was worth dying for a thousand times.  
Though wonderfully comforted within at my return,  
home, I thought I was dying indeed. .... Soon after,

a poor negro woman would see me. She came, sat  
down upon the ground, and looked earnestly in my  
face, and then said, ‘Massa, 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.’ I prayed to the Lord,  
that if I was to live, this might be the event.”

It was nearly three weeks before he was sufficiently  
recovered to proceed to Boston. The day before he  
left Portsmouth Mr. Shurtleff wrote, “The prejudices  
of most that set themselves against him before his  
coming, seem to be in a great measure abated, and in  
some, to be wholly removed; and there is no open  
opposition made to him. I have frequent opportuni-  
ties of being with him, and there always appears in  
him such a concern for the advancement of the Re-  
deemer’s kingdom and the good of souls, such a care  
to employ his whole time to these purposes, such  
sweetness of disposition, and so much of the temper  
of his great Lord and Master, that every time I see  
him, I find my heart further drawn out towards him.”

“Prince’s Christian History,” of December 15, says,  
“The Rev. Mr. Whitefield was so far revived as to be  
able to take coach with his consort, and set out from  
Portsmouth to Boston, Nov. 24; whither he came in  
a very feeble state, the Monday evening after; since  
which he has been able to preach in several of our  
largest houses of public worship, particularly the Rev.  
Dr. Colman’s, Dr. Sewall’s, Mr. Webb’s, and Mr.  
Gee’s, to crowded assemblies of people, and to great  
and growing acceptance. At Dr. Colman’s desire,  
and with the consent of the church, on the Lord’s day

after his arrival, he administered to them the holy  
communion. And last Lord’s day he preached for the  
venerable Mr. Cheever, of Chelsea, and administered  
the holy supper there. The next day he preached for  
the Rev. Mr. Emerson, of Malden. Yesterday he set  
out to preach for some towns to the northward; pro-  
poses to return hither the next Wednesday evening,  
and after a few days to comply with the earnest  
invitations of several ministers to go and preach to  
their congregations, in the southern parts of the prov-  
ince.

“He comes with the same extraordinary spirit of  
meekness, sweetness, and universal benevolence as  
before. In opposition to the spirit of separation and  
bigotry, he is still for holding communion with all  
Protestant churches. In opposition to enthusiasm,  
he preaches a close adherence to the Scriptures, the  
necessity of trying all impressions by them, and of  
rejecting whatever is not agreeable to them, as delu-  
sions. In opposition to Antinomianism, he preaches  
up all kinds of relative and religious duties, though  
to be performed in the strength of Christ; and, in  
short, the doctrines of the church of England, and the  
first fathers of this country. As before, he first  
applies himself to the understandings of his hearers,  
and then to the affections; and the more he preaches,  
the more he convinces people of their mistakes about  
him, and increases their satisfaction.”

The administration of the Lord’s supper by a priest  
of the church of England in the Congregational church  
in Brattle-street, Boston, gave great offence. Some  
said, the consent of the church was neither given nor

asked, and Dr. Colman was blamed for introducing  
Whitefield by his own authority; to which Dr. Col-  
man replied, that, as it was customary for pastors to  
invite the assistance of other ministers on such occa-  
sions, he thought it unnecessary to call for a vote of  
the church; that he plainly intimated his intention in  
his prayer after sermon, and then, on coming to the  
table, said, “The Rev. Mr. Whitefield being provi-  
dentially with us, I have asked him to administer the  
ordinance;” and that by the countenances of the peo-  
ple it seemed to be universally agreeable to them,  
which he supposed to be all the consent which the  
case required.

Since Mr. Whitefield’s former visit to New Eng-  
land, a considerable change had taken place in not a  
few of the ministers and churches. In 1740, he had  
inveighed strongly against many of the ministers, some  
of them even by name as, in his opinion, unconverted;  
and after his departure, some preachers, who profess-  
ed themselves to be his followers, had created great  
confusion by carrying these charges much farther than  
he would have approved. His second visit was there-  
fore anticipated by many with anxiety, lest it might  
cause a new outbreak of enthusiasm and disorder.  
The General Association of Connecticut, in June,  
1745, advised that he be not invited to preach in any  
of the churches. When he visited New Haven, he  
found himself shut out of the pulpit of the First church  
by its minister Mr. Noyes. A great crowd, however,  
assembled to hear him, from the neighboring towns,  
as well as from New Haven, and he preached from a  
platform erected in the street, before Mr. Pierpont’s

house on the Green, to a congregation which neither  
of the meeting-houses could have contained.

From Professor Kingsley’s “Sketch of the History  
of Yale College,” we learn that “President Clap  
issued a declaration, signed by himself and three  
tutors, that is, Samuel Whittlesey, afterwards minis-  
ter of the First church in New Haven, Thomas Dar-  
ling, for many years chief justice of the Court of Com-  
mon Pleas for the county of New Haven, and John  
Whiting, in which some of the proceedings of Mr.  
Whitefield were condemned. In consequence of the  
religious fervor which had been excited, a much greater  
diversity of theological opinions prevailed in Con-  
necticut than at any previous period. Violent con-  
troversies arose, churches were divided, and the gov-  
ernment, by interfering to prevent these evils, increased  
rather than checked them. The college became an  
object of jealousy; and the declaration of the rector  
and tutors, respecting the preaching of Whitefield,  
offended some, without effectually conciliating others.”

The opposition to Mr. Whitefield of which we  
have spoken, was by no means all that he met with.  
Even before the Association in Connecticut had taken  
action, several similar bodies in Massachusetts had  
acted in a similar manner. The corporation of Har-  
vard college published a testimony against him, while  
that of Yale represented that he intended to root out  
all the standing ministers in our land, and to intro-  
duce foreigners in their stead. The good man, not-  
withstanding all this opposition, and much more, went  
on laboring for the salvation of souls, and God still  
honored him with success.

While the impartiality to which we hold ourselves  
bound demanded the statement just made, and while  
we are compelled to admit the existence of evils  
attendant on these revivals, we also record some of  
the facts connected with a convention of ministers,  
who assembled in Boston in pursuance of a previous  
notice in the Boston Gazette of May 30, 1743. We  
copy the original invitation.

“It is desired and proposed by a number of minis-  
ters, both in town and country, that such of their  
brethren as are persuaded that there has been of late  
a happy revival of religion through an extraordinary  
divine influence, in many parts of this land, and are  
concerned for the honor and progress of this remark-  
able work of God, may have an interview at Boston,  
the day after the approaching commencement, to con-  
sider whether they are not called to give an open,  
conjunct testimony to an event so surprising and gra-  
cious; as well as against those errors in doctrine, and  
disorders in practice, which through the permitted  
agency of Satan have attended it, and in any meas-  
ure blemished its glory and hindered its advancement;  
and also to consult as to the most likely method to be  
taken to guard people against such delusions and mis-  
takes as in such a season they are in danger of falling  
into, and that this blessed work may continue and  
flourish among us.” Those who could not be present  
were invited to send written attestations.

In accordance with this proposal, the convention  
met in Boston on Thursday, July 7. The Rev. Dr.  
Sewall of Boston officiated as Moderator, and the Rev.  
Messrs. Prince of Boston, and Hobby of Reading, as

Scribes. Ninety persons thus assembled, and letters  
were read from twenty-eight who were absent. A  
committee was appointed, consisting of the Rev. Dr.  
Sewall, the Rev. Messrs. Wigglesworth, Prince, Ad-  
ams, Cooper, Nathanael Rogers, Leonard, and Hobby,  
to prepare a report. On the next morning this com-  
mittee presented a document, which, after full discus-  
sion, was signed by all present; and the meeting was  
dissolved.

Our limits will not allow us to give the whole of  
the report to which we have referred, but a few sen-  
tences will show its general character:

“We, whose names are undersigned, think it our  
indispensable duty—without judging or censuring such  
of our brethren as cannot at present see things in the  
same light with us—in this open and conjunct manner  
to declare, to the glory of sovereign grace, our full  
persuasion, either from what we have seen ourselves,  
or received upon credible testimony, that there has  
been a happy and remarkable revival of religion in  
many parts of this land, through an uncommon divine  
influence, after a long time of decay and deadness, and a  
sensible and very awful withdrawal of the Holy Spirit  
from his sanctuary among us. . . . The present work  
seems to be remarkable and extraordinary, on account  
of the numbers wrought upon. We never before saw  
so many brought under soul concern, and with great  
distress making the inquiry, ‘What must we do to  
be saved?’ And these persons were of all ages and  
character. With regard to the suddenness and quick  
progress of it, many persons and places were surprised  
with the gracious visit together, or near about the

same time, and the heavenly influence diffused itself  
far and wide, like the light of the morning. Also  
[the work seems to be remarkable] in respect to the  
degree of operations, both in a way of terror, and in  
a way of consolation, attended in many with unusual  
bodily effects. Not that all who are accounted the  
subjects of the present work have had these extraor-  
dinary degrees of previous distress and subsequent joy.  
But many, and we suppose the greater number, have  
been wrought on in a more gentle and silent way,  
and without any other appearances than are common  
and usual at other times, when persons have been  
awakened to a solemn concern about salvation, and  
have been thought to have passed out of a state of  
nature into a state of grace. As to those whose in-  
ward concern has occasioned extraordinary outward  
distresses, the most of them, when we came to con-  
verse with them, were able to give what appeared to  
us a rational account of what so affected their  
minds. . . . The instances were very few in which  
we had reason to think these affections were produced  
by visionary or sensible representations, or by any  
other images than such as the Scripture itself presents  
to us. Of those who were judged hopefully convert-  
ed, and made a public profession of religion, there  
have been fewer instances of scandal and apostasy  
than might be expected. . . . There appears to be  
more experimental godliness and lively Christianity  
than most of us can remember we have ever seen be-  
fore. . . . And now we desire to bow the knee in  
thanksgiving to the God and Father of our Lord  
Jesus Christ, that our eyes have seen and our ears

heard such things. And while these are our senti-  
ments, we must necessarily be grieved at any accounts  
sent abroad representing this work as all enthusiasm,  
delusion, and disorder. Indeed, it is not to be denied,  
that in some places many irregularities and extrava-  
gances have been permitted to accompany it, which  
we would deeply bewail and lament before God, and  
look upon ourselves obliged, for the honor of the  
Holy Spirit, and of his operations on the souls of  
men, to bear a public and faithful testimony against;  
though at the same time it is to be acknowledged,  
with much thankfulness, that in other places where  
the work has greatly flourished, there have been few  
if any of those disorders and excesses. But who can  
wonder if, at such a time as this, Satan should inter-  
mingle himself to hinder and blemish a work so  
directly contrary to the interests of his own king-  
dom? . . . Finally, we exhort the children of God to  
continue instant in prayer, that He, with whom is the  
residue of the Spirit, would grant us fresh, more plen-  
tiful, and extensive effusions, that so this wilderness,  
in all the parts of it, may become a fruitful field;  
that the present appearances may be an earnest of the  
glorious things promised in the latter days, when she  
shall shine with the glory of the Lord arisen upon  
her, so as to dazzle the eyes of beholders, confound  
and put to shame all her enemies, rejoice the hearts of  
her solicitous and now saddened friends, and have  
a strong influence and resplendency throughout the  
earth. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come  
quickly.”

This paper was signed by eighteen ministers in the

Whitefield. 12

county of Suffolk, among whom were Colman, Sewall,  
Prince, Webb, Cooper, Foxcroft, Checkly, Gee, Eliot,  
and Moorhead of Boston ; twelve in the county of  
Essex, nine in Middlesex, six in Worcester, ten in  
Plymouth, one in Barnstable, three in Bristol, three  
in York, five in New Hampshire, and one in Rhode  
Island. There were one hundred and fourteen in all  
who gave attestations, either by signing their names  
to the above document, or by sending written attesta-  
tions. Ninety-six of the one hundred and fourteen  
took their first degree of Bachelor of Arts more than  
ten years previously; consequently before the revival  
commenced. Twenty-six took their first degrees  
above thirty years before. Attestations were received  
but from twelve ministers in Connecticut, as the pro-  
posal did not reach them in time.

We may add to this statement, as showing in some  
degree the extent of this revival, that while in 1729  
the number of members in the Congregational and  
Presbyterian churches of this country may be esti-  
mated at thirty-three thousand, the number of com-  
municants in 1745 could not be less than seventy-five  
thousand. “The special revivals of religion,” says an  
able writer in the “American Quarterly Register,”vol. 4, 1832, “were probably the means of adding  
from twenty thousand to thirty thousand members to  
the churches.” The same writer adds, “The gen-  
uine fruits of holiness appeared, according to the ac-  
knowledgment of all parties, in multitudes of those  
who professed religion. They were Christians, who  
endured unto the end. This is the unanimous testi-  
mony of those men who were the best able to judge.

Great numbers who were convinced of sin by Mr.  
Whitefield’s preaching, gave ample evidence, living  
and dying, of sincere and fervent love to the com-  
mands of God. There is reason to believe that a  
preparation had been made for the descent of the Holy  
Spirit, many years before the revival commenced. The  
fasts and public reformations, the prayers and tears of  
good men, from 1700 to 1730, were not in vain.”

One fact connected with the testimony against  
Whitefield, published by the faculty of Harvard col-  
lege, we quote, as showing that then, as well as now,  
a difference of opinion existed as to written and ex-  
tempore sermons. They thought his extempore man-  
ner of preaching “by no means proper,” because ex-  
tempore preachers are of necessity less instructive,  
the greater part of the sermon being commonly “the  
same kind of harangue which they have often used  
before, so that this is a most lazy manner” of preach-  
ing; and because it exposes the preacher to utter rash  
expressions, and even dangerous errors, as Whitefield.  
they thought, had done in several instances, probably  
from that cause. Assuredly he preferred extempore  
preaching to any other; yet he never pretended to  
preach without previous study. His sermons usually  
cost him as much previous labor as if they had been  
written; so that, in his case at least, it was not “a  
lazy way” of preaching. The errors which they said  
he had uttered, were a few hasty expressions, which  
he had retracted as soon as he had been reminded of  
them.

Itinerancy, which had also been objected against  
Whitefield as one of his crimes, he strenuously de-

fended as scriptural and right; understanding an  
evangelist to be, what they said an itinerant was,  
“One that hath no particular charge of his own, but  
goes about from country to country, or from town to  
town in any country, and stands ready to preach to  
any congregation that shall call him to it.” For the  
divine command, “Go ye into all the world, and  
preach the gospel to every creature,” he argued, “au-  
thorizes the ministers of Christ, even to the end of  
the world, to preach the gospel in every town and  
country, though not ‘of their own head,’ yet whenever  
and wherever Providence should open a door, even  
though it should be in a place ‘where officers are  
already settled, and the gospel is fully and faithfully  
preached.’ This, I humbly apprehend, is every gospel  
minister’s indisputable privilege.” He further asked,  
“Was not the Reformation begun and carried on by  
itinerant preaching?” He then quoted from “Bax-  
ter’s Reformed Pastor,” a plan which had been adopt-  
ed in some parts of England, for circular lectures by  
settled ministers selected for the purpose, and with  
the consent of the pastors.

In reference to Harvard college, Whitefield lived  
long enough to take a Christian’s revenge. In 1764,  
he solicited from his friends donations of books for  
their library, which had recently been destroyed by  
fire, and four years afterwards, while his old oppo-  
nent President Holyoke was yet in office, the fol-  
lowing minute was entered on their records: “At a  
meeting of the President and Fellows of Harvard col-  
lege, August 22, 1768, the Rev. G. Whitefield having,  
in addition to his former kindness to Harvard college,

lately presented to the library a new edition of his  
Journals, and having procured large benefactions from  
several benevolent and respectable gentlemen; voted,  
that the thanks of the corporation be given to the  
Rev. Mr. Whitefield, for these instances of candor  
and generosity.”

It will be readily supposed, that notwithstanding  
all the opposition which Whitefield met, there were  
yet many thousands always ready to attend on his  
ministry. It was now the close of 1744, but the cold  
of winter did not prevent vast crowds assembling at  
early services long before daylight. Speaking of the  
opposition he met, “so that,” says he, “for a while  
my situation was rendered uncomfortable,” he adds,  
“But amidst all this smoke a blessed fire broke out.  
The awakened souls were as eager as ever to hear  
the word. Having heard that I expounded early in  
Scotland, they begged that I would do the same in  
Boston. I complied, and opened a lecture at six in  
the morning. I seldom preached to less than two  
thousand. It was delightful to see so many of both  
sexes neatly dressed flocking to hear the word, and  
returning home to family prayer and breakfast before  
the opposers were out of their beds.”

The late Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander tells us,  
that when he was at Boston, in 1800, he found in the  
Old South church a lingering relic of Whitefield’s  
times, in a convert of his day, a lady between eighty  
and ninety years of age, who belonged to a prayer-  
meeting founded then, which had been kept up weekly  
until within a few years. Of this, she was the only  
surviving member.

The “Evening Post,” which seems to have been  
on the side of those who opposed Whitefield, in its  
issue of March 11, 1745, says, “Prince, Webb, Fox-  
croft, and Gee, are the directors of Mr. Whitefield’s  
public conduct, as he himself has lately declared at  
Newbury.” He had other powerful friends among  
the clergy, and still more among the laity, who invited  
him by vote into some pulpits where the pastors were  
“shy” of him.

On the 7th of February, we find him at Ipswich,  
where he spent several days. Mr. Pickering, of the  
Second church, declined admitting him into his pulpit,  
and assigned his reasons in a letter, which was pub-  
lished. It contains the usual objections set forth in  
the various “testimonies,” and is remarkable only for  
one convenient metaphor. The Bishop of London had  
published on “Lukewarmness and Enthusiasm.” White-  
field had said in reply, “All ought to be thankful to  
that pilot who will teach them to steer a safe and  
middle course;” and Pickering wittily asks, “But  
what if the pilot should take the vane for the com-  
pass?”

Early in March we find him making an excursion  
into the east, as we hear of him both at Berwick and  
Portland, in the then territory of Maine. In the lat-  
ter place, he not only made a powerful impression on  
the people, but on their minister. In the outset a  
strong feeling existed against his preaching in the  
pulpit of the First church. Mr. Smith, the pastor,  
says in his “Journal,” “The parish are like to be in a  
flame on account of Mr. Whitefield’s coming; the lead-  
ing men violently opposing.” Under the date of May

19, after Whitefield’s departure, we find in the “Jour-  
nal” a remarkable passage: “For several Sabbaths,  
and the lecture, I have been all in a blaze; never in  
such a flame, and what I would attend to is, that it  
was not only involuntary, but actually determined  
against. I went to meeting resolving to be calm and  
moderate, lest people should think it was wildness  
and affectation to ape Mr. Whitefield; but God, I  
see, makes use of me as he pleases, and I am only a  
machine in his hand.”

About the middle of March, we find our evangelist  
at Exeter, where he afterwards preached his last ser-  
mon. Here some of the more zealous members of the  
church had withdrawn, and formed a new church.  
Their conduct had been sanctioned by one council,  
and censured by another, two years before this time.  
Whitefield preached to them twice, though Mr. Odlin,  
the pastor of the church from which they had with-  
drawn, “solemnly warned and charged him against  
preaching in his parish.” So says the “Evening Post,”of March 25, which further calls the people to whom  
he preached, “Separatists.”

In this spring of 1745, the first expedition for the  
capture from the French of the island of Cape Breton,  
near Nova Scotia, was set on foot. Colonel Pepperell,  
a warm personal friend of Whitefield, and the only  
native of New England who was created a Baronet of  
Great Britain, was then at Boston, constantly attend-  
ing Whitefieid’s lectures. On the day before he ac-  
cepted a commission to be general in that expedition,  
he asked his opinion of the matter, and was told, with  
the preacher’s usual frankness, that he did not indeed

think that the scheme proposed for taking Louisburgh  
would be very promising; and that the eyes of all  
would be upon him. If he did not succeed, the wid-  
ows and orphans of the slain soldiers would be like  
lions robbed of their whelps; but if it pleased God to  
give him success, enyy would endeavor to eclipse his  
glory: he had need, therefore, if he went, to go with  
a single eye; and then there was no doubt, if Provi-  
dence really called him, he would find his strength  
equal to the difficulties with which he would have to  
contend.

About the same time, Mr. Sherburne, another of  
Whitefield’s friends, being appointed one of the com-  
missioners, told him he must favor the expedition,  
otherwise the pious people would be discouraged from  
enlisting; not only did he say this, but he insisted  
that the evangelist should give him a motto for his  
flag, for the encouragement of his soldiers. White-  
field refused to do this, as it would not be consistent  
with his character as a minister of the gospel of peace.  
But as Sherburne would take no denial, he gave him,  
Nil desperandum, Christo Duce—[Nothing to be de-  
spaired of, Christ being leader.] In these circum-  
stances a large number of men enlisted.

The soldiers and their officers now went farther,  
and before their embarkation requested him to give  
them a sermon. He preached to them from the text,  
“And every one that was in distress, and every one  
that was in debt, and every one that was discontent-  
ed, gathered themselves unto him; and he became  
a captain over them.” 1 Samuel 22:2. From this  
somewhat singular text, he discoursed on the manner

in which distressed sinners came to Jesus Christ, the  
Son of David; and in his application, exhorted the  
soldiers to behave like the soldiers of David, and the  
officers to act like David's worthies; saying, that if  
they did so, there would be good news from Cape  
Breton. After this he preached to the general him-  
self, who invited him to become one of his chaplains.  
Whitefield declined this, saying, that though he should  
esteem this an honor, yet, as he generally preached  
three times a day, to large congregations, he could  
do more service by stirring up the people to pray,  
thus strengthening the hearts and hands of the army.  
In this practice he persevered during the whole siege  
of Louisburgh. “I believe," said he, “if ever people  
went with a disinterested view, the New Englanders  
did then. Though many of them were raw and un-  
disciplined, yet numbers were substantial persons, who  
left their farms and willingly ventured all for their  
country's good. An amazing series of providences  
appeared, and though some discouraging accounts  
were sent during the latter end of the siege, yet in  
about six weeks news came of the surrender of Louis-  
burgh. Numbers flocked from all quarters to hear a  
thanksgiving sermon upon the occasion. And I trust  
the blessing bestowed upon the country through the  
thanksgivings of many, redounded to the glory of  
God."

Sometime before this, the people of Boston had  
proposed to build for Whitefield “the largest place  
of worship ever seen in America," in which he should  
regularly preach; but, as usual, he feared this plan  
would abridge his liberty of itinerating: he thanked  
 12\*

them for their offer, but decidedly declined to accept  
it. As his bodily strength increased, he began to  
move southward, and went through Rhode Island and  
Connecticut, preaching to thousands generally twice  
a day. He says, “Though there was much smoke, yet  
every day I had more and more convincing proof that  
a blessed gospel fire had been kindled in the hearts  
both of ministers and people.”

About this time occurred a fact which delightfully  
shows how the enemies of this admirable man were  
often converted into friends. A colored trumpeter  
belonging to the. English army resolved to inter-  
rupt him while delivering a sermon in the open air.  
For this purpose he went to the field, carrying his  
trumpet with him, intending to blow it with all his  
might about the middle of the sermon. He took his  
station in front of the minister, and at no great dis-  
tance from him. The crowd became very great, and  
those who were towards the extremity pressed for-  
ward, that they might hear more distinctly, and caused  
such a pressure where the poor trumpeter stood, that  
he found it impossible at the time when he intended  
to blow his trumpet, to raise the arm which held it,  
by which means he was kept within the sound of the  
gospel as effectually as if he had been chained to the  
spot. In a short time his attention was powerfully  
arrested, and he became so deeply affected by the  
statements of the preacher, that he was seized with  
all the agonies of despair, and was carried to a  
house in the neighborhood. After the service, he  
was visited by Mr. Whitefield, who gave him suitable  
counsels, and from that time the trumpeter became a

greatly altered man. So true is it in reference to the  
omnipotent and gracious Being,

“Hearts base as hell he can control,

And spread new powers throughout the whole.”

While preaching at Boston, he was delighted to  
observe that the sheriff, who had heretofore been the  
leader of the persecution against him, now began to  
hear him preach; and his pleasure was vastly in-  
creased, when he saw the crowds come around him  
to inquire as to their highest interests.

Among these crowds was a somewhat remarkable  
gentleman of that city. He was a man of ready wit  
and racy humor, who delighted in preaching over a  
bottle to his ungodly companions. He went to hear  
Whitefield, that he might be furnished with matter for  
a “tavern harangued.” When he had heard enough of  
the sermon for his purpose, he endeavored to quit the  
church for the inn, but “found his endeavors to get  
out fruitless, he was so pent up.” While thus fixed,  
and waiting for “fresh matter of ridicule,’ the truth  
took possession of his heart. That night he went to  
Mr. Prince full of terror, and sought an introduction  
to ask pardon of the preacher. Whitefield says of  
him, “By the paleness, pensiveness, and horror of his  
countenance, I guessed he was the man of whom I had  
been apprized. ‘Sir, can you forgive me?’ he cried  
in a low, but plaintive voice. I smiled, and said, ‘Yes,  
sir, very readily.’ ‘Indeed,’ he said, ‘you cannot when  
I tell you all.” I then asked him to sit down; and  
judging that he had sufficiently felt the lash of the  
law, I preached the gospel to him.” This, with other  
remarkable conversions, gave increasing energy and

influence to his preaching in Boston. “My bodily  
strength,’ he says, “is recovered, and my soul more  
than ever in love with a crucified Jesus.”

Another illustration may also be here given of the  
meekness and gentleness which usually characterized  
our evangelist in his intercourse with his brethren.  
In his later visits to New England, it was Whitefield’s  
usual practice to spend a few days with Dr. Hopkins.  
On one of these occasions, after preaching for the doc-  
tor on the Sabbath, the next day he proposed a ride  
into the country for exercise. During the ride, White-  
field spoke with regret of the views of their “good  
brother Edwards on the subject of the witness of the  
Holy Spirit.” “Ah,” asked Dr. Hopkins, “and what  
is the error?” Here Whitefield made a long pause   
and Hopkins continued the conversation: “Do you  
believe, Mr. Whitefield, that the witness of the Spirit  
is a direct communication from God?” “I cannot say  
that I do,” was the reply. “Well, do you believe  
that Christians have any other witness of the Spirit  
than that afforded by the testimony of their own holy  
affections?” “I cannot say that I do,” Mr. White-  
field again replied. “Do you believe it to be any-

thing more or less,” continued Hopkins, “than the  
Spirit producing in the heart the gracious exercises  
of repentance, faith, etc.?” “No, that is precisely my  
view of it,” said Whitefield. “And that is precisely  
the view of good father Edwards,” pleasantly return-  
ed Dr. Hopkins. Whitefield frankly acknowledged  
his error, and rejoiced that there was no disagreement  
on the subject.

CHAPTER X.

**FROM HIS LEAVING- NEW ENGLAND TILL HIS ARRI-  
VAL IN ENGLAND—LABORS IN THE MIDDLE AND  
SOUTHERN STATES—THE BERMUDAS.**

**1745-1748.**

Leaving New England, Whitefield proceeded first  
to New York, where he preached as he had formerly  
done, and found that the seed sown in past days had  
produced much fruit. Proceeding still southward, on  
his way towards Philadelphia, arriving in New Jersey,  
he says, “I had the pleasure of preaching by an inter-  
preter to some converted Indians, and of seeing nearly  
fifty young ones in one school, near Freehold, learning  
the Assembly's Catechism." A blessed awakening  
had before this time been begun and carried on among  
the Delaware Indians, by the ministry of David Brain-  
erd; no such work had been heard of since the days  
of the apostolic Eliot in New England.

Arriving in Philadelphia, Whitefield was rejoiced  
to find that his friend Gilbert Tennent was still blessed  
with success in his labors. Many, he says, were un-  
der “soul-sickness,” and Tennent's health suffered  
much with walking from place to place to see them.

The gentlemen connected with the new house in which  
Tennent preached, were, as well as Tennent himself,  
desirous of securing at least a portion of Whitefield’s  
labors, and offered him eight hundred pounds a year,  
if he would become their pastor, and labor with them

six months in the year, travelling the other six months  
wherever he thought proper. He thanked them, but  
declined.

Not unfrequently have we been told by frigid crit-  
ics of the inferior character of Whitefield’s printed  
sermons. But have they not looked too much for the  
beauties of style, and overlooked the simple energy of  
their scriptural truths? Even these printed sermons  
have, under God, accomplished wonders. In the year  
1743, a young gentleman from Scotland, then residing  
at Hanover, in Virginia, had obtained a volume of  
Whitefield’s sermons preached in Glasgow, and taken  
in shorthand, which, after a gentleman of Hanover,  
named Hunt, the father of a distinguished Presbyte-  
rian minister of that name, had studied with great  
personal benefit, he invited his neighbors to visit his  
house to hear read. By their plainness and fervor,  
attended with the power of God, not a few became  
convinced of their lost condition as sinners, and anx-  
iously inquired the way of salvation. The feelings of  
many were powerfully excited, and they could not for-  
bear bitter and violent weeping. The intelligence  
spread, curiosity prompted the desire of many others  
to attend such remarkable services; and one and  
another begged for admission, till the houses were  
crowded. Numbers were pricked to the heart; the  
word of God became quick and powerful; and, “What  
shall we do?” was the general cry. What to do or  
say the principal leaders knew not. They themselves  
had been led by a still small voice, they hardly knew  
how, to an acquaintance with the truth; but now the  
Lord was speaking as on mount Sinai, with a voice of

thunder; and sinners, like that mountain itself, trem-  
bled. It was not long before Christians had the hap-  
piness to see a goodly number healed by the same  
word that had wounded them, and brought to rejoice  
in Christ, and his great salvation. “My dwelling-  
place,” said Mr. Morris, one of their number, “was  
at length too small to contain the people, where-  
upon we determined to build a meeting-house merely  
for reading. And having never been used to social  
prayer, none of us durst attempt it.” This reading-  
house, as it was called, was followed by others of  
like character, and the number of attendants and the  
power of divine influence were much increased. Mr.  
Morris, as the report spread, was invited to several  
places at a distance to read these sermons. The  
phrase, “Morris’ reading-house,” has come down by  
tradition to the present age, as well as important  
details of the opposition of the magistracy and other  
classes, who sought, but in vain, to stop the progress  
of the work.

Such was the origin of the Presbyterian church at  
Hanover, where, in after-days, William Robinson and  
President Davies accomplished such mighty triumphs,  
and where the sacred cause still flourishes.

Whitefield does not seem to have been made  
acquainted with these facts till he now arrived in the  
colony, and saw the happy effects which had been pro-  
duced by the labors of the Rev. Messrs. Robinson,  
Tennent, Blair, and others. Of the visit of White-  
field among them, one of them writes, “Mr. Whitefield  
came and preached four or five days in these parts,  
which was the happy means of giving us further en-

couragement, and engaging others to the Lord, espec-  
ially among the church people, who received his doc-  
trine more readily than they would from ministers of  
the Presbyterian denomination.” We may add here,  
that in 1747 there were four houses of worship in and  
around Hanover, which had sprung from the “mustard-  
seed” of the sermons taken in shorthand from White-  
field’s lips at Glasgow.

Among the converts in the south who met White-  
field, was Isaac Oliver, who was both deaf and dumb,  
and had been so from his birth. Notwithstanding  
these great disadvantages, he could both feel and  
evince his strong feelings by the most significant and  
expressive signs. He could, for instance, so represent  
the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, as to be un-  
derstood by everyone; and among his own friends he  
could converse about the love of Christ in the lan-  
guage of signs, till he was transported in rapture and  
dissolved in tears. He was much beloved for his  
eminent piety.

Whitefield had not, during any portion of this  
time, forgotten Bethesda. The public had warmly  
sustained it, and he now went forward to see to its  
affairs, and to add to the orphan-house a Latin school,  
intending, indeed, before a long time to found a col-  
lege.

The following account of the orphan-house in  
1746, was written by Mr. Whitefield in the form of a  
letter to a friend, and published as a small pamphlet.  
We transcribe it from “White’s Historical Collections  
of Georgia,” published in 1854:

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”—Rom. 12: 17.

“Bethesda, in Georgia, March 21,1745-6.

“Some have thought that the erecting such a  
building was only the produce of my own brain; but  
they are much mistaken; for it was first proposed to  
me by my dear friend the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley,  
who, with his excellency General Oglethorpe, had con-  
certed a scheme for carrying on such a design before  
I had any thoughts of going abroad myself. It was  
natural to think that, as the government intended this  
province for the refuge and support of many of our  
poor countrymen, numbers of such adventurers must  
necessarily be taken off, by being exposed to the hard-  
ships which unavoidably attend a new settlement. I  
thought it, therefore, a noble design in the general to  
erect a house for fatherless children; and believing  
that such a provision for orphans would be some  
inducement with many to come over, I fell in with the  
design, when mentioned to me by my friend, and was  
resolved, in the strength of God, to prosecute it with  
all my might. This was mentioned to the honorable  
the trustees. They took it kindly at my hands, and  
wrote to the bishop of Bath and Wells for leave for  
me to preach a charity sermon on this occasion in the  
Abbey church. This was granted, and I accordingly  
began immediately to compose a suitable discourse.  
But knowing that my first stay in Georgia would  
necessarily be short, on account of my returning again  
to take priest’s orders, I thought it most prudent first  
to go and see for myself, and defer prosecuting the  
scheme till I came home. . . . When I came to Geor-  
gia, I found many poor orphans, who, though taken

notice of by the honorable trustees, yet, through the  
neglect of persons under them, were in miserable cir-  
cumstances. For want of a house to bring them up  
in, the poor little ones were tabled out here and there;  
others were at hard services, and likely to have no  
education at all.

“Upon seeing this, and finding that his Majesty  
and Parliament had the interest of the colony much at  
heart, I thought I could not better show my regard to  
God and my country than by getting a house and land  
for these children, where they might learn to labor,  
read, and write, and at the same time be brought up  
in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Accord-  
ingly, at my return to England, in the year 1738, to  
take priest’s orders, I applied to the honorable society  
for a grant of five hundred acres of land, and laid  
myself under an obligation to build a house upon it,  
and to receive from time to time as many orphans as  
the land and stock would maintain. As I had always  
acted like a clergyman of the church of England, hav-  
ing preached in a good part of the London churches,  
and but a few months before collected near a thousand  
pounds sterling for the children belonging to the  
charity schools in London and Westminster, it was  
natural to think that I might now have the use at  
least of some of these churches to preach in for the  
orphans hereafter more immediately to be committed  
to my care. But by the time I had taken priest’s  
orders, the spirit of the clergy began to be much im-  
bittered. Churches were gradually denied me, and I  
must let this good design drop, and thousands, and I  
might add ten thousands, go without hearing the word

of God, or preach in the fields. Indeed, two churches,  
one in London, namely, Spitalfields, and one in Bris-  
tol, namely, St. Philip’s and Jacob, were lent me on  
this occasion, but those were all. I collected for the  
orphan-house in Moorfields two hundred and fifty  
pounds one Sabbath-day morning, twenty-two pounds  
of which were in copper. In the afternoon I collect-  
ed again at Kennington Common, and continued to do  
so at most of the places where I preached. Besides  
this, two or three of the bishops, and several persons  
of distinction contributed, until at length, having got-  
ten about a thousand and ten pounds, I gave over  
collecting, and went with what I had to Georgia. At  
that time multitudes offered to accompany me; but I  
chose to take over only a surgeon and a few more of  
both sexes, that I thought would be useful in carrying  
on my design. My dear fellow-traveller William  
Seward, Esq., also joined with them. Our first voy-  
age was to Philadelphia, where I was willing to go  
for the sake of laying in provision. I laid out in  
London a good part of the thousand pounds for goods,  
and got as much by them, in Philadelphia as nearly  
defrayed the families’ expenses of coming over. Here  
God blessed my ministry daily. . . .

“January following, 1739, I met my family at  
Georgia, and being unwilling to lose any time, I hired  
a large house, and took in all the orphans I could find  
in the colony. A great many also of the town’s chil-  
dren came to school gratis, and many poor people  
that could not maintain their children, upon applica-  
tion, 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 like-  
wise erected an infirmary, in which many sick people  
were cured and taken care of gratis. I have now by  
me a list of upwards of a hundred and thirty pa-  
tients, which were under the surgeon’s hands, exclu-  
sive of my own private family. About March I began  
the great house, having only about one hundred and  
fifty pounds in cash. I called it Bethesda, because I  
hoped it would be a house of mercy to many souls.  
Many boys have been put out to trades, and many  
girls put out to service. I had the pleasure, the other  
day, to see three boys work at the house in which  
they were bred, one of them out of his time, a journey-  
man, and the others serving under their masters.  
One that I brought from New England is hand-  
somely settled in Carolina; and another from Phila-  
delphia is married, and lives very comfortably in  
Savannah. We have lately begun to use the plough,  
and next year I hope to have many acres of good  
oats and barley. We have nearly twenty sheep and  
lambs, fifty head of cattle, and seven horses. We  
hope to kill a thousand weight of pork this season.  
Our garden is very beautiful, furnishes us with all  
sorts of greens, etc., etc. We have plenty of milk,  
eggs, poultry, and make a good deal of butter weekly.  
A good quantity of wool and cotton have been given  
me, and we hope to have sufficient spun and wove for  
the next winters clothing. The family now consists  
of twenty-six persons. Two of the orphan boys are  
blind, one is little better than an idiot. I have two

women to take care of the household work, and two  
men and three boys employed about the plantation  
and cattle. A set of Dutch servants has been  
lately sent over. The magistrates were pleased to  
give me two; and I took in a poor widow, aged near  
seventy, whom nobody else cared to have. A valu-  
able young man from New England is my school-  
master, and in my absence performs duty in the family.  
On Sabbaths, the grown people attend on public wor-  
ship at Savannah, or at White Bluff, a village near  
Bethesda, where a Dutch minister officiates. The  
house is a noble, commodious building, and every  
thing sweetly adapted for bringing up youth. Geor-  
gia is very healthy; not above one, and that a little  
child, has died out of our family since it removed to  
Bethesda.”

A tabular statement follows this account, giving  
full particulars of the eighty-six children who to that  
period had been admitted into the establishment.

Old newspapers, as daguerreotyping the facts, and  
even the feelings of any particular period, are some-  
times invaluable. In New York, as everywhere  
else, Whitefield had his enemies, and many charges  
were brought against him. But that there were those  
who took a strongly favorable view of his character  
and conduct, is very clear from an extract we give  
from “The New York Post-Boy,” of April, 1746:  
“Mr. Whitefield’s excellent parts, fine elocution, and  
masterly address; his admirable talent of opening the  
Scriptures, and enforcing the most weighty subjects  
upon the conscience; his polite and serious behavior,  
his unaffected and superior piety, his prudence, humil-

ity, and. catholic spirit, are things which must silence  
and disarm prejudice itself. By these qualifications  
of the orator, the divine, and the Christian, he has  
not only fixed himself deeper in the affections of his  
former friends, but greatly increased the number  
wherever he has preached; and made his way into  
the hearts of several who, till this visit, had said all  
the severe things against him that enmity itself seemed  
capable of.”

From this period, this paper especially noticed  
the various movements of this apostolic man; his ar-  
rivals in the city, his engagements in it, his depart-  
ures from it, and the places of his destination, were  
all given with the minutiae with which even the move-  
ments of monarchs are recorded.

It was not without its use that the organs of the  
public thus expressed their high sense of his charac-  
ter. In 1745, suspicions were whispered abroad as  
to the entire integrity of this excellent man in the  
appropriation of the funds collected for Bethesda.  
But happily for all parties, the magistrates of Savan-  
nah published in the Philadelphia Gazette an affidavit,  
that they had carefully examined Mr. Whitefield’s  
receipts and disbursements, and found that what he  
had collected in behalf of the orphans, had been hon-  
estly applied, and that besides, he had given consid-  
erably to them of his own property.

Having done what he could at Bethesda, feeling  
his health failing him, needing resources for his or-  
phans, and urged on by his love of preaching, White-  
field was soon again in the field, far away from his  
home. In the autumn of 1746, we find many passages

in his journals and letters like these, while in Mary-  
land: “I trust the time for favoring this and the neigh-  
boring southern provinces is come. Everywhere,  
almost, the door is opened for preaching, great num-  
bers flock to hear, and the power of an ascended  
Saviour attends the word. For it is surprising how  
the Lord causes prejudices to subside, and makes my  
former most bitter enemies to be at peace with me.. . .  
Lately I have been in seven counties in Maryland,  
and preached with abundant success.” At Charles-  
ton, South Carolina, he writes, January 1747, “The  
Lord Jesus is pleased to give me great access to mul-  
titudes of souls.” A few weeks later, he writes from  
the same place, that Bethesda was never in a better  
condition; that he had opened a Latin school there  
during the winter, and that he hoped yet to see minis-  
ters furnished from Georgia.

In April, we again find him in Maryland, as he  
writes on the twenty-fifth of that month from Bohemia,  
in that province, and speaks of the success of Mr. Sam-  
uel, afterwards President Davies, in Virginia, but  
adds that a proclamation had been issued in that state  
against itinerants, so that he himself was shut out of  
it. In the middle of May he exults, “Maryland is  
yielding converts to the blessed Jesus. The gospel  
seems to be moving southward. The harvest is prom-  
ising. The time of the singing birds is come;” and  
five days afterwards he says, “I have been now a three  
hundred miles’ circuit in Maryland, and through one  
or two counties in Pennsylvania. Everywhere the  
people have a hearing ear, and I trust some have an  
obedient heart.”

On the first of June we find him in Philadelphia,  
from whence he writes, “At present I have full work  
here. The congregations yesterday were large, and  
for this month past I have been preaching to thousands  
in different places.” During the whole of this month  
his health was in a very critical state. Here we have  
a few sentences from his pen, as given on different  
days: “I am sick and well, as I used to be in Eng-  
land; but the Redeemer fills me with comfort. I am  
determined, in his strength, to die fighting. .... I  
have almost a continual burning fever. With great  
regret I have omitted preaching one night to oblige  
my friends, and purpose to do 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. .... Since my last, I have been several times  
on the verge of eternity. At present I am so weak  
that I cannot preach. It is hard work to be silent,  
but I must be tried every way.”

Sickness did not interrupt Whitefield’s labors, if  
he could move or preach at all. “I am determined,”  
he says to Gilbert Tennent, “to die fighting, though  
it be on my stumps.” He was soon after at New York,  
Newport, Portsmouth, and Boston. At New York  
he writes, “I am as willing to hunt for souls as ever.  
I am not weary of my work.” On the next day he  
writes, “I have preached to a very large auditory,  
and do not find myself much worse for it.” He did  
so again with success. He then says, “I shall go to  
Boston like an arrow out of a bow, if Jesus strength-  
en me. I am resolved to preach and work for Him  
until I can preach and work no more. I have been

upon the water three or four days, and now eat like  
a sailor." He went on to Boston, where he heard of  
the sudden but joyful death of his venerable and ex-  
cellent friend Dr. Column. He adds, “My reception  
at Boston and elsewhere was like unto the first. Ar-  
rows of conviction fled and stuck fast. Congrega-  
tions were larger than ever, and opposers’ mouths  
were stopped.”

After again making short visits to Philadelphia  
and Bohemia, Whitefield, according to previous ar-  
rangements, went to spend the winter in North Caro-  
lina. Before he left Bohemia, however, he wrote to  
his friends at New York, who were intensely anxious  
about his health, but he could only say it was yet  
fluctuating. Even so was it when he arrived in North  
Carolina, yet he writes, “I am here, hunting in the  
woods, these ungospelized wilds, for sinners. It is  
pleasant work, though my body is weak and crazy.  
But after a short fermentation in the grave, it will be  
fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body. The  
thought of this rejoices my soul, and makes me long  
to leap my seventy years. I sometimes think all will  
go to heaven before me. Pray for me as a dying  
man; but Oh, pray that I may not go off as a snuff.  
I would fain die blazing—not with human glory, but  
with the love of Jesus.”

Such was his weakness, that his journey to Bath-  
town, in North Carolina, was long and slow. Even  
a short ride was fatiguing and painful. Still, he preach-  
ed with considerable power; cheered on from stage  
to stage by the hope that the conversion of “North  
Carolina sinners would be glad news in heaven.” His

Whitefield. 13

letters indicated lively hopes of an extensive revival,  
but his expectations were not fully realized. His  
health was still exceedingly feeble, and his physicians  
ordered him to try a change of climate. He accord-  
ingly embarked for the Bermudas, where he landed,  
March 15, 1748.

The Bermudas are a group of four small islands  
lying about nine hundred miles east of Georgia. The  
largest of the islands is called St. George’s, with a  
capital of the same name; the climate is remarkably  
fine, and well adapted for the temporary residence  
and recovery of invalids. Here Whitefield met with  
an exceedingly kind reception, and remained on the  
island with great benefit to his health, more than a  
month. We scarcely need to say that he was not idle  
during his residence here, but traversed the island  
from one end to the other, generally preaching twice  
a day. A few passages from his journal will best  
show the facts.

“The simplicity and plainness of the people, togeth-  
er with the pleasant situation of the island, much de-  
lighted me. The Rev. Mr. Holiday, minister of Span-  
ish Point, received me in a most affectionate, Chris-  
tian manner; and begged I would make his house my  
home. In the evening, I expounded at the house of  
Mr. Savage, at 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 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; a more pleasant one I  
never saw. Mrs. Smith, of St. George, for whom I

had a letter of recommendation from my dear old  
friend Mr. Smith, of Charlestown, 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. We accepted the invitation, and all be-  
haved with great civility and respect. After the gov-  
ernor rose from the 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 Brackish Pond 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 hearts to  
receive the Lord Jesus.

“Wednesday, March 28. 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 here also was large, attentive,  
and affected. Our Lord gave me utterance. I ex-  
pounded 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 min-  
ister, to his pulpit; which I complied with upon con-  
dition that the rumor 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 the Ber-  
mudas, in Mr. Paul's meeting-house, which I suppose  
contains about four hundred. Abundance of negroes,  
and many others, were in the porch, and about the  
house. The word seemed to be clothed with a con-  
vincing power, and to make its way into the hearts  
of the hearers. Between sermons, I was entertained  
very civilly in a neighboring house. Judge Bascom,  
and three more of the council, came thither, and each  
gave me an invitation to his house. 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  
Councillor 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 and uninterrupted rest shall begin.

“Thursday, March 31. Dined on Tuesday at Colo-  
nel Corbusier's, and on Wednesday at Colonel Gil-  
bert'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 quarters to hear me. Before I began preach-

ing, 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.’ While I was in the  
cave, quite unexpectedly I turned and saw Councillor  
Riddle, who, with his son, came to hear me; and  
while we were in the boat, told me that he had been  
with the governor, 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 God for so much favor. If his cause requires  
it, I shall have more. He knows my heart; I value  
the favor of man no farther 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 here 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 sung a psalm,  
in which they readily joined.

“Sunday, April 3. Preached twice this day at  
Mr. Paul's meeting-house, as on the last Sabbath, but  
with greater freedom and power, especially in the  
morning; and I think to as great, if not greater audi-  
tories. Dined with Colonel Harvy, another of the  
council; visited a sick woman, where many came to  
hear; and expounded afterwards to a great company,  
at Captain John Dorrel’s, Mrs. Dorrel's son, who with  
his wife courteously entertained me, and desired me

to make his house my home. So true is that promise  
of our Lord, that ‘whosoever leaves father or mother,  
houses or lands, shall have in this life a hundred-fold  
with persecution, and in the world to come, life ever-  
lasting.’ Lord, I have experienced the one; in thy  
good time grant that I may experience the other also.

“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, the only town on the island. The  
gentlemen of the town had sent me an invitation by  
Judge Bascom; and he, with several others, came to  
visit me at my lodgings; and informed me that the  
governor desired to see me. About ten I waited upon  
his excellency, who received me with great civility,  
and told me he had no objection against my person or  
my principles, having never yet heard me; and he  
knew nothing with respect to my conduct in moral  
life, that might prejudice him against me; but his  
intentions were to let none preach in the island, un-  
less he had a written license to preach somewhere in  
America, or the West Indies; at the same time he  
acknowledged that it was but a matter of mere form.  
I informed his excellency that I had been regularly  
inducted into the parish of Savannah; that I was or-  
dained priest by letters dismissory from my lord of  
London, and was 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 farther, that a minister’s pulpit was always  
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 satis-  
fied with the liberty he allowed me, and would not  
act contrary to his injunction. I then begged leave  
to be dismissed, as I was obliged to preach at eleven  
o’clock. His excellency said he intended to do him-  
self 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 governor, several  
of the council, the minister of the parish, and assem-  
bly-men, with a great number of the town’s people,  
assembled in great order. I was very sick, through  
a cold I caught last night; but read the church pray-  
ers. The first lesson was the fifteenth chapter of the  
first book of Samuel. I preached on those words,  
‘Righteousness exalteth a nation.’ Being weak and  
faint, and afflicted much with the headache, I did not  
do that justice to my subject which I sometimes am  
enabled to do; but the Lord so helped me that, as I  
found afterwards, the governor and the other gentle-  
men expressed their approbation, and acknowledged  
they did not expect to be so well entertained. Not  
unto me, Lord, not unto me, but to 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 favor them  
and the gentlemen of the town with my company at  
dinner. I accepted the invitation. The governor,  
and the president, and Judge Bascom were there.  
All wondered at my speaking so freely and fluently  
without notes. The governor asked 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, etc., to all which God  
enabled me to answer so pertinently, and taught me  
to mix the utile and duke [useful and pleasant] so to-  
gether, 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---, one

of his particular intimates, invited me to drink tea in  
the afternoon. I thanked all, returned proper re-  
spects, and went to my lodgings with some degree of  
thankfulness for the assistance vouchsafed me, and  
abased before God at the consideration of my un-  
speakable 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 even-  
ing had liberty to speak freely and closely to those  
who supped with me. 0 that this may be the begin-  
ning of good gospel times to the inhabitants of this  
town.”

We might fill other pages from Whitefield’s jour-  
nal, but will only give two more passages. The first  
will show him in connection with the African race, in  
whose highest welfare he always took a special  
interest.

“Saturday, May 7. In my conversation these two  
days with some of my friends, I was diverted much  
in hearing several things that passed among the poor  
negroes, since I preached to them last Sunday. One  
of the women, it seems, said that ‘if the book I preach-  
ed out of was the best book that was ever bought at

London, she was sure it had never all that 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, answer-  
ed, that ‘the gentleman put the question once or twice  
to them, and the other fools had not the manners to  
make any answer; till at last I seemed to point at  
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, ‘Ah, thou fool, dost not thou under-  
stand it? He means black with sin.’ Two girls  
were overheard by their mistress talking about relig-  
ion, and they said ‘they knew, if they did not repent,  
they must be damned.’ From all which I infer that  
these negroes on the Bermudas are more awake than  
I supposed; that their consciences are awake, and  
consequently prepared in a good measure for hearing  
the gospel preached to them.”

Whitefield sums up the events which had occurred  
in connection with himself on the Bermudas, the  
praise of which islands has also been celebrated by  
the distinguished Bishop Berkeley, who resided there  
for some time, and by Waller the poet.

“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.

13\*

Indeed, the fields are white, ready to 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 morn-  
ing to a large congregation in the fields; and expound-  
ed in the evening at Mr. Harvy’s house, around  
which stood many hundreds of people. But in the  
morning and evening how did the poor souls weep.  
Abundance of prayers and blessings were put up for  
my safe passage to England, and speedy return to the  
Bermudas again. May they enter into the ears of the  
Lord of sabaoth. With all humility and thankful-  
ness of heart will I here, 0 Lord, set up my Ebenezer,  
for hitherto surely hast thou helped me. Thanks be  
to the Lord for sending me hither. I have been re-  
ceived in a manner I dared not to expect, and have  
met with little, very little opposition indeed. The  
inhabitants seem to be plain and open-hearted. They  
have loaded me with provisions for my sea-store; and  
in the several parishes, by a private voluntary contri-  
bution, have raised me upwards of one 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 embarrassments by  
degrees. May the Lord reward all my benefactors a  
thousand-fold. I hear that what was given, was giv-  
en heartily, and people only lamented that they could  
do no more.”

Whitefield now transmitted to Georgia what had  
been collected for the orphan-house; but fearing a  
relapse, if he returned to the south during the hot  
season, which was near commencing, and pressed also  
again to visit England, he took his passage in a brig,  
and in twenty-eight days arrived at Deal.

On his voyage, he completed an abridgment,  
which he had previously begun, of “Law’s serious Call  
to a devout and holy Life’’ which he endeavored to  
make more useful by excluding whatever is not truly  
evangelical, and illustrating the subject more fully,  
especially from the holy Scriptures. He also wrote  
letters to his friends, one of which strikingly illus-  
trates his Christian humility. It bears date June 24,  
1748. “Yesterday I made an end of revising all my  
journals. Alas, alas, in how many things I have  
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 used a style  
too apostolical, and at the same time I have been too  
bitter in my zeal. Wildfire 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,  
likewise, 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 hurt the blessed cause  
I would defend, and also stirred up a needless oppo-  
sition. This has humbled me much, and made me  
think of a saying of Mr. Henry, ‘Joseph had more  
honesty than he had policy, or he never would have

told his dreams.’ At the same time, I cannot but  
praise God, who fills me with so much of his holy fire,  
and carried me, a poor weak youth, through such a  
torrent, both of popularity and contempt, and set so  
many seals to my unworthy 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 former mistakes.”

In the early part of this year, 1748, the “Gentle-  
man's Magazine” had announced Whitefield’s death  
as having taken place in America. One of his first  
letters on his arrival at Deal in that year, says,  
“Words cannot express how joyful my friends were  
to see me once more in the land of the living, for I  
find the newspapers had buried me ever since April  
last. But it seems I am not to die, but live. 0 that  
it may be to declare the works of the Lord.”

CHAPTER XI.

**LABORS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND—CHAPLAIN  
 TO LADY HUNTINGDON.**

**1748,1749.**

On the evening of July 6, 1748, Whitefield again  
found himself in London, after an absence of nearly  
four years. Here he was welcomed with joy by many  
thousands. The large church of St. Bartholomew was  
at once thrown open to him, where multitudes flocked  
to hear, and where on the first Sabbath he had a  
thousand communicants. But in his own more imme-  
diate circle many things were in an unhappy condi-  
tion. His congregation at the Tabernacle had been  
much scattered during his absence; Antinomianism  
had made sad havoc among the people; and one of  
this party threatened to rival him in Moorfields.  
Whitefield sent him word, “The fields are no doubt  
as free to you as to another. God send you a clear  
head and a clean heart. I intend preaching there on  
Sunday evening.” He did so; and found “Moor-  
fields as white to harvest as ever.” Our evangelist  
was again called to mourn the evils of poverty. He  
found himself compelled to sell his household furni-  
ture, to pay, in part, the debts of his orphan-house,  
which were yet far from being cancelled; his aged  
mother, for whom he always retained the highest  
regard, also needed his aid. These and other trials  
pressed him sorely; but on the other hand, he felt  
happy in his work, and his congregation were soon  
reunited, and happy in his labors.

We have seen that as early as 1738, Lady Hunt-  
ingdon, with his lordship her husband, as frequently  
as they could, heard Whitefield preach; since that  
period his lordship had died, leaving her ladyship a  
widow, in the thirty-ninth year of her age. At what  
period she became more openly and intimately White-  
field’s friend does not appear; but when he landed at  
Deal from his third visit to America, she sent Howel  
Harris to bring him to her house at Chelsea, where  
he preached to large circles of the gay world, who  
thronged this then fashionable watering-place. For  
the benefit of this class of hearers, she soon after  
removed to London, at that time some three miles  
distant from Chelsea, appointed Whitefield her chap-  
lain, and during the winter of 1748 and ’49, opened  
her splendid mansion in Park-street for the preaching  
of the gospel. “Good Lady Huntingdon,” he writes,  
“has come to town, and I am to preach twice a week  
at her house to the great and noble. 0 that some of  
them might be effectually called to taste the riches of  
redeeming love.” On the first day appointed, Ches-  
terfield and Bolingbroke, both of them well-known  
for their gayety and infidelity, and a circle of the  
nobility, attended; and having heard him once, they  
desired to come again. “Lord Chesterfield thanked  
me,” he says. “Lord Bolingbroke was moved, and  
asked me to come and see him the next morning. My  
hands have been full of work, and I have been among  
great company. All accepted my sermons. Thus the  
world turns round. ‘In all time of my wealth, good  
Lord, deliver me?’”

The death-bed of Lord St. John Bolingbroke,

whom we have already mentioned as one of his parlor-  
hearers, exhibited scenes unusual in the circle where  
he moved. The Bible was read to him, and his cry  
was, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” “My Lord  
Bolingbroke," wrote Lady Huntingdon to Whitefield,  
“was much struck with his brother's language in his  
last moments. 0 that his eyes might be opened by  
the illuminating influence of divine truth. He is a  
singularly awful character; and I am fearfully alarm-  
ed, lest the gospel which he so heartily despises, yet  
affects to reverence, should prove the savor of death  
unto death to him. Some, I trust, are savingly awak-  
ened, while many are inquiring; thus the great Lord  
of the harvest hath put honor on your ministry, and  
hath given my heart an encouraging token of the util-  
ity of our feeble efforts."

It is related that the Rev. Mr. Church, a clergy-  
man who died curate of Battersea, near London, one  
day called on Bolingbroke, who said to him, “You  
have caught me reading John Calvin; he was indeed  
a man of great parts, profound sense, and vast learn-  
ing; he handles the doctrines of grace in a very mas-  
terly manner." “Doctrines of grace," replied the  
clergyman; “the doctrines of grace have set all man-  
kind by the ears." “I am surprised to hear you say  
so," answered Lord Bolingbroke, “you who profess to  
believe and to preach Christianity. Those doctrines  
are certainly the doctrines of the Bible, and if I be-  
lieve the Bible I must believe them. And let me seri-  
ously tell you, that the greatest miracle in the world  
is the subsistence of Christianity, and its continued  
preservation, as a religion, when the preaching of it

is committed to the care of such unchristian men as  
you.”

At this period Whitefield renewed his acquaint-  
ance with the Rev. James Hervey, who has not im-  
properly been called the Melancthon of the second  
reformation in England. Among all the converts of  
our evangelist, no one was more distinguished for piety,  
or for his fascination as a writer, than this admirable  
clergyman. His writings, though too flowery in their  
style, were eminently suitable, as Whitefield himself  
says, “for the taste of the polite world.” Hervey  
wrote to Whitefield, “Tour journals and sermons, and  
especially that sweet sermon on ‘What think ye of  
Christ,’ were a means of bringing me to the know-  
ledge of the truth.” Whitefield felt the warmest  
attachment to Hervey in return, and when he intro-  
duced some of his works into America, wrote, “The  
author is my old friend a most heavenly-minded  
creature; one of the first Methodists, who is contented  
with a small cure, and gives all he has to the poor.  
We correspond with, though we cannot see each  
other.” Whitefield intimated in one of his journals  
his intention of sketching Hervey’s character, but this  
was one of the many intended things which were  
never accomplished. Dr. Doddridge wrote a preface  
to one of his works, which Warburton, as might be  
expected, called “a weak rhapsody.”

Under the auspices of Lady Huntingdon, a prayer-  
meeting was established for the women who, from the  
circles of rank and fashion, became the followers of  
the Lord. Among these were Lady Frances Gardiner,  
Lady Mary Hamilton, daughter of the Marquis of

Lothian, who had attended the ministry of Whitefield  
in Scotland, Lady Gertrude Hotham and Countess  
Delitz, sisters of Lady Chesterfield, Lady Chesterfield  
herself, and Lady Fanny Shirley. “Religion,” says  
Lady Huntingdon, when writing to Doddridge, “was  
never so much the subject of conversation as now.  
Some of the great ones hear with me the gospel pa-  
tiently, and thus much seed is sown by Mr. White-  
field’s preaching. 0 that it may fall on good ground,  
and bring forth abundantly.”

Someone, we believe a bishop, complained to  
George II. of the popularity and success of White-  
field, and entreated his majesty in some way or other  
to silence him. The monarch, thinking, no doubt, of  
the class described by the martyr Latimer, as “un-  
preaching prelates,” replied with jocose severity, “I  
believe the best way will be to make a bishop of  
him.”

But if Whitefield was honored by some of the  
great, he received from others unmingled hostility.  
Horace Walpole, the gay man, and the corrupt cour-  
tier, thought it worthwhile to introduce the Methodist  
preacher into his “Private Correspondence.” The  
statement he makes of professed facts is altogether  
incredible, but shows unmistakably the spirit of the  
writer. “The apostle Whitefield is come to some  
shame. He went to Lady Huntingdon lately, and  
asked for forty pounds for some distressed saint or  
other. She said she had not so much money in the  
house, but would give it him the first time she had.  
He was very pressing, but in vain. At last he said,  
‘There’s your watch and trinkets, you don’t want

such vanities; I will have that.’ She would have put  
him off; but he persisting, she said, ‘Well, if you must  
have it, you must.’ About a fortnight afterwards,  
going to his house, and being carried into his wife’s  
chamber, among the paraphernalia of the latter the  
countess found her own offering. This has made a  
terrible schism; she tells the story herself. I had  
not it from Saint Frances, [Lady Fanny Shirley,] but  
I hope it is true.” Everything goes to prove the  
sincerity of his hope, though founded on falsehood.

It has generally happened that the most effective  
public speakers, whether secular or sacred, have been  
accused by a fastidious class with vulgarisms. So with  
Cicero, Burke, and Chathamso with Patrick Henry  
and Daniel Webster; and to turn to eminent preach-  
ers, so with Luther, Latimer, and Whitefield. The  
reason was, that intent on the greatest good to the  
greatest number, they used what Dr. Johnson, after  
Daniel Burgess, called “market language.” Dr. Will-  
iam Bates, an accomplished and courtly non-conform-  
ist minister, in the seventeenth century, once com-  
plained in the presence of his faithful but unpolished  
friend Daniel Burgess, that he found very little suc-  
cess in his work as a minister; when his aged brother  
smartly replied, “Thank your velvet mouth for that—  
too fine to speak market language.” Whitefield, very  
happily for thousands, had no squeamishness of this  
sort.

Some ladies called one Saturday morning to pay a  
visit to Lady Huntingdon, and during the interview,  
her ladyship inquired of them if they had ever heard  
Mr. Whitefield preach. On being answered in the

negative, she said, “ I wish you would hear him; he  
is to preach to-morrow evening.” They promised her  
ladyship they would certainly attend. They fulfilled  
their promise; and when they called on her ladyship  
the next Monday morning, she anxiously inquired if  
they had heard Mr. Whitefield on the previous even-  
ing, 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 pre-  
posterous things, would your ladyship believe it, he  
declared that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive  
sinners, that he did not object to receive even the  
devil's castaways! Now, my lady, did you ever hear  
of such a thing since you were born?” Her ladyship,  
in reply, said, “There is something, I acknowledge, a  
little singular in the invitation, and I do not recollect  
to have met with it before; but as Mr. Whitefield is  
below in the parlor, we will have him up, and let him  
answer for himself.”

On Mr. Whitefield's entering the drawing-room,  
Lady Huntingdon said, “Sir, 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 re-  
ceive sinners, you said, that ‘so ready was Christ to  
receive sinners who came to him, that he was willing  
to receive even the devil's castaways.' ” Mr. White-  
field immediately replied, “I certainly, my lady, must  
plead guilty to the charge; whether I did what was  
right, or otherwise, your ladyship shall judge when  
you have heard a fact. 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 de-  
sired that she might be shown into the parlor, when  
she thus addressed me: ‘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 someone 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 receive the devils castaways.  
Do you think, sir, that Jesus Christ would receive me?’I answered her that there was not a doubt of it, if she  
was but willing to go to him.”

It is pleasant to add, that the impression conveyed  
in the singular language of Mr. Whitefield ended in  
the conversion of the poor woman to God. She gave  
satisfactory evidence that her great and numerous sins  
had been forgiven through the atonement of the Lord  
Jesus Christ. Was Mr. Whitefield to be censured for  
the use of this language?

In September, 1748, Mr. Whitefield made his third  
visit to Scotland, where he met with a cordial wel-  
come, and where his labors became increasingly val-  
ued. Some of the clergy at Glasgow, Perth, and  
Edinburgh used their influence to exclude him from  
the pulpits, but the majority voted in his favor; and  
a full examination vindicated his character, and made  
his excellences more generally known. All the min-  
isters who were disposed to invite him to preach, were  
at liberty to do so, except in the presbytery of Edin-

burgh; here, however, he was accommodated by the  
magistrates with a church to preach in whenever he  
visited the city. In Scotland he now warmly advo-  
cated the cause of the college in New Jersey: of the  
results of his labors we shall hear more hereafter.

On his return to London, Whitefield resumed his  
preaching at Lady Huntingdon’s to “the great ones,”  
as he calls them. Thirty, and sometimes even sixty  
persons of rank attended, although the newspapers  
gave false and degrading accounts of the reception he  
met with in Scotland. He now availed himself of the  
influence he possessed, to forward his intended college,  
in addition to his orphan-house, for which his plea  
was, “If some such thing be not done, I cannot see  
how the southern parts will be provided with minis-  
ters for all are afraid to go over.” On this ground  
he appealed to the trustees of Georgia; reminding  
them that he had expended five thousand pounds upon  
the orphan-house; begging them to relieve it, as a  
charitable institution, from all quit-rent and taxes;  
and especially to allow him the labor of blacks in cul-  
tivating the farm. “White hands,” he said, “had left  
his tract of land uncultivated.”

It will not be expected that Whitefield could stay  
long, even in the courtly circles of London, where he  
met with so much acceptance. We very soon find him  
among his old friends at Gloucester and Bristol. The  
bishop of the latter see, he says, behaved very respect-  
fully to him; he visited also his old tutor, now be-  
come one of the prebendaries, and met with the old  
kindness received at Oxford. “I told him, that my  
judgment, as I trust, was a little more ripened than it

was some years ago; and that as fast as I found out  
my faults, I should he glad to acknowledge them.  
He said the offence of the governors of the church  
would wear off as I grew moderate.” The evangelist  
did not tell the doctor how little he cared for such  
moderation as the governors of the church in that day  
required; but he wrote to Lady Huntingdon, on the  
subject of their favor, “I am pretty easy about that.  
If I can but act an honest part, and be kept from  
trimming, I leave all consequences to Him who orders  
all things well.” During this journey, many new con-  
verts were won. One of these was a counsellor, who  
was so much affected, that his zeal in inviting others  
to hear Whitefield led his wife to suspect him of  
madness.

An interesting fact connected with Gloucester-  
shire, his native county, may be introduced in this  
place, though we are not sure that it occurred during  
this journey. John Skinner of Houndscroft was a  
strolling fiddler, going from fair to fair, supplying  
music to any party that would hire him. Having  
determined to interrupt Mr. Whitefield while preach-  
ing, he obtained a standing on a ladder raised to a  
window near the pulpit. Here he remained a quiet,  
if not an attentive hearer, till the text was read, when  
he intended to begin his annoying exercise on the vio-  
lin. It pleased God, however, while he was putting  
his instrument in tune, to convey the word preached  
with irresistible power to his soul; his attention was  
diverted from his original purpose, he heard the whole  
sermon, and became a new man.

Happily Whitefield was blessed in bringing to

Christ many who were made eminently useful. Among  
others we might mention the late Rev. Cornelius  
Winter, an eminent minister, who afterwards accom-  
panied our evangelist in his last voyage to America,  
and who after his death conveyed his will to Eng-  
land, and sought ordination to return and labor in  
Georgia. Disappointed in this, he became an able  
and successful minister in England; and also trained  
several young men for the Christian ministry, in-  
cluding the late celebrated William Jay of Bath.  
Whitefield had often been heard by Winter with  
great pleasure, for he admired his eloquence; but for  
some time no good effects were apparent. One night,  
while playing at cards, an amusement in which he  
much delighted, and though surrounded by a number  
of gay companions, the thought presented itself to  
Winter’s mind that he might that evening hear his  
favorite preacher. He broke off from play in the  
midst of the game, which made his companions, very  
angry, as they suspected where he was going. He  
tells us that it was a night much to be remembered.  
He had reason to hope the scales of ignorance were  
then removed from his eyes, he had a sense of his  
misery as a sinner, and was led to earnest inquiry  
after the way of salvation. It is scarcely necessary  
to say, that he never again played at cards.

From the exhilarating scenes of Gloucestershire  
and Bristol, we must accompany Whitefield into Corn-  
wall, among the glens and dales of which, or on  
the seaside to a somewhat similar population and  
with almost equal success, he spoke “all the words of  
this life.” The robust and determined miners of the

west of England, whose very employment gives hardi-  
hood alike to their character and frame, at first re-  
ceived him in somewhat rough and unpolished style,  
but were soon after melted and transformed by the  
grace which had displayed its triumphs among their  
brethren at Kingswood. “I am just returned,” he  
writes on one occasion, “from near the Land’s End,  
where thousands and thousands heard the gospel glad-  
ly. Everywhere the word of God has run and been  
glorified. Every day I have been travelling and  
preaching; and could I stay a month, it might be  
spent to great advantage. At a place called Port  
Isaac, the Redeemer’s stately steps were indeed seen.  
At Camelford I preached with great quietness in the  
streets. At St. Ann’s we had a very powerful season,  
and yesterday at Redruth several thousands attended,  
and the word was quick and powerful.” Again he  
writes, “Immediately after writing my last, I preach-  
ed to many thousands at a place called Gwennap.  
The rain descended, but the grace of God seemed to  
fall like a gentle dew, sprinkling rain upon our souls.  
It was indeed a fine spring shower. In the evening  
I rode to St. Ives, and preached to many who gladly  
attended to hear the word; a great power seemed to  
accompany it. On the Lord’s day I preached twice  
to great auditories. On Monday I preached again at  
Redruth, at ten in the morning, to nearly, as they  
were computed, ten thousand souls. Arrows of con-  
viction seemed to fly fast.” Again, in a communica-  
tion to the Countess of Huntingdon, he says, “I have  
been very near the Land7s End, and everywhere souls  
have fled to hear the word preached, ‘like doves to

their windows.’ The harvest is great, yea, very great,  
but laborers are few. 0 that the Lord of the harvest  
would thrust out more laborers.” And yet again he  
says, “Invitations are sent to me from Falmouth and  
several other places, but I cannot attend to them all  
at present. I want more tongues, more bodies, more  
souls, for the Lord Jesus. Had I ten thousand, he  
should have them all.” Such was the noble spirit he  
displayed, and such were the manner and fruits of his  
“entering in among” the, at that time, benighted chil-  
dren of Cornwall. A great light shone upon them.  
They came from the caverns of the earth to welcome  
its rising, and to look upon its brightness. Thousands  
of them were indeed “brought out of darkness into  
marvellous light,” and turned by it from sin to holi-  
ness, and from Satan to God; and thousands are still  
rejoicing in its beams.

On his return to London, Whitefield found his  
assemblies at the countess’s “brilliant indeed,” and  
Lord Bolingbroke still one among them. Of this tal-  
ented nobleman our evangelist at this time indulged  
a happy hope, which, alas, seems never to have been  
realized.

In February, 1749, Whitefield made an excursion  
to Exeter and Plymouth, where he was agreeably sur-  
prised to find a great alteration had taken place since  
his preceding visit, five years before. He loved to  
“range,” as he called it, “after precious souls,” and  
happily for him and for others he found them. Dur-  
ing this and subsequent visits to Plymouth, he resided  
with the Rev. Andrew Kinsman, an excellent Congre-  
gational minister, of whom we have already spoken.

Whitefield. 14

He was born in Devonshire in 1724, and was there-  
fore ten years younger than Whitefield. While pecul-  
iarly amiable in his manners, and remarkable for his  
regard to his parents, he was unacquainted with the  
religion of the heart till his seventeenth year, when he  
met with a volume of Mr. Whitefield’s sermons, and  
one of those on the new birth alarmed him. His  
pious friends were few, but his religious feelings were  
deeply moved, and God at length gave him “the oil  
of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the  
spirit of heaviness.” Concerned for the highest inter-  
ests of his relatives, he one night, as the family were  
retiring to rest, broke out, with intense emotion, “What,  
shall we go to bed without prayer? How do we know  
but some of us may awake in hell before morning?”  
This unexpected address struck the family with solemn  
awe; and while they looked at each other with con-  
scious shame, for the neglect of so clear a duty, he  
fell upon his knees and prayed with so much readi-  
ness and fervor that it excited their astonishment.

As might be expected, his concern for others did  
not stop here; he was anxious that his neighbors  
might also find “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”  
He began, therefore, to read Whitefield’s sermons to  
as many as would attend, supposing, with Melancthon,  
that what had proved so great a blessing to himself,  
would not fail of similar effects on others, as soon as  
they were heard. After a short time, he began him-  
self to expound and preach, and was encouraged by  
many conversions under his ministry, including those  
of his father, mother, and three sisters. Not long  
after these events, Whitefield, in entering on one of

his voyages to America, had "been compelled to stay  
at Plymouth, where Kinsman first saw and heard him.  
By a series of remarkable events, Mr. Kinsman was  
brought to settle as a minister at Plymouth, where  
the “Tabernacle” was erected on ground given by  
himself, and the congregation were served by him and  
other ministers with abundant success. In the whole  
neighborhood an extraordinary blessing attended his  
labors, and his usefulness and deliverances from dan-  
ger were only second to those of Whitefield himself.  
Nor was he less respected, nor his ministry attended  
with less success, at Bristol and London—cities to  
which he was invited by Whitefield; who used to  
call Bristol “Kinsman’s America,” alluding to his own  
reception and success in the western world.

On one occasion, when Whitefield was about to  
sail for America, he sent for Kinsman to London, and  
on his arrival dined with his distinguished friend at  
the Tabernacle house. After dinner there was a vio-  
lent storm of thunder and lightning. As they stood at  
the window looking out on the raging elements, Mr.  
Kinsman, supposing a young clergyman who had dined  
with them, and who now stood by his side, to be a  
pious man, familiarly put his hand on his shoulder,  
and with great cheerfulness and energy repeated the  
lines of Dr. Watts:

“The God who rules on high,

And thunders when he please;

Who rides upon the stormy sky,

And manages the seas—

This awful God is ours,

Our Father, and our love!”

The words so appropriately introduced, and so  
emphatically spoken, made a deep impression on the  
mind of the young clergyman, and gave rise to a con-  
versation which, by the blessing of God, led to his  
conversion.

At the Tabernacle in London, the ministry of Mr.  
Kinsman was greatly distinguished for its excellence  
and success, and he thought himself highly honored in  
preaching the first sermon delivered from the pulpit  
of the present Tabernacle. His musical voice, his  
lively and pathetic address, and the richness of the  
evangelical truths he proclaimed, brought numbers of  
all classes of society to hear him. Among them was  
Shuter, the comedian, to whom we shall again refer  
as a hearer of Whitefield, and who years afterwards,  
in an interview with Kinsman, drew a striking con-  
trast between their professions, and bitterly lamented  
that he had not cordially embraced religion, when his  
conscience was impressed under the preaching of the  
great evangelist.

But we must not stay longer to speak of Kinsman;  
suffice it to say that he founded, in addition to Plym-  
outh, a new church three miles from thence, at a place  
now called Devonport, and labored with energy and  
holy success till the sixty-ninth year of his age, when he  
died in triumph, February 28, 1798. Of such a man  
it was truly said, that for Whitefield “he retained the  
most filial affection to his dying day; and frequently  
travelled with, and consulted him as a father upon all  
his religious concerns.”

In March Whitefield returned to London, where  
the feeble state of his health made him feel weary

even in his success. He says, “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 henceforward.”Yet his zeal abated not. “I dread the thoughts of  
flagging in the latter stages of my road,” is an expres-  
sion often used, in his letters to his friends. He  
thought that preaching and travelling contributed to  
his health. In a letter to Hervey, he says, “Fear not  
your weak body, we are immortal till our work is  
done. Christ’s laborers must live by miracle; if not,  
I must not live at all, for God only knows what I  
daily endure. My continual vomitings almost kill  
me, and yet the pulpit is my cure; so that my friends  
begin to pity me less, and to leave off that ungrateful  
caution, ’Spare thyself.’ I speak this to encourage  
you.”

All this Whitefield meant. Hence in May we find  
him preaching at Portsmouth daily, for more than a  
week, to very large and attentive auditories; where  
was shown another remarkable instance of the power  
which attended his preaching, for many who a few  
days before were speaking all manner of evil against  
him, were very desirous of his longer stay to preach  
the gospel among them. From Bristol, June 24, he  
writes, “Yesterday God brought me here, after a cir-  
cuit of about eight hundred miles, and enabled me to  
preach to, I suppose, 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.”

Whitefield returned to London to welcome his  
wife home from the Bermuda Islands. From her he  
learned that there his character had been aspersed by  
one of the clergy; but while he grieved over the fact,  
he said, “I am content to wait till the day of judgment  
for the clearing up of my character; and after I am  
dead, I desire no other epitaph than this, ‘Here lies  
George Whitefield. What sort of a man he was, the  
great day will discover.”

In the midst of his sorrows, Whitefield was com-  
forted by a visit from two German ministers, who had  
been laboring among the Jews with apparently happy  
results. He found also several of the peeresses, and  
others of “the great,” cordially disposed to receive  
him; and shortly afterwards was visited by Mr. Grim-  
shaw, a clergyman from Yorkshire, for whom in Sep-  
tember he went to preach. Thousands in the village of  
Haworth attended his preaching, even ten thousand at  
a time, and a thousand communicants approached the  
table of the Lord. At Leeds also he preached, at the  
invitation of Mr. Wesley’s people, to ten thousand  
persons, and Mr. Charles Wesley himself introduced  
him to the pulpit at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In the north of England the visits of Mr. White-  
field were always looked for with intense interest. In  
one of his letters, he thus describes the state of things  
there in August, 1756: “It is now a fortnight since I  
came to Leeds, in and about which I preached eight  
days successively, three times almost every day, to  
thronged and affected auditories. On Sunday last at  
Bradford, in the morning, the audience consisted of  
above ten thousand; at noon, and in the evening, at

Birstal, of nearly double that number. Though hoarse,  
I was able to speak so that they all heard.” These  
hallowed services were often spoken of by the late  
Rev. Dr. John Fawcett, for more than half a century  
an eminent Baptist minister of that neighborhood, to  
whose soul they proved a rich blessing. After hav-  
ing heard Whitefield at Bradford in the morning, he  
followed him to Birstal, where a platform was erected  
at the foot of a hill adjoining the town, whence Mr.  
Whitefield addressed an immense concourse of people,  
not fewer, it was believed, than twenty thousand, who  
were ranged before him on the declivity in the form  
of an amphitheatre. “I lay,” says Fawcett, “under  
the scaffold, and it appeared as if all his words were  
addressed to me, and as if he had known my most  
secret thoughts from ten years of age. As long as  
life remains, I shall remember both the text and the  
sermon.” Accustomed as he was to preach to large  
and promiscuous multitudes, when he looked on this  
vast assemblage, and was about to mount the tempo-  
rary stage, he expressed to his surrounding friends a  
considerable feeling of timidity; but when he began  
to speak, an unusual solemnity pervaded the assembly,  
and thousands, in the course of the sermon, as was  
often the fact, gave vent to their emotions by tears  
and groans. Fools who came to mock, began to pray,  
and to cry out, “What must we do to be saved?”

Mr. Shirley, in giving an account of this same ser-  
vice tells us that “not only the field, but the wood-  
lands about it, were covered with crowds collected  
from different parts. An unusual solemnity pervaded  
this vast multitude, and at the close of the service the

one hundredth psalm was sung, and concluded with  
Mr. Grimshaw’s favorite doxology,

“‘Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.’

The volume of sound produced by the united voices  
of thousands, while if reechoed through the vale be-  
low, had such an effect as no language can describe.”

Mr. Grimshaw was a very remarkable clergyman  
connected with the church of England, though found  
fault with on account of his irregularity. He studied  
at Cambridge for the ministry before he was acquaint-  
ed with the reality of true religion. His conversion  
was very striking; after which he became a remarka-  
bly faithful and pungent preacher. He settled at  
Haworth, in Yorkshire, where Mr. Whitefield visited  
him.

In one of the services held by Mr. Whitefield in  
Yorkshire, a deep solemnity was created by providen-  
tial circumstances. He had mounted the temporary  
scaffold to address the thousands before him. Cast-  
ing a look over the multitude, he elevated his hands,  
and in an energetic manner implored the divine pres-  
ence and blessing. With a solemnity peculiarly his  
own, he then announced his text, “It is appointed  
unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”  
Heb. 11:27. After a short pause, as he was about  
to proceed, a wild, terrifying shriek issued from the  
centre of the congregation. A momentary alarm and  
confusion ensued. Mr. Whitefield waited to ascertain  
the cause, and requested the people to remain still.  
Mr. Grimshaw hurried to the spot, and in a few min-  
utes was seen pressing towards the place where Mr.

Whitefield stood. “Brother Whitefield,” said he,  
manifesting in the strongest manner the intensity of  
his feelings, and the ardor of his concern for the sal-  
vation of sinners, “you stand among the dead and the  
dying. An immortal soul has been called into eter-  
nity; the destroying angel is passing over the con-  
gregation; cry aloud, and spare not.” The awful  
occurrence was speedily announced to the congrega-  
tion. After the lapse of a few moments, Mr. White-  
field again announced his text. Again a loud and  
piercing shriek proceeded from the spot near where  
Lady Huntingdon and Lady Margaret Ingham were  
standing! A thrill of horror seemed to escape from  
the multitude when it was understood that a second  
person, had fallen a victim to the king of terrors.  
When the consternation had somewhat subsided, Mr.  
Whitefield gave indications of proceeding with the  
service. The excited feelings of many were wound up  
to their highest point. All was hushed; not a sound  
was to be heard; and a stillness like the awful silence  
of death spread over the assembly, as he proceeded in  
melting strains to warn the careless, Christless sinner  
to “flee from the wrath to come.”

As winter was now approaching, Whitefield felt it  
important to return to the metropolis. During the  
tour he had made, he won to Christ not a few of those  
who afterwards laid the foundations of churches now  
flourishing in the counties of Lancaster, York, and  
Northumberland. He met, however, with so much  
“rude treatment here and there, as sent him home  
praying, ‘Lord, give me a pilgrim heart for my pil-  
grim life.’” He was now in “winter quarters,” but  
 14\*

was neither idle nor useless. To use his own words,  
“The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and the  
shout of a king was in the camp,” and that from week  
to week. “Thousands, thousands crowded to hear.” Every day also he heard of instances of conversion.  
One of these pleased him greatly. It was that of a  
boatswain, who, before hearing him, knew no more  
about divine truth, “than the whistle he blew on  
board.” He mentions also a boy eleven years of age,  
a woman of eighty, and a baker, who had been “a  
Jerusalem sinner,” all of whom bowed before the  
cross, and placed their hopes of salvation on Him  
who died thereon.

CHAPTER XII.

**LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN-FOURTH VISIT TO  
AMERICA—NEW TABERNACLE IN LONDON, AND  
TABERNACLE AT BRISTOL.**

1750-1754.

At the beginning of the year 1750, Whitefield was  
still in London. At this time his intended college at  
Bethesda occupied much of his attention. He wrote  
to his friends in every quarter for help. His usual  
appeal was, “We propose having an academy or col-  
lege at the orphan-house. The house is large, and  
will hold a hundred. My heart, I trust, is larger, and  
will hold ten thousand.” Though in London, his  
heart was in America. He says, “Ranging seems my  
province; and methinks I hear a voice behind me say-  
ing, ‘This is the way, walk in it.’ My heart echoes  
back, ‘Lord, let thy presence go with me, and then  
send me where thou pleasest.’ In the midst of all,  
America, dear America, is not forgotten. I begin to  
count the days, and to say to the months, ‘Fly fast  
away, that I may spread the gospel-net once more in  
dear America.’ ”

Be it here mentioned, that amid the busy scenes  
of his life, and while surrounded with the flatteries of  
the great and noble, Whitefield did not forget the  
duties he owed to his mother. A person whom he had  
employed to obtain some comforts for her, had neg-  
lected the duty, so that the now aged matron might

have felt a week’s anxiety. He wrote to her, “I  
should never forgive myself, was I, by negligence or  
any wrong conduct, to give you a moment’s needless  
pain. Alas, how little have I done for you. Christ’s  
care for his mother excites me to wish I could do any-  
thing for you. If you would have anything more  
brought, pray write, honored mother. \* \* \* To-

morrow it will be thirty-five years since you brought  
unworthy me into the world. O that my head were  
waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might  
bewail my barrenness and unfruitfulness in the church  
of God.”

While he was now fully engaged in preaching, and  
was surrounded with flatteries, he did not forget his  
duty to conflict with sin. He writes, “I find a love  
of power sometimes intoxicates even God’s dear chil-  
dren. It is much easier for me to obey than govern.  
This makes me fly from that which, at our first setting  
out, we are apt to court. I cannot well buy humility  
at too dear a rate.”

Dr. Philip Doddridge, as every reader knows, was  
one of the most pious and accomplished preachers and  
writers of the Non-conformists of England in his day.  
Nor was his missionary zeal small in its degree.  
Though he died as early as 1751, he had said, “I am  
now intent on having something done among the dis-  
senters, in a more public manner, for propagating the  
gospel abroad, which lies near my heart. I wish to  
live to see this design brought into execution, at least  
into some forwardness, and then I should die the more  
cheerfully.” It was indeed the passion of his life to  
promote the interests of evangelical truth, and save

the souls of men. And though, as his recent eulogist,  
the Rev. John Stoughton, has said, condemned by  
some, and suspected by others for so doing, he took a  
deep and sympathetic interest in the evangelical la-  
bors of Whitefield. It seems strange in our day to  
think of Whitefield being regarded as an enthusiast  
by orthodox dissenters. Yet there were those who  
did thus regard him. Bradbury poured on him streams  
of wit; Barker regarded his sermons as low and  
coarse; and another in writing calls him “ honest,  
crazy, confident Mr. Whitefield.” But Doddridge  
regarded him as far otherwise, and spoke of him as  
“a flaming servant of Christ.” He prayed on one  
occasion at the Tabernacle, but Dr. Watts was much  
grieved by it; and when, on Whitefield’s visiting  
Northampton, Doddridge gave him the use of his  
pulpit, the managers of the college of which he was  
president remonstrated with him for so doing.

The visit of Whitefield to Doddridge was in Feb-  
ruary, 1750, where he met with the Rev. Dr. Sir James  
Stonehouse, and the Rev. Messrs. Hartley and Hervey.  
The latter eminent clergyman thus writes: “I have  
lately seen that most excellent minister of the ever-  
blessed Jesus, Mr. Whitefield. I dined, supped, and  
spent the evening with him at Northampton, in com-  
pany with Dr. Doddridge, and two pious, ingenious  
clergyman of the church of England, both of them  
known to the learned world by their valuable writ-  
ings. And surely I never spent a more delightful  
evening, or saw one that seemed to make nearer  
approaches to the felicity of heaven. A gentleman of  
great worth and rank in the town invited us to his

house, and gave us an elegant treat; but how mean  
was his provision, how coarse his delicacies, compared  
with the fruit of my friend’s lips: they dropped as  
honey from the honey-comb, and were a well of life.  
Surely people do not know that amiable and exem-  
plary man, or else, I cannot but think, instead of  
depreciating, they would applaud and love him. For  
my part, I never beheld so fair a copy of our Lord,  
such a living image of the Saviour, such exalted de-  
light in God, such enlarged benevolence to man, such  
a steady faith in the divine promises, and such a fer-  
vent zeal for the divine glory; and all this without  
the least moroseness of humor, or extravagance of  
behavior, sweetened with the most engaging cheerful-  
ness of temper, and regulated by all the sobriety of  
reason and wisdom of Scripture; insomuch that I  
cannot forbear applying the wise man’s encomium of  
an illustrious woman to this eminent minister of the  
everlasting gospel: ‘Many sons have done virtuously,  
but thou, excellest them all.’”

In the month of March, 1750, a general alarm had  
been awakened by earthquakes in London, and fears  
were excited by pretended prophecies of still greater  
devastation. These signal judgments of Jehovah  
were preceded by great profligacy of manners, and its  
fruitful parent, licentiousness of principle. Dr. Horne,  
afterwards dean of Canterbury and bishop of Bristol,  
in a sermon preached at the time, says, “As to faith,  
is not the doctrine of the Trinity, and that of the divin-  
ity of our Lord and Saviour—without which our re-  
demption is absolutely void, and we are yet in our  
sins, lying under the intolerable burden of the wrath

EARTHQUAKE IN LONDON. 327

of God—blasphemed and ridiculed openly in conver-  
sation and in print? And as to righteousness of life,  
are not the people of this land dead in trespasses and  
sins? Idleness, drunkenness, luxury, extravagance,  
and debauchery; for these things cometh the wrath  
of God, and disordered nature proclaims the impend-  
ing distress and perplexity of nations. And Oh, may  
we of this nation never read a handwriting upon the  
wall of heaven, in illuminated capitals of the Almigh-  
ty, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin—God hath num-  
bered the kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weigh-  
ed in the balances of heaven, and found wanting the  
merits of a rejected Redeemer, and therefore the king-  
dom is divided and given away.”

The shocks felt in London in February and March  
of this year, were far more violent than any remem-  
bered for a long series of years. The earth moved  
throughout the whole cities of London and West-  
minster. It was a strong and jarring motion, attend-  
ed with a rumbling noise like that of thunder. Multi-  
tudes of persons of every class fled from these cities  
with the utmost haste, and others repaired to the  
fields and open places in the neighborhood. Tower-  
hill, Moorfields, and Hyde Park were crowded with  
men, women, and children, who remained a whole  
night under the most fearful apprehensions. Places  
of worship were filled with persons in the utmost  
state of alarm. Especially was this the case with  
those attached to Methodist congregations, where  
multitudes came all night, knocking at the doors, and  
for God’s sake begging admittance. As convulsions  
of nature are usually regarded by enthusiasts and

fanatics as the sure harbinger of its dissolution, a  
soldier “had a revelation,” that a great part of Lon-  
don and Westminster would be destroyed by an earth-  
quake on a certain night, between the hours of twelve  
and one o’clock. Believing his assertion, thousands  
fled from the city for fear of being suddenly over-  
whelmed, and repaired to the fields, where they con-  
tinued all night, in momentary expectation of seeing  
the prophecy fulfilled; while thousands of others ran  
about the streets in the most wild and frantic state  
of consternation, apparently quite certain that the  
day of judgment was about to commence. The whole  
scene was truly awful.

Under these circumstances, the ministers of Christ  
preached almost incessantly, and many were awakened  
to a sense of their awful condition before God, and to  
rest their hopes of eternal salvation on the Rock of  
ages. Mr. Whitefield, animated with that burning  
charity which shone so conspicuously in him, ventured  
out at midnight to Hyde Park, where he proclaimed  
to the affrighted and astonished multitudes that there  
is a Saviour, Christ the Lord. The darkness of the  
night, and the awful apprehensions of an approaching  
earthquake, added much to the solemnity of the scene.  
The sermon was truly sublime, and to the ungodly  
sinner, the self-righteous pharisee, and the artful hyp-  
ocrite, strikingly terrific. With a pathos which show-  
ed the fervor of his soul, and with a grand majestic  
voice that commanded attention, he took occasion from  
the circumstances of the assembly, to call their atten-  
tion to that most important event in which everyone  
will be interested, the final consummation of all things,

the universal wreck of nature, the dissolution of earth,  
and the eternal sentence of every son and daughter of  
Adam. The whole scene was one of a most memora-  
ble character. Mr. Charles Wesley, Mr. Romaine,  
and others preached in a similar manner, and with  
like happy results.

At this period, Whitefield and his female friends  
especially, were the subjects of royal attention at the  
court of George the Second. It is said that on one  
occasion Lady Chesterfield appeared in a dress “with  
a brown ground and silver flowers,” of foreign manu-  
facture. The king, smiling significantly, said to her  
aloud, “I know who chose that gown for you—Mr.  
Whitefield; I hear you have attended on him for a  
year and a half.” Her ladyship acknowledged she  
had done so, and professed her approbation of his  
character and ministry; and afterwards deeply re-  
gretted that she had not said more when she had so  
good an opportunity. Whitefield had occasion to  
wait on the secretary of state, in company with Dr.  
Gifford, a Baptist pastor in London, to ask relief for  
some persecuted Christians in Ireland, and was assured  
that “no hurt was designed by the state to the Meth-  
odists.” He also renewed his friendship with the  
Messrs. Wesley, and several times exchanged pulpits  
with them. He writes, “I have now preached thrice  
in Mr. Wesley’s chapel, and God was with us of a  
truth.”

Again was our evangelist tired of London, and  
again had he grown sick for want of field-preaching.  
Accordingly he set out for Bristol and other parts of  
the west of England; and although rain and hail pelt-

ed him in his field-pulpits, he preached “about twenty  
times in eight or nine days.” As soon as he found  
himself in his own element, he saw everything in his  
old lights. He says, “Everything I meet with seems  
to carry this voice with it: ‘Go thou and preach the  
gospel; be a pilgrim on earth; have no party, or  
certain dwelling-place.’ My heart echoes back, ‘Lord  
Jesus, help me to do or suffer thy will. When thou  
seest me in danger of nestling, in pity, in tender pity  
put a thorn in my nest, to prevent me from it.”

From Bristol, Whitefield went to Taunton, where  
he met with the Rev. Richard Pearsall, an eminent  
and excellent Presbyterian minister, of whom he  
speaks very highly; and from thence, on his way to  
Plymouth, he stayed at Wellington, to preach for the  
Rev. Risdon Darracott, who has ever since been distin-  
guished as “the star in the west.” Mr. Darracott was  
the son of a dissenting minister in Dorsetshire, where  
he was born in 1717, when Whitefield was three years  
old. He studied for the ministry under the Rev. Dr.  
Doddridge, at Northampton, and entered on his min-  
isterial course in Cornwall in 1738, which situation  
he was most reluctantly compelled to leave two years  
afterwards from violent hemorrhage of the lungs.  
Under this alarming visitation he spent about six  
months with his friends in Devonshire, where his fer-  
vent-minded father had preached till his death at the  
age of forty. While here, he had a call to succeed a  
venerable minister at Wellington, who had recently  
deceased. He found the congregation small, and the  
number of communicants but twenty-eight. His min-  
istry soon drew a large congregation, many of whom

had never before made a profession of religion, and  
were first attracted into the town from the neighbor-  
ing villages out of mere curiosity to hear him. The  
house of worship was soon insufficient to contain his  
hearers; and even when it was enlarged, many were  
frequently compelled to stand out of doors, unable to  
obtain an entrance. The Rev. Benjamin Fawcett, who  
preached his funeral sermon, said, “I never knew any  
congregation which appeared to have so many in-  
stances of abiding religious impressions;” and added,  
“I have good reason to believe that his ministry was  
owned to the effectual conversion of many hundreds  
of souls.”

The night before the death of this excellent man,  
which took place in his forty-second year, he exclaim-  
ed, “Oh, what a good God have I, in and through  
Jesus Christ. I would praise him, but my lips can-  
not. Eternity will be too short to speak his praises.”  
The physician coming in, he said to him, “Oh, what a  
mercy is it to be interested in the atoning blood of  
Jesus. I come to the Lord as a vile sinner, trust-  
ing in the merits and precious blood of my dear Re-  
deemer. 0 grace, grace, free grace!” His last words  
were, “I am going from weeping friends to congratu-  
lating angels, and rejoicing saints in glory. He is  
coming. Oh, speed thy chariot wheels; why are they  
so long in coming? I long to be gone!” He left in  
his church more than two hundred communicants.

Whitefield and Darracott were congenial spirits,  
and Darracott, like his friend, had suffered much re-  
proach in the cause of his Master; he was what  
Whitefield called him, “a flaming and successful

preacher of the gospel.” He had just at this time  
lost three lovely children. “Two of them,” says  
Whitefield, “had died on the Saturday evening be-  
fore the sacrament; but weeping did not prevent  
sowing. He preached the next day, and administered  
as usual. Our Lord strengthened him; and for his  
three natural, gave him above thirty spiritual chil-  
dren; and he is likely to have many more. He has  
ventured his little all for Christ; and last week a  
saint died who left him and his heirs two hundred  
pounds in land. Did ever any one trust in God, and  
was forsaken?” This interview with Darracott, and  
with good old Mr. Pearsall, who had been a preacher  
of righteousness before Whitefield was born, had an  
inspiring influence upon him. He says, “I began to  
take the field again at his dwelling for the spring!  
I begin to begin to spend and be spent for Him who  
shed his own dear heart’s blood for me. He makes  
ranging exceedingly pleasant.”

Soon after this, Whitefield went again into York-  
shire. At Rotherham he says, “Satan rallied his  
forces. The crier was employed to give notice of a  
bear-baiting. You may guess who was the bear!  
However, I preached twice. The drum was heard,  
and several watermen attended with great staves.  
The constable was struck, and two of the mobbers  
apprehended, but rescued afterwards.” Sheffield and  
Leeds he found to be a new and warmer climate.  
Lancashire, however, was still but cold to him. All  
was quiet at Manchester, and he “humbly hoped some  
had enlisted,” but no great impression was then made.  
At Bolton, a drunkard stood up behind him to preach;

and the wife of the man who lent him the field, twice  
attempted to stab the workman who put up the stand  
for him. This roused him, and he bore down all op-  
position by a torrent of eloquence, which quite ex-  
hausted him. In the night, however, some rude fel-  
lows got into the barn and stables where his chaise  
and horses had been put, and cut them very shame-  
fully. This conduct he called, “Satan showing his  
teeth.”

To narrate the particulars of this journey would  
be little more than a repetition of scenes of insult and  
of success with which the reader has already become  
familiar. At Ulverston he says, “Satan made some  
small resistance. A clergyman, who looked more like  
a butcher than a minister, came with two others, and  
charged a constable with me; but I never saw a poor  
creature sent off with such disgrace.”

One of the most remarkable conversions recorded  
in the history of the church occurred during this jour-  
ney by the ministry of Mr. Whitefield. The full par-  
ticulars are recorded in the Life of the Countess of  
Huntingdon, and can only be briefly mentioned here.

In the early period of Whitefield’s ministry, many  
of the taverns became places where his doctrines and  
zeal were talked of and ridiculed. A Mr. Thorpe,  
and several other young men in Yorkshire, undertook  
at one of these parties to mimic the preaching of Mr.  
Whitefield. The proposition met with applause; one  
after another stood on a table to perform his part,  
and it devolved on Mr. Thorpe to close this irrever-  
ent scene. Much elated, and confident of success, he  
exclaimed, as he ascended the table, “I shall beat you

all.” Who would have supposed that the mercy of  
God was now about to be extended to this transgres-  
sor of his law? The Bible was handed to him; and  
by the guidance of unerring Providence, it opened at  
Luke 13:3: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise  
perish.” The moment he read the text his mind was  
impressed in a most extraordinary manner - he saw  
clearly the nature and importance of the subject; and  
as he afterwards said, if he ever preached with the  
assistance of the Holy Spirit, it was at that time. His  
address produced a feeling of depression in his audi-  
tors; and when he had finished, he instantly retired  
to weep over his sins. He soon after became asso-  
ciated with the people of God, and died a successful  
minister of Christ, at Masborough, in Yorkshire, in  
1776, about six years after the death of Mr. White-  
field. He was the father of the distinguished Rev.  
William Thorpe, of Bristol.

Passing on to Edinburgh, Whitefield was, as usual,  
received with the most unfeigned tenderness and joy,  
preaching to great multitudes of attentive and serious  
people, whose earnest desire to hear him made him  
exert himself beyond his strength. He says, “By  
preaching always twice, once thrice, and once four  
times in a day, I am quite weakened; but I hope to  
recruit again. Christ’s presence makes me smile at  
pain.” He returned to London, having preached  
about one hundred times, it was believed to not less  
than one hundred thousand people.

Among the occasional hearers of Whitefield when  
in Scotland, was the celebrated infidel historian, Da-  
vid Hume. An intimate friend having asked him

what he thought of Mr. Whitefield’s preaching, he  
replied, “He is, sir, the most ingenious preacher I  
ever heard; it is worthwhile to go twenty miles to  
hear him.” He then repeated the following passage,  
which occurred towards the close of the discourse he  
had been hearing. “After a solemn pause, Mr. White-  
field thus addressed his numerous audience: ‘The at-  
tendant angel is just about to leave the threshold, and  
ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend, and not bear  
with him the news of one sinner, among all this mul-  
titude, reclaimed from the error of his ways?’ To  
give the greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped  
with his foot, lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven,  
and with gushing tears cried aloud, ‘Stop, Gabriel!  
stop, Gabriel! stop, ere you enter the sacred portals,  
and yet carry with you the news of one sinner con-  
verted to God.’ He then, in the most simple but en-  
ergetic language, described what he called a Saviour’s  
dying love to sinful man, so that almost the whole as-  
sembly melted into tears. This address was accom-  
panied with such animated, yet natural action, that it  
surpassed any thing I ever saw or heard in any other  
preacher.”

In the summer of 1751, Whitefield paid a second  
visit to Ireland, and was most hospitably received in  
Dublin by a respectable and opulent gentleman named  
Lunell, who had been brought to Christ by the first  
Methodist itinerant preacher in that city. During  
this excursion, Whitefield preached about eighty ser-  
mons, fourteen of them in Dublin, and seven in Limer-  
ick. His hearers in Dublin organized themselves into  
a public society, which does not seem to have met his

approbation. He says, “This morning I have been  
talking with dear Mr. Adams, and cannot help think-  
ing that you have run before the Lord, in forming  
yourselves into a public society as you have done. I  
am sincere when I profess that I do not choose to set  
myself at the head of any party. When I came to Ire-  
land, my intention was to preach the gospel to all;  
and if it should ever please the Lord of all lords to  
send me thither again, I purpose to pursue the same  
plan. For I am a debtor to all of every denomination,  
and have no design, if I know anything of this despe-  
rately wicked and deceitful heart, but to promote the  
common salvation of mankind. The love of Christ  
constrains me to this.”

During this visit, Whitefield a few times ventured  
out of the city to Oxmantown-green, then a large open  
place, situated near the royal barracks, where the Or-  
mond and Liberty boys, two factions among the low-  
est class of the people, generally assembled on the  
Sabbath to fight with each other. The congregations  
at first were very numerous, and deeply affected, nor  
did any disturbance occur. Thus encouraged, the  
preacher ventured again, and gave notice of his inten-  
tion to resume his labors. He went through the bar-  
racks, the door of which opened into the green, and  
pitched his tent near the barrack walls, not doubting  
of the protection, or at least of the interposition of  
the officers and soldiers, if there should be occasion  
for it. The multitude in attendance was indeed vast.  
After singing and prayer, Whitefield preached without  
molestation, except that now and then a few stones  
and clods of dirt were thrown at him. It being war-

time, he took occasion to exhort his hearers, as was  
his usual practice, not only to fear God, but to honor  
the king; and prayed for the success of the king of  
Prussia. When the service was over, he thought to  
return home by the way he came, but, to his great sur-  
prise, a passage through the barracks was denied;  
and he was compelled to pass from one end of the  
green to the other, through thousands of Roman-cath-  
olics. He was unattended; for a soldier and four  
preachers who came with him had fled from the scene  
of danger, and he was seriously attacked by the mob.  
They threw vollies of stones upon him from all quar-  
ters, and he reeled backwards and forwards till he  
was almost breathless and covered with blood. At  
length, with great difficulty he staggered to the door  
of a minister's house near the green, which was kind-  
ly opened to him. For a while he continued speech-  
less, and panting for breath; but his weeping friends  
having given him a cordial, and washed his wounds,  
a coach was procured, in which, amidst the oaths, im-  
precations, and threatenings of the rabble, he got safe  
home, and united in a hymn of thanksgiving with his  
friends. In a letter written to a friend soon after this  
event, he says, “I received many blows and wounds;  
one was particularly large, and near my temple: I  
thought of Stephen, and was in hopes, like him, to go  
off in this bloody triumph to the immediate presence  
of my Master.”

Unpromising, however, as things were in Ireland,  
the labors of Whitefield, followed as they were by  
those of the Wesleys, became the foundation of a num-  
ber of Christian societies that proved vast blessings

Whitefield 15

to Ireland; and some of them grew into large church-  
es, which continue to flourish till this day.

The society to which reference has been made,  
which assembled in Skinner’s alley, secured ministerial  
aid from the late Rev. John Edwards, who was one of  
Whitefield’s converts, and among the earliest preachers  
at the Tabernacle in London; and who also itinerated  
over nearly the whole of England, Scotland, and Ire-  
land. The period was one of great persecution, and  
this good man had several remarkable preservations  
from death. At one time, while he resided in Dublin,  
he was returning from preaching at a village, when he  
was seized by a party of rude fellows, who declared  
they would throw him over the bridge into the Liffey.  
This was observed by an opposite political party, resid-  
ing on the other side of the river, who encountered his  
assailants, and rescued him out of their hands, saying  
he lived on their side the river, and none should hurt  
him. At another time, having preached out of doors,  
a furious mob of the White-boys, a political party so  
called, beset the house in which he was, and threat-  
ened to burn it to the ground, unless he was driven  
out of it. His anxious friends could see but one way  
for his escape, which was through a window that open-  
ed into a garden belonging to a justice of the peace,  
who was himself a violent persecutor of the Method-  
ists. Through this window Mr. Edwards was, like  
the apostle Paul, let down in a basket. Here he stood  
some time in great consternation, fearing the family  
might observe him, and charge him with breaking into  
the garden for improper purposes, and so both religion  
and himself would be injured. At length he ventured

to knock at the door, and asked for the magistrate, to  
whom he ingenuously stated the facts, and who most  
generously protected and extended to him the hospi-  
talities of his house for two days.

One fact more must be told of this excellent man.  
He resolved to visit a town to which had removed a  
number of soldiers who had received benefit from his  
ministry. He was met, however, by some of these  
pious men, who told him that the inhabitants were  
determined to take his life. Edwards was not to be  
dissuaded from his purpose; and on his arrival he  
immediately preached in the street, and several dis-  
tinguished persons, including the mayor of the town,  
came to hear him, and by their influence prevented dis-  
turbance. After the service, the mayor invited him  
to breakfast with several of the principal inhabitants,  
and told him they were very glad he was come—that  
the people were extremely dissolute in their manners,  
and the clergy, both Protestants and Catholics, ex-  
ceedingly remiss in their duty, and they hoped the  
Methodists would succeed in reforming the town.  
These gentlemen subscribed to the support of stated  
preaching, and extensive and lasting good was done.

Amid Whitefield’s innumerable engagements and  
declining health, Bethesda and his beloved America  
could not be forgotten. While he was at Glasgow  
during this summer of 1751, he was greatly delighted  
to hear that Mr. Dinwiddie, brother-in-law to the Rev.  
Mr. M’Culloch, of Cambuslang, was appointed gover-  
nor of Virginia. The gospel had been much opposed  
there, and he thought the appointment now made  
would greatly tend to check persecution.

Whitefield, as it appears to us, now very suddenly  
determined on another voyage to America. He ar-  
rived in London from Edinburgh in the early part of  
August, with improved health, the country air having  
healed his hemorrhage. He took a hasty leave of his  
friends, and set sail for Georgia, in the Antelope,  
Captain M’Lellan, taking several orphans with him.  
He arrived at Savannah Oct. 27, and had the happi-  
ness of finding the orphan-house in a prosperous con-  
dition. Here, however, he did not stay long; as in  
November we hear of him in his usual labors, and  
with his usual ardor engaged in his constant work of  
preaching. Having formerly suffered much from the  
climate of America in the summer, he determined  
again to embark for London, which he did in April.  
We can scarcely trace his object in this journey to  
and from America, except in some designs of the gov-  
ernment to place Georgia on a new footing.

In June, 1752, Mr. Whitefield was found in the  
society of the Countess of Huntingdon at Bath, where  
he continued about three weeks, preaching every even-  
ing to great numbers of the nobility. Here he became  
acquainted with Mrs. Grinfield, a lady who attended  
on the person of Queen Caroline. “One of Cmsar’s  
household,” he writes, “hath been lately awakened,  
through her ladyship’s instrumentality, and I hope  
others will meet with the like blessing.” He after-  
wards visited her at the palace of St. James, and says,  
“The court, I believe, rings of her, and if she stands,  
I trust she will make a glorious martyr for her bless-  
ed Lord.”

The Moravians, or United Brethren, were at one

period on terms of very cordial friendship with the  
Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield. At the time of which  
we are writing, a series of strange absurdities, resem-  
bling the adoration of saints and other superstitions  
of popery, developed themselves among members of  
that body, at the head of which then stood Count  
Zinzendorf, to whom Whitefield wrote an urgent  
remonstrance on the subject. An open separation  
took place, and Mrs. Grinfield, the Rev. John Cen-  
nick, and some others, adhered to the count, while  
Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon endeavored to bring  
him back to what they believed the simplicity of the  
gospel. Lady Huntingdon, speaking of her final  
interview with him, says, “Our conference was long,  
and as the count honored me with his company for a  
few days, was resumed at intervals, always closing  
with a solemn scriptural prayer to our great and glo-  
rious Head, for the illuminating influences of his Spirit  
to guide us into all truth. We parted with the utmost  
cordiality.”

“Hear Mr. Whitefield’s letter,” says Lady Hun-  
tingdon, “has much grieved the count. But his re-  
monstrance is faithful, and the awful exposures he has  
reluctantly been forced to make, may be productive of  
the highest good in opening the eyes of many to the  
miserable delusions under which they lie.”

A correspondence, indeed we may say friendship,  
had for years existed between Whitefield and the  
eminent philosopher Dr. Benjamin Franklin. The  
following, from a letter of Whitefield, August 17,  
1752, shows his fidelity to the eminent citizen and  
statesman: “I find you grow more and more famous

in the learned world. As you have made a pretty  
considerable progress in the mysteries of electricity,  
I would now humbly recommend to your diligent,  
unprejudiced pursuit and study, the mystery of the  
new birth. It is a most important, interesting study,  
and when mastered, will richly answer and repay you  
for all your pains. One, at whose bar we are shortly  
to appear, hath solemnly declared that, without it, we  
cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. You will  
excuse this freedom. I must have aliquid Christi—  
something of Christ, in all my letters.” This honest  
letter ought to have delighted the philosopher in his  
closet, even more than the eulogium he heard while  
standing behind the bar of the House of Lords, when  
Earl Chatham said of him, “Franklin is one whom  
Europe holds in high estimation for his knowledge  
and wisdom; one who is an honor, not to the English  
nation only, but to human nature.”

In the course of the summer of 1752, and the fol-  
lowing one, Whitefield visited Scotland twice, and  
preached much also throughout England and Wales.  
As usual, he greatly rejoiced in the presence and ser-  
vice of God, and never appears to have been more  
happy than in this period of his life. “Since I left  
Newcastle,” he writes, “I have scarcely known some-  
times whether I have been in heaven or on earth.  
Thousands and thousands flock twice or thrice a day  
to hear the word of life. God favors us with weather,  
and I would fain make hay while the sun shines. Oh  
that I had as many tongues as there are hairs in my  
head. The ever-loving, ever-lovely Jesus should have  
them all. Fain would I die preaching.”

About this period also, Mr. Hervey and he were  
employed in revising each other’s manuscripts; the  
former was then preparing his “Theron and Aspasio,”  
a work which, though florid in its style, has been  
eminently useful in conducting many of its readers to  
a saving knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel.  
Of his friend’s writings Mr. Whitefield says, “For me  
to play the critic on them, would be like holding up  
a candle to the sun. However, I will just mark a few  
places, as you desire. I foretell their fate; nothing  
but your scenery can screen you. Self will never bear  
to die, though slain in so genteel a manner, without  
showing some resentment against its artful murder-  
er. ... I thank you a thousand times for the trouble  
you have been at in revising my poor compositions,  
which I am afraid you have not treated with a becom-  
ing severity. How many pardons shall I ask for  
mangling, and, I fear, murdering your ‘Theron and  
Aspasio?’ If you think my two sermons will do for  
the public, pray return them immediately. I have  
nothing to comfort me but this, that the Lord chooses  
the weak things of this world to confound the strong,  
and things that are not, to bring to naught things that  
are. I write for the poor; you for the polite and  
noble. God will assuredly own and bless what you  
write.”

Whitefield was now also very busy in erecting his  
second London Tabernacle, which he dedicated, June  
10, 1753. We have, for the sake of completing the  
narrative of its first building, already given in our  
third chapter a statement of the second tabernacle, to  
which the reader is referred.

Both the judgment and inclination of Mr. White-  
field concurred to induce him to persevere in his itin-  
erant course, correctly judging that in this way he best  
employed his peculiar talents. After preaching, there-  
fore, with his usual fervor and success for a short time  
in his newly erected Tabernacle, he again set out tow-  
ards Scotland, where he spent some days at Edin-  
burgh and Glasgow, and preached generally twice,  
sometimes three times a day, and once five times. He  
says, “Attention sat upon all faces, and friends came  
round like bees, importuning me to stay another week.”  
This he found too much for his strength, but still went  
forward, often expressing his desire to serve his divine  
Master to the utmost limit of his power, and his hopes  
to be with him soon in heaven. During this journey,  
including his return to London, where he arrived the  
latter end of September, he travelled about twelve  
hundred miles, and preached one hundred and eighty  
times, to many thousands of hearers.

As converts increased in Bristol and its neighbor-  
hood, Mr. Whitefield felt compelled to erect there  
also a “tabernacle.” Lady Huntingdon was one of  
the earliest contributors to this important object, and  
through her influence Lord Chesterfield gave twenty  
pounds to it. He had no taste for religion, but he  
well understood oratory, and in his letter to Lady  
Huntingdon covering his remittance, he said, “Mr.  
Whitefield’s eloquence is unrivalled, his zeal inex-  
haustible.” The Earl of Bath sent fifty pounds, say-  
ing, “Mocked and reviled as Mr. Whitefield is by all  
ranks of society, still, I contend that the day will  
come when England will be just, and own his great-

ness as a reformer, and his goodness as a minister of  
the most high God.”

The Tabernacle at Bristol was dedicated Novem-  
ber 25, 1753, with a sermon from Whitefield. Its  
history is one of deep interest. Its early ministers  
were worthy of any age, but remarkably fitted for that  
in which their lot was cast; men of pith and power,  
undismayed at dangers, braving all kinds of difficulty  
and toil, and prepared equally for labor and suffer-  
ings in the cause of their great Master. Nor have  
later ministers dishonored their predecessors; the  
cause still flourishes, and the hallowed house has been  
the birthplace of many eminent Christians. What  
Whitefield then said of this house might often be said  
of it now: “It is large, but not half large enough; for  
if the place could contain them, nearly as many would  
attend as in London.” He always delighted in his  
visits to this place, and laid here a foundation for vast  
benefits, even to the present day. On one of his vis-  
its to preach here, he began a series of sermons on the  
evening before the commencement of the fair. His  
text was, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to  
the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye,  
buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without  
money, and without price.” Isa. 55:1. The congre-  
gation was large, and thus he began: “My dear hear-  
ers, I fear that many of you are come to attend Bris-  
tol fair. So am I. You do not mean to show your  
goods until to-morrow; but I shall exhibit mine to-  
night. You are afraid purchasers will not come up  
to your price; but I am afraid my buyers will not  
come down to mine; for mine,” striking his hand  
 15\*

on the Bible, “are ‘without money, and without  
price.”

After the dedication of this Bristol Tabernacle,  
Whitefield preached in the open air in various parts  
of Somersetshire, at seven o’clock at night. “My  
hands and body,” says he, “were pierced with cold;  
but what are outward things, when the soul is warmed  
with the love of God? The stars shone with exceed-  
ing brightness; by an eye of faith I saw Him who  
‘calleth them all by their names.’ My soul was filled  
with a holy ambition, and I longed to be one of those  
who ‘shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.’”

At this time he had a fine opportunity to show his  
Christian attachment to his old friends. Mr. John  
Wesley had, by a series of extraordinary labors,  
brought his life into great danger, and Whitefield,  
hearing of this while at Bristol, wrote a sympathizing  
letter to his brother Charles, in which he prays for  
the descending garment of Elijah to rest on the sur-  
viving Elisha, and encloses an ardent and solemn  
farewell to the invalid, who was supposed to be dying.  
He says, “The news and prospect of your approach-  
ing dissolution have quite weighed me down. I pity  
myself and the church, 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 will  
be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain

you, even you, reverend and very dear sir, shall not  
leave us yet. But if the decree is gone forth that you  
must now sleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away,  
and give yon to die in the embraces of triumphant love.  
If in the land of the living, I hope to pay my best  
respects to you next week. If not, reverend and dear  
sir, farewell.” He had soon the satisfaction of wit-  
nessing the recovery of his friend, who was to survive  
him more than twenty years.

We have already intimated that Whitefield used  
his influence in Scotland in favor of the New Jersey  
college, located at Princeton. In accordance with  
his advice, the friends of the college in this country  
sent over the Rev. Samuel Davies, afterwards presi-  
dent of the college, and the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, to  
promote its interests in the British islands. A few  
extracts from the manuscript diary of Davies, with  
the use of which we have been favored for this volume,  
will show the readiness of Whitefield to labor, or to  
“be nothing,” so that the cause of Christ might be  
advanced. The deputation arrived in England in the  
closing month of 1753, and thus writes Davies:

“Wednesday, December 26. Mr. Whitefield hav-  
ing sent us an invitation last night to make his house  
our home during our stay here, we were perplexed  
what to do, lest we should blast the success of our  
mission among the dissenters, who are generally dis-  
affected to him. We at length concluded, with the  
advice of our friends and his, that a public intercourse  
with him would be imprudent, in our present situation,  
and visited him privately this evening; and the kind  
reception he gave us revived dear Mr. Tennent. He

spoke in the most encouraging manner as to the suc-  
cess of our mission. And in all his conversation dis-  
covered so much zeal and candor, that I could not but  
admire the man as the wonder of the age. When we  
returned, Mr. Tennent’s heart was all on fire, and  
after we had gone to bed, he suggested that we should  
watch and pray; and we rose and prayed together  
till about three o’clock in the morning.

“Jan. 1. Went in the evening to hear Mr. White-  
field in the Tabernacle, a large, spacious building.  
The assembly was very numerous, though not equal to  
what is common. He preached on the parable of the  
barren fig-tree; and though the discourse was inco-  
herent, yet it seemed to me better calculated to do  
good to mankind than all the accurate, languid dis-  
courses I ever heard. After sermon I enjoyed his  
pleasing conversation at his house.”

It would seem that Messrs. Davies and Tennent had  
their trials, as well as their encouragements. Writ-  
ing Jan. 14, Mr. Davies says, “Spent an hour with  
Mr. Whitefield. He thinks we have not taken the  
best method in endeavoring to keep in with all par-  
ties, but should ‘come out boldly,’ as he expressed it,  
which would secure the affections of the pious people,  
from whom we might expect the most generous con-  
tributions.” On the evening after this, they dined  
with Whitefield at the house of a common friend, and  
he rejoiced in the abundant success they afterwards  
met with from nearly all parties.

“Jan. 25. Dined with Mr. Bradbury, who has  
been in the ministry about fifty-seven years. He read  
us some letters which passed between Mr. Whitefield

and him, anno 1741; occasioned by Mr. Whitefield’s  
reproving him in a letter for singing a song in a tav-  
ern, in a large company, in praise of old English beef.  
The old gentleman sung it to us, and we found it was  
partly composed by himself, in the high-flying days of  
Queen Anne. He is a man of a singular turn, which  
would be offensive to the greatest number of serious  
people; but for my part I could say,

“‘I knew ’twas his peculiar whim,

Nor took it ill, as’t came from him.’”

In March, 1754, Whitefield, in company with twen-  
ty-two poor destitute children, sailed the fifth time for  
America.

CHAPTER XIII.

**FIFTH VISIT TO AMERICA—RENEWED LABORS IN  
GREAT BRITAIN— TOTTENHAM-COURT-ROAD CHAP-  
EL.**

1754-1763.

On this voyage to America, Whitefield sailed for  
South Carolina by way of Lisbon. His health de-  
manded repose; he thought that seeing Popery as it is  
when unrestrained by public opinion, might be of use  
to him in his future labors; and moreover, he had with  
him a number of orphans whom he wished comfortably  
to settle at Bethesda before he yisited the northern  
provinces. It would be pleasant, if our limits would  
allow it, to furnish the letters he wrote from Lisbon  
during nearly four weeks, but a few sentences must suf-  
fice: “This leaves me an inhabitant of Lisbon. We  
have now been here almost a week, and I suppose shall  
stay a fortnight longer. A reputable merchant has  
received me into his house, and every day shows me the  
ecclesiastical curiosities of the country. O, my dear  
friend, bless the Lord of all lords, for causing your  
lot to be cast in such a fair ground as England, and  
giving you such a goodly heritage. It is impossible to  
be sufficiently thankful for civil and religious liberty,  
for simplicity of worship, and powerful preaching of  
the word of God. 0 for simplicity of manners, and a  
correspondent behavior. The air agrees with my  
poor constitution extremely well. Through divine

assistance; I hope what I see will also improve my  
better part, and help to qualify me better for preach-  
ing the everlasting gospel.”

In another letter he writes, “Never did civil and  
religious liberty appear to me in so amiable a light  
as now. What a spirit must Martin Luther and the  
first reformers be endued with, that dared to appear  
as they did for God. Lord, hasten that blessed time  
when others, excited by the same spirit, shall perform  
like wonders. Oh, happy England! Oh, happy Meth-  
odists, who are Methodists indeed! And all I account  
such, who, being dead to sects and parties, aim at  
nothing else but as holy a method of living to, and  
dying in the blessed Jesus.”

He was heartily glad to get away from Popish  
processions and superstitious rites, and again to visit  
his “dear America.”

Our evangelist arrived with his orphans at Beau-  
fort, in South Carolina, May 27, 1754, greatly im-  
proved in health, with a heart burning with love and  
zeal for his Lord and Master. He says, With his  
usual energy, “Oh that I may at length learn to begin  
to live. I am ashamed of my sloth and lukewarmness,  
and long to be on the stretch for God.” His family  
now consisted, “black and white,” of one hundred and  
six members, all dependent, on his personal efforts  
and influence. He regarded his charge as a steward-  
ship for God, and collected accordingly, nothing doubt-  
ing. It was now summer, and besides the oppressive  
heat, “great thunders, violent lightnings, and heavy  
rains” frequently beat upon him as he journeyed from  
place to place. His health improved, and his spirits

rose as he advanced on his journey. At Charleston,  
and elsewhere, his labors were received with the same  
degree of acceptance as formerly, and he was much  
encouraged by the conversion of a clergyman, a faith-  
ful successor to Mr. Smith of the city just named, and  
the first student sent forth from Bethesda.

He arrived at New York, by water, July 27, and  
divided his labors between that city and Philadelphia  
almost entirely for nearly two months. In the latter  
city, he tells us, he was seized with violent cholera  
morbus, and brought to the gates of death. To use  
his own words, he “had all his cables out, ready to  
cast anchor within the port of eternity;” but he was  
soon “at sea again,” although only able to preach  
once a day for some time. “Everywhere,” he says,  
“a divine power accompanied the word, prejudices  
were removed, and a more effectual door opened than  
ever for preaching the gospel.” When he looked at  
“the glorious range for hunting in the American  
woods,” he was at a loss on which hand to turn. ...  
“Affection, intense affection cries aloud, Away to New  
England, dear New England, immediately. Provi-  
dence, and the circumstances of the southern provin-  
ces, point directly to Virginia.”

While thus undecided, he visited his old friend  
Governor Belcher, then governor of New Jersey, and  
residing at Elizabethtown. He found the good old  
man ripening for heaven, willing to depart and to be  
with Christ. At this time the commencement of New  
Jersey college was held, and as a mark of their re-  
spect, the president and trustees conferred on him the  
honorary degree of master of arts. The meeting of

the synod immediately followed, respecting which body  
he says, “I was much refreshed with the company of  
the whole synod; such a number of simple-hearted,  
united ministers I never saw before. I preached to  
them several times, and the great Master of assemblies  
was in the midst of us.”

Influenced by what he saw and heard in New Jer-  
sey, Whitefield determined to go to New England,  
and to return from thence by Virginia to Georgia,  
and made his arrangements accordingly; it would  
comprise a circuit of more than two thousand miles,  
but he said, “The Redeemer’s strength will be more  
than sufficient.”

It has been thought that it was during this visit of  
Whitefield to New Jersey, and probably at the table  
of Governor Belcher, that he dined in company with  
a number of ministers, and held the often-reported  
conversation with “Father Tennent.” After dinner,  
Mr. Whitefield adverted to the difficulties attending  
the Christian ministry; lamented that all their zeal  
availed but little; said that he was weary with the  
burden of the day; and declared his great comfort in  
the thought, that in a short time his work would be  
done, when he should depart and be with Christ. He  
then appealed to the ministers, if it was not their  
great comfort that they should soon go to rest. They  
generally assented, except Mr. Tennent, who sat next  
to Mr. Whitefield in silence, and by his countenance  
indicated but little pleasure in the conversation.

Seeing this, Mr. Whitefield, gently tapping him on  
the knee, said, “Well, brother Tennent, you are the  
oldest man among us; do you not rejoice to think that

your time is so near at hand, when you will be called  
home?” Mr. Tennent bluntly answered, “I have no  
wish about it.” Mr. Whitefield pressed him again.  
Mr. Tennent again answered, “No, sir, it is no pleas-  
ure to me at all; and if you knew your duty, it would  
be none to you. I have nothing to do with death;  
my business is to live as long as I can, as well as I  
can, until He shall think proper to call me home.” Mr. Whitefield still urged for an explicit answer to  
his question, in case the time of death were left to his  
own choice. Mr. Tennent replied, “I have no choice  
about it; I am God’s servant, and have engaged to do  
his business as long as he pleases to continue me there-  
in. But now, brother, let me ask you a question.  
What do you think I should say, if I was to send my  
servant into the field to plough; and if at noon I  
should go to the field, and find him lounging under a  
tree, and complaining. ‘Master, the sun is very hot,  
and the ploughing hard; I am weary of the work you  
have appointed me, and am overdone with the heat  
and burden of the day. Do, master, let me return  
home, and be discharged from this hard service?’ What should I say? Why, that he was a lazy fellow,  
and that it was his business to do the work that I had  
appointed him, until I should think fit to call him  
home.”

Accompanied by President Burr, Whitefield set  
out, October 1, for Boston, and arrived there on the  
9th. Here he stayed a week, and saw there, morning  
after morning, three or four thousand people hanging  
in breathless silence on his lips, and weeping silent  
tears. Whitefield himself calls it “a lovely scene,”

and says he “never saw a more effectual door opened  
for the gospel. Sinners have been awakened, saints  
quickened, and enemies made at peace with me.  
Grace, grace! Surely my coming here was of God.  
Convictions do fasten, and many souls are comforted.”Such were the crowds at the early sermons, that in  
order to reach the pulpit, he had to get in at the win-  
dows of the churches. In a letter to the Countess of  
Huntingdon, he wrote, “In Boston, the tide ran full  
as high as ever your ladyship knew it at Edinburgh,  
or in any part of Scotland.”

While at Boston, Whitefield heard with much  
pleasure of the appointment of his friend Habersham  
as secretary to the new governor of Georgia, and  
wrote to him, “I wish you joy of your new honor.  
May the King of kings enable you to discharge your  
trust as becomes a good patriot, subject, and Chris-  
tian. You have now a call, I think, to retire from  
business, and to give up your time to the public.”Our evangelist travelled north as far as Portsmouth,  
in New Hampshire, generally preaching two or three  
times a day, till November 7, when he took his fare-  
well at Boston, at four o’clock in the morning. Speak-  
ing of this journey, he says, “What have I seen?  
Dagon falling everywhere before the ark; enemies  
silenced, or made to own the finger of God; and the  
friends of Jesus triumphing in his glorious conquests.  
A hundredth part cannot be told. We had scarcely  
one dry meeting.” When he arrived in the neighbor-  
hood of Portsmouth, the northern boundary of his  
journey, he was overwhelmed with humility as well as  
joy, by the large cavalcade which came out to meet

and welcome him. He says of them, “They were too  
many and of tills northern journey, “It seems to me  
the most important one I was ever engaged in.”

Of no portion of Whitefield’s life are we so igno-  
rant as of the journey he now made from New Eng-  
land to the South. Journal, letters, historians, and  
newspapers alike fail us. Gillies tells us only that  
from Boston he “proceeded to Rhode Island, and  
went onward through Maryland and Virginia, with a  
prospect so pleasing, that he lamented he had not  
come sooner. The whole country seemed eager to  
hear the gospel, many coming forty or fifty miles, and  
a spirit of conviction and consolation appeared in  
every congregation. Prejudices seemed to have fled;  
churches were opened to him; high and low, rich and  
poor, now seemed tothink favorably of his ministra-  
tions; and many acknowledged what God had done  
for their souls through his preaching, when he was  
there before.” It scarcely appears probable that he  
went from Rhode Island to Maryland by water; but  
if he did not, he must have passed through New York,  
New Jersey, and Philadelphia, and we feel somewhat  
of surprise that no records of the journey appear to  
have been preserved.

Dr. Franklin relates a very characteristic anec-  
dote of Mr. Whitefield, which probably occurred in  
Philadelphia or its neighborhood at a period not later  
than this. “The eloquent orator” was preaching in  
an open field, when a drummer was present, who was  
determined to interrupt the preacher, and rudely beat  
his drum in a violent manner, in order to drown his  
voice. Whitefield spoke very loud, but could not

make so much, noise as the instrument. He therefore  
called out to the drummer, “Friend, you and I serve  
the two greatest masters existing, but in different  
callings. You beat up for volunteers for King George,  
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.” This  
speech had such an effect on the drummer, that he  
went away in great good-humor, and left the preacher  
in full possession of the field.

Virginia, alike from the success of his former labors  
there, and from the general characteristics of the peo-  
ple, must have presented a scene of intense interest to  
Whitefield at this time. Everywhere great prepara-  
tions were made for his coming, and large congrega-  
tions assembled to hear him. It is said, that on one  
occasion, as he was speaking on the banks of one of  
the rivers of this noble province, and spoke of the  
strength of human depravity, and the insufficiency of  
the means of grace to convert the sinner without the  
influence of the Holy Spirit: “Sinners,” said he, “think  
not that I expect to convert a single soul of you by  
any thing that I can say, without the assistance of  
Him who is ‘mighty to save.’ Go and stand by that  
river, as it moves on its strong and deep current to  
the ocean, and bid it stop, and see if it will obey you.  
Just as soon should I expect to stop that river by a  
word, as by my preaching to stop that current of sin  
which is carrying you to perdition. Father in heav-  
en, see! they are hurried on towards hell; save them,  
or they perish!” The impression which this address  
produced on his hearers was so strong, that they were

ready to respond with trembling, “Save, Lord; we  
perish!”

Whitefield must have been highly gratified on  
reaching Charleston, in attending the ordination of  
the young minister there, his first student from Be-  
thesda, of whom we have already spoken as succeed-  
ing Mr. Smith; and not less would he rejoice that  
one of the actors at the Charleston theatre had been  
“snatched as a brand from the burning.”'

Though we have not the exact date of his arrival  
at Savannah, we know that he remained there but a  
very short time. His health again declined, his for-  
mer vomitings returned with violence, and his animal  
spirits failed with his strength. In February, 1755,  
we again find him at Charleston; and in the latter end  
of March, he embarked for England, arriving, after a  
comparatively short voyage, at Newhaven, in Sussex,  
May the eighth.

Two strong impressions were made on the mind  
of Whitefield as he now looked on his native land.  
The first was that of grief on account of its condition.  
Nothing less than war with France was daily expect-  
ed, for the French threatened to invade Britain, and  
were constantly making encroachments on her Amer-  
ican colonies. “At this time,” he says, “next to Jesus  
Christ, my king and my country were upon my heart.  
I hope I shall always think it my duty, next to invit-  
ing sinners to the blessed Jesus, to exhort my hearers  
to resist the first approaches of popish tyranny and  
arbitrary power. O that we may be enabled to watch  
and pray against all the opposition of antichrist in  
our own hearts; for, after all, there lies the most dan-

gerous man of sin.” His second feeling was one of  
holy joy; for during his absence the preaching of the  
gospel had been abundantly successful. He writes,  
“Glory be to the great Head of the church! The  
poor despised Methodists are as lively as ever; and  
in several churches the gospel is now preached with  
power. Many in Oxford are awakened to the know-  
ledge of the truth; and I have heard almost every  
week of some fresh minister or another, who seems  
‘determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and  
him crucified.’”

At the Tabernacle in London, as might be ex-  
pected, Whitefield enjoyed what he terms “golden  
seasons;” but by this time not a few of the London  
clergy had begun to preach Christ with holy fidelity;  
and as this was the principal thing he desired, he says  
his “call to go abroad was still more clear.” Indeed,  
so little did he now esteem London as a sphere of la-  
bor, and so much did he regard places by the amount  
of their destitution, that he wished at once to return  
to America, without ranging through England or  
Scotland. Hence he says, “Methinks I could set out  
for America to-morrow, though I have not yet entered  
upon my country range.”

But if he loved America most, England loved her-  
self more, and he was drawn again into Gloucester-  
shire and Bristol. He went also, at the request of  
Lady Huntingdon; to dedicate the new Tabernacle at  
Norwich, to which we have already referred. At this  
last place, he says, August 30,1755, “Notwithstanding  
offences have come, there has been a glorious work  
begun, and is now carrying on, The polite and great

seem to hear with much attention; and I scarcely  
ever preached a week together with greater freedom.”For a long period the work of God abundantly pros-  
pered in connection with this “Tabernacle.” Two  
years after its dedication, the Hon. and Rev. Walter  
Shirley preached some time in it, and had eight hun-  
dred communicants in fellowship, and he said of them,  
“Their experience, lives, and conversation are so  
excellent, that there is nothing like it in the whole  
kingdom.”

On Whitefield’s return to London, there were  
those who urgently entreated him to engage in a new  
controversy with the Messrs. Wesley, some of whose  
followers had been jealous of his success at Norwich.  
He declined, with his common remark, “I have no  
time for controversy,” and reserved what he had to  
say till he could see them “face to face,” simply writ-  
ing to assure them that he had no party designs on  
foot.

Very soon after this, he set out for his northern  
circuit; and wonderfully indeed did the Lord grant  
him success. One thing, however, on this journey  
grieved him. His friends at Leeds, without his know-  
ledge, had built a large church edifice. He saw at  
once, that this circumstance would create an “awful  
separation among the societies” formed by the Messrs.  
Wesley and his own friends; and lost no time in writ-  
ing to those ministers, that they might endeavor to  
prevent a breach. Both the plan and the spirit of  
this undertaking so grieved him, that he exclaimed,  
“Oh this self-love, this self-will, is the devil of devils.  
This he wrote to Lady Huntingdon, a proof that party

was not their object; and it is pleasant to add, that  
Whitefield’s fears were groundless. Leeds, even then,  
contained population sufficient to fill both houses, and  
the whole movement “fell out rather to the further-  
ance of the gospel.” During two months he preached  
twice, and some days three times, to greater numbers  
than ever before, inviting them to Christ, and “ex-  
horting them to pray for King George, and the dear  
friends in America.” He heard at this time, that the  
American ladies were making the soldiers’ coats; and  
he immediately wrote to urge his own female friends  
in the new world to be “some of the most active in  
this labor of love.”

Though Mr. Whitefield stood very high in the  
esteem of that class of ministers who embraced his  
views of evangelical truth, and who approved the  
plans he pursued for the evangelization of the world,  
they never considered him perfect, nor were some of  
them backward, when they deemed it needful, to re-  
prove him. In a sermon he once preached in Haw-  
orth church, Yorkshire, of which his friend Grim-  
shaw was the minister, having spoken severely of those  
professors of the gospel who, by their loose and evil  
conduct, caused the ways of truth to be evil spoken  
of, he intimated his hope, that it was not necessary  
to enlarge much on that topic to the congregation  
before him, who had so long enjoyed the labors of  
an able and faithful preacher; and he was willing  
to believe that their profiting appeared to all men.  
This latter expression roused Mr. Grimshaw’s spirit,  
and notwithstanding his great regard for the preach-  
er, he stood up and interrupted him, saying, with a

Whitefield. 16

loud voice, “0 sir, for God’s sake, do not speak so;  
I pray you, do not flatter. I fear the greater part of  
them are going to hell with their eyes open.”

Notwithstanding the astonishing labors of White-  
field on this tour, he returned to London apparently  
in full flesh, and was congratulated by his friends  
on his improved appearance. Alas, all this, as he  
well knew, was disease, which indeed very soon be-  
came apparent. He was seized with inflammatory  
sore throat, that was followed by quinsy, assuming an  
almost fatal aspect. One physician prescribed silence  
and warmth, and the preacher “promised to be very  
obedient,” but a few days afterwards, another recom-  
mended a perpetual blister: this proposal roused him,  
and he determined to try his own remedy—perpetual  
preaching. The remedy itself was painful, but he  
said, “When this grand catholicon fails, it is all over  
with me.” At this time the sad news of the earth-  
quake at Lisbon arrived in London he was unable  
to preach on the subject, but when told of it he said,  
“Blessed be God, I am ready; I know that my Re-  
deemer liveth. Oh that all in Portugal had known  
this! Then an earthquake would only be a rumbling  
chariot to carry the soul to God. Poor Lisbon, how  
soon are thy riches and superstitious pageantry swal-  
lowed up!”

In the winter of 1755-6, he was applied to to preach  
in the vicinity of the two great theatres, which he  
began to do in Long Acre chapel. Disturbances took  
place, and the Bishop of London interposed to stop  
him. In the end he erected Tottenham Court-road  
chapel, as already detailed in our third chapter.

Mr. Whitefield’s ministry in London at this time  
was still successful. Thousands hung on his lips with  
delight, not a few of whom were won to the service  
of Christ. He tells us, among many similar facts, of  
the conversion of a Mr. Crane, who was afterwards  
appointed steward of the orphan-house in Georgia.  
This gentleman had one evening determined to visit  
the theatre, and set out for Drury-lane; that house  
being crowded, he resolved to go to Covent-garden;  
that also being so full that he could not obtain admit-  
tance, he changed his plan, and resolved on being en-  
tertained with one of Whitefield’s sermons, and hast-  
ened to Tottenham Court-road chapel. It pleased  
God to impress the word on his heart, and he became  
an eminent Christian. So truly is the prediction ver-  
ified, “I am found of them who sought me not.”

During this year he published “A Short Address  
to Persons of all Denominations, occasioned by an  
Alarm of an intended Invasion.” We have examined  
it, and not without pleasure. It is a faithful exposure  
of Popery and its bitter fruits.

It is a charge often preferred against the faithful  
ministers of Christ, by those whose consciences testify  
to their own guilt, that they are personal in their re-  
marks, and mean to censure particular individuals.  
It is certain that this was often done by Mr White-  
field, and sometimes with very happy effect. He once  
drew, from the conduct of his female servant, the pic-  
ture of a Christian failing in his duty, which painfully  
distressed her, till he gave her an assurance of his  
entire forgiveness.

Nor was this the only time when his hearers were

compelled to feel, “he means me.” The celebrated  
comedian, Shuter, had a great personal regard for Mr.  
Whitefield, and not unfrequently attended his minis-  
try. At one period of his popularity he was acting  
in a drama under the character of Ramble. During  
the run of the performance, he attended service at  
Tottenham Court chapel, and was seated in a pew  
exactly opposite the pulpit. Mr. Whitefield on that  
occasion gave full vent to his feelings, and in his own  
energetic manner invited sinners to the Saviour.  
While doing this, fixing his eye full on Shuter, he  
added, “And thou, poor Ramble, who hast long ram-  
bled from him, come also. Oh, end your rambling by  
coming to Jesus.” Shuter was exceedingly struck,  
and going afterwards to Whitefield, he said, “I thought  
I should have fainted; how could you serve me so?”  
In the early part of 1756, Whitefield was engaged  
in London, preaching and collecting for the poor not  
only at Bethesda, but also for the French Protestants.  
At the Tabernacle, a man came up to him in the pulpit,  
threatening his life, and handing him three anonymous  
letters denouncing sudden and certain death, unless  
he ceased to preach and to pursue the offenders by  
law. One of these letters Whitefield sent to the gov-  
ernment, who at once offered a reward, and his maj-  
esty’s pardon, to any one who would discover the  
writer. While this fact gratified, it also embarrassed  
him. He wrote to Lady Huntingdon, “My greatest  
distress is to act so as to avoid rashness on the one  
hand, and timidity on the other.” For his own sake,  
he would not have cared about the matter; but look-  
ing at it as connected with the cause of civil and

religious freedom, he wisely allowed the law to take  
its course at the hazard of his own life by assassina-  
tion. Agreeably with the advice of the government,  
he carried the whole affair into the court of the King’s  
Bench; this alarmed the offenders, and the annoyance  
ceased.

We next find him at Bristol, but not to rest, though  
the labors and anxieties of the winter and spring had  
nearly worn out his strength and spirits. Here he  
preached as usual, and then returned to London.  
During this journey he preached in several places in  
Gloucestershire, his native county, and in Bradford,  
Drome, Warminster, and Portsmouth, spending about  
three months in the tour.

In the county which gave Whitefield birth, is still  
to be seen a chair on which he often sat, and on which  
may be yet read the following lines :

“If love of souls should e’er be wanting here,

Remember me, for I am Whitefield’s chair;

I bore his weight, was witness to his fears,

His earnest prayers, his interesting tears.

His holy soul was fired with love divine:

If thine be such, sit down and call me thine**.”**

A very few weeks passed, and we find him in  
Kent. In a letter written July 27, after his visit to  
that county, he says, “The gospel flourishes in Lon-  
don. I am just returned from preaching at Sheerness,  
Chatham, and in the camp.” On the next day he set  
off towards Scotland. On August 14, he writes from  
Sunderland, “How swiftly doth my precious time pass  
away! It is now a fortnight since I came to Leeds,  
in and about which I preached eight days, thrice  
almost every day, to thronged and affected auditories.

366 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
On Sunday last at Bradford, in the morning, the audi-  
tory consisted of about ten thousand; at noon and in  
the evening, at Birstal, to nearly double the number.  
Though hoarse, I was helped to speak so that all  
heard. Next morning I took a sorrowful leave of  
Leeds, preached at Doncaster at noon, and at York  
the same night. On Wednesday, at Warstall, about  
fifty miles off; on Thursday, twice at Yarm; and last  
night and this morning, here.” Wherever he labored,  
he heard of the good effects of his preaching in those  
places last year, and was constantly finding “many  
trophies of redeeming love.” Such was the effect of  
the two sermons he preached at Birstal, that “several  
hundreds rode eight miles with him in the evening,  
singing and praising God.”

In a day or two after this, we find him at Edin-  
burgh and Glasgow, preaching, as usual, to vast  
crowds, and with his accustomed success. At the  
former places especially, even politicians gave him a  
cordial welcome, and thronged to hear him, while the  
newspapers applauded him for his spirit-stirring ex-  
posures of “Popish tyranny and arbitrary power.” He preached twice every day in the Orphan-hospital  
park, and blended with almost every sermon rousing  
appeals to the Protestantism, courage, and loyalty of  
the Scotch. At the close of one of his sermons he  
pleaded the cause of the poor Highlanders, and col-  
lected at its close about three hundred dollars.

On his way back to London, Whitefield held a  
peculiarly solemn and refreshing meeting with his  
friends. at Leeds; and after it, he braced his nerves  
by a tour of mountain preaching in company with his

IN GREAT BRITAIN 367

friend Grimshaw. But it was now late in October,  
and as he found “these cold countries bringing on his  
last year’s disorder,” and having, as he significantly  
says, “grown very prudent,” he returned to London,  
and dedicated Tottenham Court-road church edifice.  
Another errand also had taken him to that city. The  
new governor of Georgia had sent for him, to con-  
sult with him before sailing to that colony. White-  
field met him, and was so much delighted with him,  
that he wrote off to Bethesda to prepare them for a  
state visit. He says, “Waited upon his excellency,  
and gave him, and all whom he pleases to bring, an

invitation to Bethesda. Dear Mrs. C--- will make

proper provision.” He went even farther, and pro-  
posed that the governor, if possible, should be received  
at Bethesda with military honors.

The success of his new house of worship in Tot-  
tenham Court-road showed the necessity and pro-  
priety of its erection on that spot. Several persons  
of distinction came, and engaged permanent seats;  
and the place was often so crowded, that hundreds  
were unable to obtain admission. It was now usual  
with him to preach about fifteen times every week,  
which, with a weak appetite, want of rest, and much  
care upon his mind, greatly enfeebled him. He writes,  
“But the joy of the Lord is my strength; and my  
greatest grief is, that I can do no more for Him who  
hath done and suffered so much for me.”

In the following year, 1757, Whitefield planned  
another journey to Scotland, at the time the general  
assembly of the church was held. Before leaving  
London, he had placed the affairs of his projected col-

368 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.  
  
lege in the hands of Lord Halifax, and he now seems  
to have hoped that this journey to Scotland would  
have promoted that object, as well as others. It is  
said, that about a hundred ministers at a time attended  
his sermons, thirty of whom invited him to a public  
entertainment. Lord Cathcart, his majesty’s commis-  
sioner to the assembly, also invited him to his own  
table. Whitefield says that he preached “just fifty  
times” on this visit, which extended to about a month.

From Scotland he went, in June, as we have seen,  
to Ireland, and enjoyed, in the midst of no small per-  
secution, much preaching, and much success. On his  
return to London, he found that the governor of Geor-  
gia had visited Bethesda, and promised to communi-  
cate his sentiments to Lord Halifax, “concerning its  
being enlarged into a college but the pressure of  
public affairs hindered his application to the govern-  
ment. Bad news arrived from America, “about the  
fleet,” and therefore Whitefield kept a fast-day at his  
houses of worship.

The health of our evangelist now sadly failed. He  
was brought to live on the “short allowance of preach-  
ing but once a day, and thrice on the Sundaya very  
“short allowance” for him. Once, however, he broke  
through the restraint, and preached three times on  
the success of the king of Prussia; which, he says,  
“somewhat recovered” him, after he had been for a  
week at the gates of the grave. He was not able this  
winter to attempt what he considered great things;  
but Tottenham Court was his Bethel, as he called it.

IN GREAT BRITAIN 369

This house was then surrounded by a beautiful piece  
of ground, and he formed the plan of building on it  
an almshouse for “twelve godly widows,” as a “stand-  
ing monument that the Methodists were not against  
good works.” This charity he soon carried into  
effect. His thoughts, however, were not confined to  
home. Although broken down in health and spirits,  
by weakness and want of rest, he watched the affairs  
of Prussia with intense interest, and assured the Ger-  
man Protestants, through Professor Francke, that “we  
looked on their distresses as our own.”

In the spring of 1758, he laid the foundation-stone  
of his almshouse, and in June of the same year began  
to select its inmates. Pointing to these houses, some  
years afterwards, he said to a gentleman who was  
visiting him, “Those are my redoubts. The prayers  
of the poor women who reside in them, protect me in  
my house.” Having arranged for the supply of his  
London pulpits, Whitefield went into the west of Eng-  
land, and proceeded from thence into Wales. But  
his health was so feeble, that he could not bear to  
drive, nor even ride in a one-horse chaise. The roads  
were rough, and riding shook him nearly to pieces.  
“Every thing,” he says, “wearies this shattered bark  
now.” A friend purchased for him a close chaise,  
advancing the money until he could conveniently  
repay it. He deeply felt this kindness, because by no  
other means could he have itinerated. “I would not,”  
he says, “lay out a single farthing but for my blessed  
Master; but it is inconceivable what I have under-  
gone these three weeks. I never was so before. 0 for

a hearse to carry my weary carcass to the wished for  
grave.” During all this tour he was unable to sit up  
in company even once; yet he often preached to ten

16\*

or fifteen thousand people, and made their “tears flow  
like water from the rock.” His views of himself at  
this time were more than usually humble. He said  
to Lady Huntingdon, “Oh, I am sick—sick in body,  
but infinitely more so in mind, to see so much dross  
in my soul. Blessed be God, there is One who will  
sit as a refiner’s fire, to purify the sons of Levi. I  
write out of the burning bush. Christ is there; Christ  
is there!”

Among the many illustrations of Scripture which  
Whitefield often introduced into his sermons, one is  
truly worthy of record. Preaching from the words,  
“Wherefore, glorify ye the Lord in the fires,” Isa.  
24:15, he says, “When I was, some years ago, at  
Shields, I went into a glass-house, and standing very  
attentively, I saw several masses of burning glass of  
various forms. The workman took one piece of glass,  
and put it into one furnace, then he put it into a  
second, and then into a third. I asked him, ‘Why do  
you put that into so many fires?’ He answered me,  
‘Oh, sir, the first was not hot enough, nor the second,  
and therefore we put it into the third, and that will  
make it transparent.’ ‘Oh,’ thought I, ‘does this man  
put this glass into one furnace after another, that it  
may be rendered perfect? Oh, my God, put me into  
one furnace after another, that my soul may be trans-  
parent, that I may see God as he is.’”

In the month of July, Whitefield again set out for  
Scotland, preaching on his way in many pulpits, in-  
cluding “Bishop Bunyan’s,” as he used to call him, at  
Bedford, Berridge’s at Everton, and Doddridge’s at  
Northampton. Four Episcopal clergymen lent him

their pulpits. His health received, for some time,  
little benefit, so that he sometimes feared he must  
return. But he adds, “Through divine strength, I  
hope to go forward; and shall strive, as much as in  
me lies, to die in this glorious work.” He preached  
and collected in Scotland with his accustomed energy  
and success, and returned to London with his health  
somewhat renovated. This year he lost by death  
some of his earliest and warmest friends, including  
Hervey in England, and Presidents Burr and Ed-  
wards, and Governor Belcher, in America. Such  
removals gave him also “a desire to depart,” but his  
work on earth was not yet done.

Three principal facts connected with our evange-  
list may be said to mark the year 1759. One was,  
that he had the satisfaction to clear off all his debts  
for the orphan-house. “Bethesda’s God,” he writes,  
“lives for ever, and is faithful and all-sufficient,” He  
longed again to visit America, but several difficulties  
intervened for the present.

A second event which marked the year, was  
another journey to Scotland. He complains in his  
letters, that though his congregations at Edinburgh  
and Glasgow were never more numerous and atten-  
tive, yet, with respect to the power of religion, it was  
a dead time in Scotland, in comparison with London  
and several other parts of England. His presence in  
Scotland, however, at this time was very important,  
especially in collecting for his orphan-house and the  
Highland Society for the support of children. Many  
Scottish soldiers were now in America, which greatly  
increased the interest felt in every thing relating to it.

In this year, 1759, Mr. Whitefield also for the first  
time visited Brighthelmstone, now called Brighton, a  
very fashionable watering-place, where George IV.  
afterwards, while regent, built a tawdry tasteless  
palace. The preacher’s first sermon was delivered  
under a tree in a field behind the White Lion inn.  
Among his congregation on that day was a young  
man named Tuppen, about eighteen years of age. He  
had been educated by a pious mother in the strict  
observance of the external parts of religion, but was  
entirely destitute of its power. He attended not so  
much from curiosity, as from the intention to insult  
and interrupt the preacher. He tells us, “I had there-  
fore provided myself with stones in my pocket, if op-  
portunity offered, to pelt the preacher; but I had not  
heard long, before the stone was taken out of my heart  
of flesh; and then the other stones, with shame and  
weeping, were dropped one by one out upon the  
ground.” The words, “Turn ye, turn ye,” became the  
means of turning him from sin to God. Mr. Tuppen  
became an excellent Christian minister, and labored  
as a pastor for some years in Portsmouth. He then  
removed to the city of Bath, where he originated a  
congregation, and built a house for public worship.  
He was succeeded in this important sphere by the late  
distinguished William Jay, who labored there for  
about sixty-four years.

Such was the prosperity attendant on the efforts  
of Messrs. Whitefield, Madan, Romaine, Berridge,  
Venn, and Pletcher, at Brighton, that Lady Hunt-  
ingdon felt it her duty to erect a church edifice there,  
and being unable to do it in any other way, sold her

jewels to the amount of nearly three thousand five  
hundred dollars. The cause still flourishes there, and  
very many have been turned to righteousness.

While Whitefield’s ministry at the Tabernacle was  
at its height of popularity, Foote, a comedian of emi-  
nent talent for mimicry, who was frequently in diffi-  
culties on account of his love of ridicule, by which  
indeed his life was shortened, employed his wit to  
bring the distinguished preacher into contempt. One  
of his biographers says, that “very pressing embarrass-  
ments in his affairs compelled him to bring out his  
comedy of ‘The Minor,’ in 1760, to ridicule Method-  
ism, which, though successful, gave great offence, and  
was at last suppressed.” Of this miserable piece of  
buffoonery, it may be enough to say, that Foote, and  
the agents employed at the Tabernacle and Totten-  
ham Court-road chapel to collect materials from  
Whitefield for the accomplishment of their object,  
were so disgracefully ignorant of the inspired writ-  
ings, as not to know that what they took for Mr.  
Whitefield’s peculiar language was that of the word  
of God.

Lady Huntingdon interposed in the matter, first  
with the Lord Chamberlain, by whose license alone  
any play could then be performed in London, and then  
with Mr. Garrick, the latter of whom assured her that  
he would use his influence to exclude it, and added,  
that had he been aware of the offence it was adapted  
to give, it should never have appeared with his con-  
currence. The representation of this piece of mum-  
mery, as might have been expected, considerably in-  
creased Whitefield’s popularity, and brought thou-

sands of new persons to hear the gospel: thus Provi-  
dence gave him the victory over his opposers.

To report the sicknesses, the labors, and the suc-  
cesses of Whitefield from this time to that of his sixth  
embarkation for America, would be little more than  
a repetition of the past. Suffice it to say, that in Eng-  
land, and in Scotland, he labored amid much ill-health,  
and surrounded with many dangers; but at length,  
having found an Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. John  
Berridge, a man of somewhat eccentric manners, but  
of great learning, of eminent piety, and of burning  
zeal, who was willing to labor for a time in London,  
Whitefield set sail in the ship Fanny, Captain Archi-  
bald Galbraith, bound from Greenock to Virginia,  
June 1, 1763, and arrived at Rappahannock, after a  
tedious, but otherwise pleasant voyage of about twelve  
weeks, in the last week of August.

CHAPTER XIV.

**SIXTH VISIT AND LABORS IN AMERICA—RENEWED  
LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN.**

1763-1767.

Whitefield was now for the sixth time in Ameri-  
ca. He was twelve weeks on the voyage; but though  
tedious, it had done him good. “I enjoyed,” he says,  
“that quietness which I have in vain sought after for  
some years on shore.” Owing to the violence of his  
asthma, he had set sail “with but little hopes of far-  
ther public usefulness;” but after being six weeks at  
sea, he wrote to a friend, “Who knows but our latter  
end may yet increase? If not in public usefulness,  
Lord Jesus, let it be in heart-holiness. I know who  
says Amen. I add, Amen and amen.”

On his arrival in Virginia, Whitefield was sur-  
rounded by many Christian friends, the fruits of his  
former labors in that colony, but whom he had not  
hitherto known. It was with great difficulty, how-  
ever, that he preached to them; for though his gen-  
eral health was better, his breathing was very bad.  
The months of September, October, and November,  
he spent in Philadelphia. He says, “Here are some  
young bright witnesses rising up in the church. Per-  
haps I have already conversed with forty new creature  
ministers of various denominations. Sixteen popular  
students, I am credibly informed, were converted in  
New Jersey college last year. What an open door if  
I had strength! Last Tuesday we had a remarkable

season among the Lutherans; children and grown peo-  
ple were much impressed.” Ill as he was, he preached  
twice a week, and with his usual success.

He intensely desired at this time to visit Georgia,  
but was absolutely prohibited by his physicians, till  
he had recovered his strength. In the end of Novem-  
ber, therefore, he passed over into New Jersey, visit-  
ing the college, and Elizabethtown. He tells us that  
at the college he had “four sweet seasons.” His spir-  
its rose at the sight of the young soldiers who were  
to fight when he had fallen. It was now winter, and  
“cold weather and a warm heart” put him in good  
spirits, so that he was able to preach three times a  
week.

A young man, a member of the college, hearing  
that Whitefield was to preach in the neighborhood,  
and being more than a little anxious to ascertain  
whether he really deserved all the celebrity he en-  
joyed, went to hear him. The day was very rainy,  
and the audience was small; the preacher, accustomed  
to address thousands, did not feel his powers called  
forth as at other times. After having heard about  
one-third part of the sermon, the young man said to  
himself, “The man is not so great a wonder after all—·  
quite commonplace and superficial—nothing but show,  
and not a great deal of that and looking round upon  
the audience, he saw that they appeared about as un-  
interested as usual, and that old father, who sat

directly in front of the pulpit, and who always went  
to sleep after hearing the text and plan of the sermon,  
was enjoying his accustomed nap. About this time,  
Whitefield stopped. His face went rapidly through

many changes, till it looked more like a rising thun-  
der-clond than any thing else; and beginning very  
deliberately, he said, “If I had come to speak to you  
-in my own name, you might rest your elbows upon  
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 God of hosts, and ”—here he  
brought down his hand and foot at once, so as to  
make the whole· house ring—“ and I must, and will be  
heard.” Every one in the house started, and old

father among the rest. “Aye, aye,” continued

the preacher, looking at 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.” The congregation was fully  
aroused, and the remaining part of the sermon pro-  
duced a considerable effect.

From New Jersey, Whitefield passed on to New  
York, where he says, “Such a flocking of all ranks I  
never saw before at New York. ... Prejudices have  
most strangely subsided. The better sort flock as  
eagerly as the common people, and are fond of coming  
for private gospel conversation. Congregations con-  
tinue very large, and I trust saving impressions are  
made upon many.” Such also was his influence as  
a philanthropist, that though prejudices ran high  
against the Indians, on account of a threatened in-  
surrection in the south, he,collected about six hun-  
dred dollars for Dr. Wheelock’s Indian school at

Lebanon, Conn., which he soon after visited with  
much pleasure.

An extract of a letter from New York, dated Jan.  
23, 1754, which appeared in the Boston Gazette, may-  
show the esteem in which he was held: “The Rev.  
George Whitefield has spent seven weeks with us,  
preaching twice a week, with more general approba-  
tion than ever; and has been treated with great  
respect by many of the gentlemen and merchants of  
this place. During his stay he preached two charity  
sermons, the one on the occasion of the annual collec-  
tion for the poor, in which double the sum was col-  
lected that ever was upon the like occasion; the  
other was for the benefit of Mr. Wheelock’s Indian  
school at Lebanon, for which he collected, notwith-  
standing the present prejudices of many people against  
the Indians, the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds.  
In his last sermon, he took a very affectionate leave of  
the people of this city, who expressed great concern  
at his departure. May God restore this great and  
good man, in whom the gentleman, the Christian, and  
accomplished orator shine forth with such peculiar  
lustre, to a perfect state of health, and continue him  
long a blessing to the world and the church of Christ.”

Leaving New York, he visited and preached, as  
far as his strength would allow, at Easthampton  
Bridge, Hampton, and Southhold, on Long Island; at  
Shelter Island, and at New London, Norwich, and  
Providence.

Whitefield arrived at Boston in the end of Feb-  
ruary, 1764, and was welcomed by multitudes with  
cordial affection; and again he saw “the Redeemer’s

stately steps in the great congregation.” Boston at  
that time was visited with small-pox, and Whitefield  
therefore devoted much of his labor to the adjacent  
towns. Writing from Concord, he says, “How would  
you have been delighted to have seen Mr. Wheelock’s  
Indians. Such a promising nursery of future mission-  
aries, I believe, was never seen in New England be-  
fore. Pray encourage it with all your might.” About  
two months after his arrival in Boston, his illness  
returned, but did not long prevent him from preach-  
ing, and the people still flocked in crowds to hear  
him. He left Boston for the south; but messengers  
were sent to entreat his return, and especially urged  
him to renew his six o’clock morning lecture. He  
did return, but was now unable to preach at the early  
hour they desired he appeared, however, in the pul-  
pit for some time on three occasions in the week, and  
such was the number of converts discovered, that after  
he had left it was proposed to send him a book filled  
with their names, as desiring his return.

We ought to have said, that according to the  
Boston Gazette, about the time of the arrival of  
Whitefield, “at a meeting of the freeholders and other  
inhabitants of the town of Boston, it was unanimously  
voted that the thanks of the town be given to the Rev.  
George Whitefield, for his charitable care and pains  
in collecting a considerable sum of money in Great  
Britain for the distressed sufferers by the great fire in  
Boston, 1760. A respectable committee was appointed  
to wait on Mr. Whitefield, to inform him of the vote,  
and present him with a copy thereof.”

Notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of his

friends, he left Boston in the early part of June. On  
the first of that month he wrote, “Friends have even  
constrained me to stay here, for fear of running into  
the summer’s heat. Hitherto I find the benefit of it.  
"Whatever it is owing to, through mercy, I am much  
better in health than I was this time twelve months,  
and can preach thrice a week to very large auditories  
without hurt; and every day I hear of some brought  
under concern. This is all of grace.”

Sorrowfully parting from his friends at Boston,  
Whitefield left them for New York by way of New  
Haven. Here he preached to the students, and had  
taken his leave of them; but such was the impression  
he had made on their minds, that they requested the  
president to go after him, to entreat for another “quar-  
ter of an hour’s exhortation.” He complied with the  
request, and the effect was what he called “the crown  
of the expedition.” He continued at New York till  
the end of August. While there he writes, “At pres-  
ent my health is better than usual, and as yet I have  
felt no inconvenience from the summer’s heat. I have  
preached twice lately in the fields, and we sat under  
the blessed Redeemer’s shadow with great delight.  
My late excursions upon Long Island, I trust, have  
been blessed. It would surprise you to see above one  
hundred carriages at every sermon in the new world.”  
On his way to Philadelphia, in September, White-  
field preached at the New Jersey college commence-  
ment; for which, and for the influence he had exerted  
in favor of the institution, the trustees sent him a vote  
of thanks. His reception at the college was all he  
could desire. The governor and the ex-governor of

the state, with many other gentlemen, attended, and  
every other mark of respect was shown him. At  
Philadelphia, he describes the effect of his labors as  
“great –indeed,” and as usual, he was compelled to  
exclaim, “Grace, grace!”

Leaving Pennsylvania, he went on through Vir-  
ginia; here he tells us, in places as “unlikely as Rome  
itself,” he found societies of Christians, formed and  
led on by a wealthy planter of that colony they met  
him in a body, wishing publicly to identify themselves  
with him. “Surely the Londoners,” he writes, “who  
are fed to the full, will not envy the poor souls in  
these parts. I almost determine to come back in the  
spring” from Georgia to them.

On one occasion, while he was preaching in this  
colony, a Mr. Allen, afterwards a member of the em-  
inent Mr. Davies’ church at Hanover, and who, with  
his family, “addicted himself to the ministry of the  
saints,” fell on the ground at full length, suddenly, as  
if shot through the heart, and lay for the remainder of  
the evening as one who was dead. His descendants  
are now very numerous, and many of them are among  
the most zealous Christians in that state.

From Virginia, Whitefield proceeded to South  
Carolina, and, Nov. 22, wrote, “At Newbern, last Sun-  
day, good impressions were made. I have met with  
what they call ‘New Lights’ in almost every place,  
and have the names of several of their preachers.” Having preached at Charleston, he passed on to Be-

thesda, and had the happiness to find the whole col-  
ony in a prosperous condition. Here he spent the  
winter, and writes, “Peace and plenty reign at Be-  
thesda. All things go on successfully. God hath  
given me great favor in the sight of the governor,  
council, and assembly. A memorial was presented for  
an additional grant of lands, consisting of two thou-  
sand acres. It was immediately complied with. Both  
houses addressed the governor on behalf of the intend-  
ed college. A warm answer was given; and I am  
now putting every thing in repair, and getting every  
thing ready for that purpose. Every heart seems to  
leap for joy at the prospect of its future usefulness to  
this and the neighboring colonies. He who holdeth  
the stars in his right hand will direct, in due time,  
whether I shall directly embark for England, or take  
one tour more to the northward. I am in delightful  
winter quarters for once. His excellency dined with  
me yesterday, and expressed his satisfaction in the  
warmest terms. Who knows how many youths may  
be trained up for the service of the ever-loving and  
altogether lovely Jesus. Thus far, however, we may  
set up our Ebenezer. Hitherto the bush hath been  
burning, but is not consumed.” To this statement he  
adds, “Mr. Wright hath done much in a little time;  
but he hath worked night and day, and not stirred a  
mile for many weeks. Thanks be to God, all outward  
things are settled on this side the water. The audit-  
ing the accounts, and laying the foundation for a col-  
lege, hath silenced enemies and comforted friends.  
The finishing of this affair confirms my call to Eng-  
land at this time.”

But the intense anxiety of multitudes to hear his  
preaching, prevented Whitefield from leaving Amer-  
ica for several months longer. He had, indeed, as

early as the middle of February, determined not do  
visit New England till his return from Europe; but  
arriving at Charleston, he was compelled to devote  
to labors there the whole month of March, and then  
set out for Philadelphia, preaching at many places on  
his way. He says, “All the way from Charleston to  
this place the cry is, ‘For Christ's sake, stay and  
preach to us.’ Oh for a thousand lives to spend for  
Jesus."

The heat of the weather made it indispensable for  
his health that he should go to sea, and July 5th he  
once more arrived in England, on his last return voy-  
age from America. He says, “We have had but a  
twenty-eight days' passage. The transition has been  
so sudden, that I can scarcely believe that I am in  
England. I hope, ere long, to have a more sudden  
transition into a better country." When he arrived  
in his native land, he was ill of a nervous fever,  
which left him extremely weak in body, and unable to  
exert himself as formerly. Yet, still intent on his  
work, he did what he could, in expectation of soon  
entering into his eternal rest. “Oh, to end life well!"  
he writes; “methinks I have now but one river to  
pass over. And we know of One who can carry us  
over without being ankle deep."

On Whitefield's arrival in England, he found that  
his excellent friend the Countess of Huntingdon was  
erecting a large and beautiful church edifice in the  
fashionable city of Bath, and to that place he at once  
repaired. There he found several of his clerical  
brethren preaching in the private chapel at Bretby  
Hall, belonging to the Earl of Chesterfield, who had

placed it for the time being at the disposal of Lady  
Huntingdon. On Whitefield’s arrival, this place was  
of necessity exchanged for the Park, where the con-  
course of people was as vast as ever.

October 6, he preached the dedicatory sermon  
of Lady Huntingdon’s church at Bath, to an immense  
crowd. To his friend Robert Keen, Esq., one of the  
managers of his London houses, he wrote, “Could you  
have come, and have been present at the opening of  
the chapel, you would have been much pleased. The  
building is extremely plain, and yet equally grand.  
A most beautiful original! All was conducted with  
great solemnity. Though a wet day, the place was  
very full, and assuredly the great Shepherd and Bish-  
op of souls consecrated and made it holy ground by  
his presence.”

He made but a short stay at Bath, and returned  
to London, still feeble and tottering, but still com-  
pelled to labor. He had an interview with his old  
friend John Wesley, who says of him, “He seemed to  
be an 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 dif-  
ference from what I was at five and twenty, only that  
I have fewer teeth, and more gray hairs.” Writing  
to a friend at Sheerness, in Kent, Jan. 18,1766, White-  
field says, “I am sorry to acquaint you that it is not  
in my power to comply with your request, for want of  
more assistance. I am confined in town with the care  
of two important posts, when I am only fit to be put  
into some garrison among invalids.” By some means,

however, he obtained a release, for in March we find  
him at Bath and Bristol. Writing, March 17, he says,  
“The uncertainty of my motions has made me slow in  
writing; and a desire to be a while free from London  
cares, has made me indifferent about frequent hearing  
from thence. Last Friday evening, and twice yester-  
day, I preached at Bath, to very thronged and brilliant  
auditories.”

Whitefield’s interest in America was not lessened  
by his absence from it. He ardently loved it, and  
wished for the return of its peace and prosperity. He  
hoped, with many others, that the repeal of the Stamp  
Act would lead to this result; hence, we find in his  
Letter-book this entry: “March 16, 1766, Stamp Act  
repealed. Gloria Deo”

Among the remarkable men of his day was Sam-  
son Occum. He was descended, on hig mother’s side,  
from Uncas, chief of the Mohegans. He was born in  
1723, of parents who led a wandering life, depending  
on hunting and fishing for subsistence. None culti-  
vated their lands, all dwelt in wigwams, and Samson  
was one of the very first of the tribe who learned to  
read. About the year 1740, at the age of seventeen, he  
was converted by the labors of Whitefield, Gilbert Ten-  
nent, and their companions. In a year or two he had  
learned to read his Bible with ease, and to his great  
advantage. He was a pupil at the school originally  
founded by Dr. Wheelock, at Lebanon, Conn., for the  
benefit exclusively of Indians, four years, and was  
then a teacher for eleven years. In 1759, he was or-  
dained by the Suffolk Presbytery, and became an emi-  
nently zealous preacher to the scattered Mohegans.

Whitefield. 17

In 1766, in company with the Rev. Mr. Whitaker of  
Norwich, he went to England to advocate the cause  
of Dr. Wheelock’s Indian school, which school was  
afterwards merged in Dartmouth college, of which  
Mr. Wheelock was also founder and first president.  
Occum preached in the, churches of Whitefield and  
Lady Huntingdon, as well as in some others of differ-  
ent denominations. We remember half a century ago  
hearing an old lady at Kidderminster, the town of  
Richard Baxter, describe a scene which occurred in  
Fawcett's church in that town. Occum had preached,  
and a handsome collection had been taken for his  
object; with tears of gratitude and joy the good man  
thanked them, and in tones which neither the weeping  
nor the mimetic talent of the old lady would allow  
her fully to imitate, assured them that the blessing of  
many ready to perish would come upon them. The  
place was a Bochim, and nothing could prevent the  
people from having the plates again carried round,  
that they might add to the liberal contributions they  
had already made.

Occum preached in Great Britain from three to  
four hundred sermons; and as no North American  
Indian had ever preached in England before, public  
curiosity was great, and his pecuniary success consid-  
erable. He brought to this country, with his compan-  
ion, as the produce of their labors, more than forty-  
five thousand dollars. In 1772 he published an inter-  
esting sermon which he preached to an Indian at his  
execution. An excellent portrait of him was publish-  
ed in England.

Dr. Timothy Dwight writes, “I heard Mr. Occum

twice. His discourses, though not proofs of superior  
talents, were decent; and his utterance in some degree  
eloquent. His character at one time labored under  
some imputations; yet there is good reason to believe  
that most, if not all of them were unfounded; and  
there is satisfactory evidence that he was a man of  
piety.” An account of the Montauk Indians, written  
by Occum, is preserved in the “Historical Collec-  
tions.” He died at New Stockbridge, N. Y., July,  
1792. It has been said that the first Sunday-school  
in these United States was founded in the house of  
his sister, a few months after his death.

Occum was somewhat of a wit, and could well  
apply his talent in his conflict with the enemies of di-  
vine truth. He once ended a long controversial con-  
versation with a Universalist, by saying, “Well, well,  
remember, if you are correct, I am safe; if you are not  
correct, I am safe. I have two strings to my bow;  
you have but one.”

In June, 1766, we again find Whitefield in the  
neighborhood of Bristol, whence he writes, “As my  
feverish heat continues, and the weather, is too wet to  
travel, I have complied with the advice of friends,  
and have commenced a Hot-wells water drinker twice  
a day. However, twice this week, at six o’clock in  
the morning, I have been enabled to call thirsty souls  
to come and ‘drink of the water of life freely.’ To-  
morrow evening, God willing, the call is to be repeat-  
ed, and again on Sunday.” On his return to London,  
he writes, under date of September 25, “Many in this  
metropolis seem to be on the wing for God; the shout  
of a king is yet heard in the Methodist camp. Had

I wings, I would gladly fly from pole to pole; but  
they are clipped by thirty years’ feeble labors. Twice  
or thrice a week I am permitted to ascend my gospel  
throne. The love of Christ, I am persuaded, will  
constrain you to pray that the last glimmering of an  
expiring taper may be blessed to the guiding of many  
wandering souls to the Lamb of God.”

The good providence of God now gave Whitefield  
a colleague in the ministry at the Tabernacle and  
Tottenham Court-road chapel, the Rev. Torial Joss.  
This gentleman had spent many years as captain at  
sea; converted by divine grace, and filled with holy  
zeal, he devoted his popular talents to the welfare of  
his fellow-men, preaching both on sea and land. In a  
remarkable manner, Mr. Whitefield became acquaint-  
ed with him, and, without his knowledge, published  
that he would preach in his houses of worship, which,  
though with extreme reluctance, Joss did. These  
services were often renewed, and Whitefield gave him  
no rest till he abandoned the sea, and devoted himself  
to the ministry. Everywhere he was popular, and  
everywhere useful. He continued minister of the two  
places in London—spending four or five months in  
each year travelling and preaching—for twenty-seven  
years after the death of his friend, and then departed  
from earth, in 1797, in holy triumph, in the 66th year  
of liis age.

One of the most extraordinary men in modern  
times was the late Rev. Rowland Hill, who erected  
Surrey chapel, London, and continued to preach in it  
till his death, in his eighty-ninth year, in 1833. He  
was eminently dignified in person, possessed extraor-

dinary zeal, and was honored by his great Master  
with probably more success in the direct work of say-  
ing souls than any other minister of his day. He  
was a man of considerable rank, his father being a  
gentleman of title, one of his brothers a member of  
Parliament for many years, representing his native  
county, and the late eminent statesman and soldier  
Lord Hill was his nephew. Mr. Hill himself in early  
life became a Christian, and was educated for the  
ministry in the established church, but violated its  
rules, and preached wherever he could; for many  
years he was greatly persecuted by his own family,  
some of whom, however, in the end sustained the yoke  
of Christ. When Rowland began his somewhat er-  
ratic career, the opposition from his father was so  
great, that he was reduced sometimes to extreme pov-  
erty; and he was exactly the man to be encouraged  
by such men as Whitefield and Berridge. We give a  
few extracts from letters addressed to him by White-  
field, which certainly show no small degree of ardor,  
though we cannot see in them what Hill’s clerical  
biographer, Mr. Sidney, professed to find, “an aspi-  
ration after the honors, when he had no prospect of  
the sufferings of martyrdom.” The fact was, that  
Mr. Sidney was offended with Whitefield, as he was  
with his venerable uncle, Mr. Hill, for having deviated  
from the rigid laws of the establishment. It is only  
needful to introduce the first letter by saying that it  
was dated, London, December 27, 1766, and was sent  
in answer to one in which Mr. Hill had asked his  
counsel.

“About thirty-four years ago, the master of Pem-

broke college, where I was educated, took me to task  
for visiting the sick and going to the prisons. In my  
haste I said, ‘Sir, if it displeaseth you I will go no  
more! My heart smote me immediately; I repented,  
and went again; he heard of it—‘threatened—but for  
fear he should be looked on as a persecutor, let me  
alone. The hearts of all are in the Redeemer's hands.  
I would not have you give way; no, not for a mo-  
ment. The storm is too great to hold long. Visiting  
the sick and imprisoned, and instructing the ignorant,  
are the very vitals of true and undefiled religion. If  
threatened, denied degree, or expelled for this, it will  
be the best degree you can take—a glorious prepara-  
tive for, and a blessed presage of future usefulness.  
I have seen the dreadful consequences of giving way  
and looking back. How many by this wretched cow-  
ardice, and fear of the cross, have been turned into  
pillars, not of useful, but of useless salt. Now is your  
time to prove the strength of Jesus yours. If opposi-  
tion did not so much abound, your consolations would  
not so abound. Blind as he is, Satan sees some great  
good coming on. We never prospered so much at  
Oxford as when we were hissed at and reproached as  
we walked along the streets, as being counted the  
dung and offscouring of all things. That is a poor  
building which a little stinking breath of Satan’s vas-  
sals can throw down. Your house, I trust, is better  
founded. Is it not built upon a rock? Is not that  
rock the blessed Jesus? The gates of hell, therefore,  
shall not be able to prevail against it. Go on, there-  
fore, my dear man, go on. Old Berridge, I believe,  
would give you the same advice; you are honored in

sharing his reproach and name. God be praised that  
you are enabled to bless when others blaspheme. God  
bless and direct and support you. He will, he will.  
Good Lady Huntingdon is in town she will rejoice to  
hear that you are under the cross. You will not want  
her prayers, or the poor prayers of, my dear honest  
young friend, yours, in an all-conquering Jesus.”

The opposition Mr. Hill met with from his par-  
ents increased, and the threat of his degree being  
withheld, was, on the part of the university author-  
ities, more determined; still, however, he persevered  
in his preaching and his visits, in violation of the laws  
of discipline. In June, 1767, Mr. Whitefield wrote  
him: “I wish you joy of the late high dignity con-  
ferred upon you—higher than if you were made the  
greatest professor in the university of Cambridge.  
The honorable degrees you intend giving to your  
promising candidates, [allowing some of his fellow-  
students to preach in the various places which he had  
visited,] I trust will excite a holy ambition, and a  
holy emulation; let me know who is first honored.  
As I have been admitted to the degree of doctor for  
near these thirty years, I assure you I like my field  
preferment, my airy pluralities, exceedingly well.  
For these three weeks last past I have been beating up  
for fresh recruits in Gloucestershire and South Wales.  
Thousands and thousands attended, and good Lady  
Huntingdon was present at one of our reviews. Her  
ladyship’s aid-de-camp preached in Brecknock-street,  
and Captain Scott, that glorious field-officer, lately  
fixed up his standard upon dear Mr. Fletcher’s horse-  
block at Madeley. Being invited thither, I have a great

inclination to lift up the Bedeemer’s ensign next week  
in the same place; with what success, you and your  
dearly beloved candidates for good old methodistical  
contempt shall know hereafter. God willing, I intend  
fighting my way up to town. Soon after my arrival  
there, I hope thousands and thousands of volleys of  
prayers, energetic, effectual, fervent, heaven-besieging,  
heaven-opening, heaven-taking prayers, shall be poured  
forth for you all. Oh, my dearly beloved and longed-  
for in the Lord, my bowels yearn towards you. Fear  
not to go without the camp; keep open the correspon-  
dence between the two universities. Remember the  
praying legions—they were never known to yield.  
God bless those that are gone to their respective  
cures—I say not livings, a term of too modern date.  
Christ is our life; Christ is the Levite’s inheritance,  
and Christ will be the true disinterested Levite’s lot  
and portion and all. Greet your dear young com-  
panions whom I saw; they are welcome to write  
when they please. God be your physician under your  
bodily malady. A thorn, a thorn! but Christ’s grace  
will be sufficient for you. To his tender, never-failing  
mercy I commit you.”

A few weeks after this, Mr. Hill was much de-  
pressed in spirits, partly from bodily illness, partly  
because he was about to leave Cambridge and its sur-  
rounding villages, where he had latterly so frequently  
preached, but chiefly from the fact that he was going  
home, where he would again meet the frowns of his  
honored parents, for what they adeemed his overright-  
eousness. In the midst of all this, however, he knew  
that he would meet at Hawkstone, his father’s resi-

dence,the cordial welcome of his sister and elder  
brother, Richard Hill, afterwards a baronet. This  
gentleman had lately become a village preacher and a  
visitor of prisons, like his brother. Under these cir-  
cumstances he was addressed by Whitefield, in his  
own peculiar and energetic style: “What said our  
Lord to Martha? ‘Did I not say unto thee, If thou  
wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?’  
Blessed, for ever blessed be the God and Father of  
our Lord Jesus Christ, for what he hath done for your  
dear brother. A preaching, prison-preaching, field-  
preaching esquire, strikes more than all the black  
gowns and lawn sleeves in the world. And if I am  
not mistaken, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls  
will let the world, and his own children too, know  
that he will not be prescribed to in respect to men,  
or garbs, or places; much less will he be confined to  
any order or set of men under heaven. I wish you  
both much, very much prosperity. You will have it—  
you will have it. This is the way, walk ye in it. Both  
Tabernacle and [Tottenham Court-road] chapel pul-  
pits shall be open to a captain or an esquire sent of  
God. The good news from Oxford is encouraging.  
Say what they will, preaching should be one part of  
the education of a student in divinity. I pray for  
you night and day.”

On the arrival of Mr. Hill at his father’s beautiful  
seat, it was his happiness to find that his brother  
Brian, afterwards useful as a clergyman, was added  
to the number of believers in Christ; he learned also,  
that one of his college friends had been threatened to  
have an exhibition, or yearly gift towards his univer-

17\*

sity expenses, withdrawn, unless he renounced his evan-  
gelical doctrines and practices. The reader will now  
understand Mr. Whitefield’s letter: “I have been  
sadly hindered from answering your last letter, deliv-  
ered to me by your brother. I gave it him to read,  
and we had, I trust, a profitable conference. God be  
praised if another of your brothers is gained. What  
grace is this! Four or five out of one family—it is  
scarcely to be paralleled. Who knows but the root,  
as well as the branches, may be taken by and by?  
Abba, Father, all things are possible with thee!  
Steadiness and perseverance in the children will be  
one of the best means, under God, of convincing the  
parents. This present opposition I think cannot last  
very long; if it does, to obey God rather than man,  
when forbidden to do what is undoubted duty, is the  
invariable rule. Our dear Penty [afterwards the  
Rev. Thomas Pentycross] is under the cross at Cam-  
bridge. But

“‘Satan thwarts, and men object,

Yet the thing they thwart effect.’

I should be glad if any one’s exhibition was taken  
from him for visiting the sick, etc. It would vastly  
tend to the furtherance of the gospel; but Satan sees  
too far, I imagine, to play such a game now. Let  
him do his work; he is only a mastiff chained. Con-  
tinue to inform me how he barks, and how far he is  
permitted to go in your parts; and God’s people  
shall be more stirred up to pray for you all.”

The close of Mr. Hill’s life was truly interesting  
and instructive. As has been intimated, he preached  
with scarcely diminished power until within a few

weeks of his death. During the last two or three  
years of his life he very frequently repeated the fol-  
lowing lines of an old poet:

“And when I’m to die,

Receive me, I’ll cry,

For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;

But this I can find,

We two are so joined,

That he’ll not be in glory, and leave me behind.”

“The last time he occupied my pulpit,” writes his  
neighbor, the Rev. George Clayton, “when he preach-  
ed excellently for an hour, in behalf of a charitable  
institution, he retired to the vestry after service under  
feelings of great and manifest exhaustion. Here he  
remained until every individual except the pew-open-  
ers, his servant, and myself had left the place. At  
length he seemed with some reluctance to summon  
energy enough to take his departure, intimating that  
it was in all probability the last time he should preach  
in Walworth. His servant went before to open the  
carriage-door, the pew-openers remaining in the ves-  
try. I offered my arm, which he declined, and then  
followed him as he passed down the aisle of the  
chapel. The lights were nearly extinguished, the  
silence was profound, nothing indeed was heard but  
the slow majestic tread of his own footsteps, when, in  
an undertone, he thus soliloquized:

“‘And when I’m to die,’ etc.

To my heart this was a scene of unequalled solemnity,  
nor can I ever recur to it without a revival of that  
hallowed, sacred, shuddering sympathy which it orig-  
inally awakened.”

When the good old saint lay literally dying, and  
when apparently unconscions, a friend put his mouth  
close to his ear, and repeated slowly his favorite lines:

“And when I’m to die,” etc.

The light came back to his fast-fading eye, a smile  
overspread his face, and his lips moved in the ineffec-  
tual attempt to articulate the words. This was the  
last sign of consciousness which he gave.

We could almost wish that every disciple of Christ  
would commit these lines, quaint as they are, to mem-  
ory, and weave them into the web of his Christian  
experience. Confidence in Christ, and undeviating  
adherence to him, can alone enable us to triumph in  
life and death.

In November, 1766, Whitefield again visited Bath  
and Bristol, and then passed on to Gloucestershire  
and Oxford. Never did so many of the nobility attend  
his ministry as he now saw at Bath, and the results of  
his whole journey were such as to fill him with the  
most devout gratitude. He saw too the number of  
his clerical friends largely increasing, and especially  
rejoiced in the fact that the excellent Fletcher, of  
Madeley, preached in his pulpits in London. He writes  
of this event, “Dear Mr. Fletcher has become a scan-  
dalous Tottenham Court preacher. . . . Were we  
more scandalous, more good would be done. ....  
Still, ‘the shout of a king is yet heard’ in the Meth-  
odist camp.”

In January, 1767, Whitefield wrote a recommend-  
atory preface to the works of John Bunyan, whom he  
pleasantly designated, “Bishop Bunyan;” and as soon

as the weather would permit, we find him at Norwich,  
and then at Rodborough, Woodstock, Gloucester,  
and Haverfordwest, from which last place he wrote,  
“Thousands and thousands attend by eight in the  
morning. Life and light seem to fly all around.” On  
a second visit to Gloucester on this tour, he wrote,  
“Blessed be God, I have got on this side the Welsh  
mountains. Blessed be God, I have been on the other  
side. What a scene last Sunday! What a cry for  
more of the bread of life! But I was quite worn  
down.”

In September following, he again visited the north  
of England, writing from day to day in high spirits.  
September 28, he says, “My body feels much fatigued  
in travelling; comforts in the soul overbalance and  
from Leeds, October 3, he writes, “Field and street  
preaching have rather bettered than hurt my bodily  
health.”

Whitefield now returned to London, to sustain a  
heavy disappointment. The negotiations relative to  
the college at Bethesda were this winter brought to an  
issue. A memorial addressed to his Majesty was put  
into the hands of the clerk of the Privy Council, set-  
ting forth the great utility of a college in that place  
to the southern provinces; and praying that a charter  
might be granted upon the plan of the college in New  
Jersey. This memorial was transmitted by the clerk  
of the Privy Council to the lord president, and by his  
lordship referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury,  
to whom also a draft of an intended charter was pre-  
sented by the Earl of Dartmouth. A correspondence  
followed all this between the archbishop and White-

field; the consequence of which was, that his grace  
gave the draft of the college to the lord president,  
who promised he would consider of it; and gave it as  
his opinion that “ the head of the college ought to be  
a member of the church of England; that this was a  
qualification not to be dispensed with; and also, that  
the public prayers should not be extempore ones, but  
the liturgy of the church, or some other settled and  
established form.” Whitefield replied that these re-  
strictions he could by no means agree to, because the  
greatest part of the contributions for the orphan-house  
came from Protestant dissenters; and because he had  
constantly declared that the intended college should  
be founded upon a broad foundation, and no other.

“This,” said he, “I judged I was sufficiently war-  
ranted to do, from the known, long-established, mild,  
and uncoercive genius of the British government; also  
from your grace’s moderation towards Protestant dis-  
senters; from the unconquerable attachment of the  
Americans to toleration principles, as well as from  
the avowed habitual feelings of my own heart. This  
being the case, and as your grace, by your silence,  
seems to be like-minded with the lord president; and  
as your grace’s and his lordship’s influence will un-  
doubtedly extend itself to others, I would beg leave,  
after returning all due acknowledgments, to inform  
your grace that I intend troubling your grace and his  
lordship no more about this so long depending con-  
cern. As it hath pleased the great Head of the  
church in some degree to renew my bodily strength,  
I propose now to renew my feeble efforts, and to turn  
the charity into a more generous, and consequently

into a more useful channel. I have no ambition to  
be looked upon as the founder of a college; but I  
would fain act the part of an honest man, a disinter-  
ested minister of Jesus Christ, and a true, catholic,  
moderate presbyter of the church of England.”

Thus ended Whitefield’s labors to establish a col-  
lege at Bethesda. Berridge, and not a few others of  
his friends rather rejoiced in his disappointment, as  
they thought there was some fear, uncontrolled as the  
institution might hereafter be by men of established  
principles of piety, that an unconverted ministry might  
be increased by its means.

CHAPTER XV.

**HIS LAST LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN—COLLEGE  
AT TREYECCA—EARL OF BUCHAN — TUNBRIDGE  
WELLS.**

**1767-1769.**

Whitefield had abandoned the idea of a charter  
for a college at present, but he was yet ardently desir-  
ous of a public academy being added to his orphan-  
house, similar to what existed at Philadelphia before  
a college charter was granted. He thought that if  
this could be done, a better day might arrive, when a  
charter on broad principles might be obtained. He  
developed his whole plan in a letter to Governor  
Wright. Feeling too the uncertainty of life, he wrote  
to his friend Mr. Keen, “None but God knows what a  
concern is upon me now, in respect of Bethesda. As  
another voyage, perhaps, may be the issue and the  
result of all at last, I would beg you and my dear

Mr. H to let me have all my papers and letters,

that I may revise and dispose of them in a proper  
manner. This can do no hurt, come life or come  
death.”

October 28th, 1767, Whitefield preached at the Lon-  
don Tabernacle before the society for promoting re-  
ligious knowledge among the poor, usually called, The  
Book Society. This society had been organized seven-  
teen years before this period, and included in it such  
men as Watts, Doddridge, and Gifford. He gave

way to all the zeal of his heart while he discussed the  
petition, “Thy kingdom come.” Luke 11:2. The  
congregation was immense, many had to go away  
unable to obtain admittance. It was believed that a  
larger number of dissenting ministers were present  
than ever before heard a sermon from an Episcopal  
minister, and the collection reached more than five  
hundred dollars, or above four times the usual amount,  
besides eighty new annual subscribers. After the  
service, he dined with a very large party, including the  
ministers, where harmony reigned, and much respect  
was shown him.

It may be readily supposed, that with advancing  
years and increasing experience, some changes might  
have taken place both in the style and manner of  
Whitefield’s preaching. The Rev. Cornelius Winter,  
who had become somewhat closely associated with him,  
says, “ He dealt more in the explanatory and doctrinal  
mode on the Sabbath morning than at any other time,  
and sometimes made a little, but by no means an im-  
proper show of learning. His afternoon sermon was  
more general and exhortatory. In the evening, he  
drew his bow at a venture; vindicated the doctrines  
of grace, fenced them with articles and homilies, refer-  
red to the martyr’s seal, and exemplified the power of  
divine grace by quotations from the venerable Foxe.  
Sinners were then closely plied, numbers of whom,  
from curiosity, coming to hear for a minute or two,  
were often compelled to hear the whole sermon. How  
many in the judgment-day will rise to prove that they  
heard to the salvation of the soul. Upon the mem-  
bers of society, the practice of Christianity was then

usually inculcated, not without some pertinent anec-  
dote of a character worthy to be held up for an exam-  
ple, and in whose conduct the hints recommended  
were exemplified. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednes-  
days, and Thursdays, he preached at six in the morn-  
ing; and never, perhaps, did he preach greater ser-  
mons than at this hour.” This, with the frequent  
administration of the Lord’s supper to hundreds of  
communicants, was his usual plan for several years;  
but now he became more colloquial in his style, with  
but little action; he gave pertinent expositions of the  
Scriptures, with striking remarks, all comprehended  
within an hour. Winter adds, “The peculiar talents  
he possessed, subservient to great usefulness, can be  
but faintly conceived from his sermons in print;  
though, as formerly, God has made the reading of  
them useful, and I have no doubt that in future they  
will have their use.”

But even yet our evangelist had to engage in war.  
The opposition of the universities in Oxford and Cam-  
bridge to the principles and practices introduced by  
Whitefield, Wesley, and their companions, grew and  
strengthened, till an event occurred at Oxford singu-  
larly remarkable in its history for opposition to evan-  
gelical religion, which for many years continued to  
excite very extraordinary interest. The London “St.  
James’ Chronicle,” of Thursday, March 17, 1763, con-  
tained the following “extract of a letter from Oxford:”  
“On Friday last, six students, belonging to Edmund  
Hall, were expelled the university, after a hearing of  
several hours before Mr. Vice-Chancellor and some  
of the heads of houses, for holding methodistical

tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and ex-  
pound the Scriptures, and singing hymns in a private

house. The —— of the [The Principal of the

Edmund Hall, Rev. Dr. Dixon] defended their doc-  
trines from the Thirty-nine Articles of the established  
church, and spoke in the highest terms of the piety  
and exemplariness of their lives; but his motion was  
overruled, and sentence pronounced against them.

Dr. , [Dixon,] one of the heads of houses present,

observed, that as these six gentlemen were expelled for  
having too much religion, it would be very proper to  
inquire into the conduct of some who had too little;

and Mr. [Dr. Nowell] was heard to tell their

chief accuser, that the university was much obliged to  
him for his good work.”

To detail the events which followed this extraor-  
dinary, act, and to describe the excitement thus cre-  
ated, form no part of the design of our volume.  
We have referred to the fact because Mr. Whitefield  
and his friend Sir Richard Hill took part in the con-  
troversy. Referring to Dr. Nowell's assertion to  
Mr. Higson, their “chief accuser,” and who was also  
their tutor, that the university was obliged to him,  
Whitefield says to the Vice-Chancellor, “What thanks,  
reverend sir, he may meet with from the whole uni-  
versity I know not; but one thing I know, namely,  
that he will receive no thanks for that day's work  
from the innumerable company of angels, the general  
assembly of the first-born which are written in heav-  
en, or from God the Judge of all, in that day when  
Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant shall come in  
his own glory, in the glory of the Father and his holy

angels, and gather his elect from all the four corners  
of the world.

“It is true, indeed, one article of impeachment  
was, that ‘some of them were of trades before they  
entered into the university.’ But what evil or crime  
worthy of expulsion can there be in that? To be  
called from any, though the meanest mechanical em-  
ployment, to the study of the liberal arts, where a  
natural genius hath been given, was never yet looked  
upon as a reproach to, or diminution of any great and  
public character whatsoever. Profane history affords  
us a variety of examples of the greatest heroes, who  
have been fetched even from the plough to command  
armies, and who performed the greatest exploits for  
their country’s good. And if we examine sacred his-  
tory, we shall find that even David, after he was  
anointed king, looked back with sweet complacency  
to the rock from whence he was hewn, and is not  
ashamed to leave it upon record, that God took him  
away from the sheepfolds, as he was following the  
ewes great with young; and, as though he loved to  
repeat it, he took him, he says, ‘that he might feed  
Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.’

“But why speak I of David, when Jesus of Naza-  
reth, David’s Lord and David’s King, had for his  
reputed father a carpenter? and in all probability,  
as it was a common proverb among the Jews, that ‘he  
who did not teach his son a trade, taught him to be a  
thief,’ he worked at the trade of a carpenter himself.  
For this, indeed, he was reproached and maligned:  
‘Is not this,’ said they, ‘the carpenter’s son?’ Nay,  
‘Is not this the carpenter?’ But who were these ma-

ligners? The greatest enemies to the power of god-  
liness which the world ever saw, the scribes and Phar-  
isees, that ‘generation of vipers,’ as John the Baptist  
calls them, who, upon every occasion, were spitting  
out their venom, and shooting their arrows, even bit-  
ter words, against that Son of man, even that Son of  
God who, to display his sovereignty, and confound  
the wisdom of the worldly wise, chose poor fishermen  
to be his apostles; and whose chief of the apostles,  
though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, both be-  
fore and after his call to the apostleship, labored with  
his own hands, and worked at the trade of a tent-  
maker.”

It is pleasant to know that the young men thus  
expelled became useful in the church of Christ. One  
of them, indeed, Erasmus Middleton, who had been  
sustained at Oxford by Mr. Puller, a dissenter and  
banker in London, was ordained in Ireland by the  
bishop of Down, and having married a lady of the  
ducal family of Gordon, in Scotland, was curate suc-  
cessively to the Rev. Messrs. Romaine and Cadogan  
in London, and finally rector of Turvey, in Bedford-  
shire, where he was the immediate predecessor of the  
sainted Legh Richmond.

Many delightful evidences yet exist that as White-  
field drew nearer the end of his career on earth, his  
holy zeal increased, rather than lessened. We have  
lying before us three of his letters, not included either  
in the collection of his printed correspondence, or in  
the lives which have been published. The first was  
addressed to a gentleman at Wisbeach, and appears  
to have been written from London. It is dated Sept.  
25, 1766.

“Dear Sir—As your letter breathes the spirit of  
a sincere follower of the Lamb of God, I am sorry  
that it hath lain by so long unanswered; but bodily  
weakness, and a multiplicity of correspondents, both  
from abroad and at home, must be pleaded as excuses.  
‘Blessed be God, our salvation is nearer than when  
we believed.’ It should seem that you have now  
served three apprenticeships in Christ’s school, and  
yet I suppose the language of your heart is, ‘I love  
my Master, and will not go from him;’ and Oh, what  
a mercy, that whom Jesus loves, he loves to the end!  
Do you not begin to long to see him more than ever?  
Do you not groan in this tabernacle, being burdened?  
Courage, courage; he that cometh will come, and will  
not tarry. Oh that patience may have its perfect  
work! Many in this metropolis seem to be on the  
wing for God; the shout of a king is yet heard in  
the Methodist camp. Had I wings, I would gladly  
fly from pole to pole; but they are clipped by thirty  
years’ feeble labors. Twice or thrice a week I am  
permitted to ascend my gospel throne. The love of  
Christ, I am persuaded, will constrain you to pray  
that the last glimmering of an expiring taper may  
be blessed to the guiding of many wandering souls to  
the Lamb of God.”

The second letter was written from the same city,  
February 12, in the following year, and was addressed  
to Captain Scott, a military officer then “quartered  
at Leicester.” This gentleman, in early life, had been  
much devoted to the gayeties of fashionable society;  
long after he had entered the army, he was converted  
to God, under the ministry of the Rev. W. Romaine;

and a few weeks before Mr. Whitefield addressed to  
him this letter, he had begun to preach the grand mes-  
sage of reconciliation. He afterwards left the army,  
was ordained as a Congregational minister, and la-  
bored for many years in almost innumerable places  
in city and country, with abundant success.

“What, not answer so modest a request, namely,  
to snatch a few moments to send dear Captain Scott  
a few lines? God forbid. I must again welcome him  
into the field of battle. I must again entreat him to  
keep his rank as captain, and not suffer any persua-  
sions to influence him to descend to the low degree of  
a common soldier. If God will choose a red-coat  
preacher, who shall say unto him, ‘What doest thou?’

“Prevent thy foes, nor wait their charge;

But call the lingering battle on;

But strongly grasp thy seven-fold targe,

And bear the world and Satan down.

“Strong in the Lord’s almighty power,

And armed in panoply divine,

Firm mayest thou stand in danger’s hour,

And prove the strength of Jesus thine.

“The helmet of salvation take,

The Lord the Spirit’s conquering sword;

Speak from the word, in lightning speak;

Cry out, and thunder from the Lord.

“Through friends and foes pursue thy way,

Be mindful of a dying God;

Finish thy course, and win the day,

Though called to seal the truth with blood.

“Gladly would I come, and in my poor way en-  
deavor to strengthen, your hands; but alas, I am fit  
for nothing, but, as an invalid, to be put into some

garrison, and now and then put my hand to some old  
gun. Blessed be the Captain of our salvation for  
drafting out some young champions to reconnoitre  
and attack the enemy. You will beat the march in  
every letter, and bid the common soldiers not halt,  
but go forwards. Good Lady Huntingdon wishes you  
much prosperity. Pray write to her at Brighthelm-  
stone, [now Brighton,] Sussex. She will most gladly  
answer you; and I assure you, her Ladyship’s letters  
are always weighty. Hoping one day or another to  
see your face in the flesh, and more than hoping to  
see you crowned with glory in the kingdom of heaven,  
I must hasten to subscribe myself, my dear captain,  
yours in our all-glorious Captain-general,

“ G. WHITEFIELD.”

The last letter we shall introduce in this connec-  
tion was addressed by Whitefield to the Honorable and  
Rev. Walter Shirley, of Ireland, a near relative of the  
Countess of Huntingdon, who breathed, as a minister  
of Christ, much of the spirit of his great Master. It  
was dated, Bath, Dec. 8, 1767:

“Rev. and very dear Sir—How glad was I to  
hear by the London Shunamite, [Mrs. Herritage,] that  
you and your lady were well; that God had given  
you a son; that you reflected on your preaching at  
Tottenham Court chapel with pleasure; that you had  
gotten a curate; and, to complete all, that you intend-  
ed to visit England next spring. This news rejoiced  
me before I left town, and was most grateful to our  
good Lady Huntingdon, whom I have the honor of  
waiting upon at this time in Bath. She hath been  
sick, nigh unto death, but through mercy is now some-

what recovered, though as yet unable to write much.  
This her ladyship much regrets on your account; and  
therefore enjoins me to inform you, that your letter  
did not reach her hands till many weeks after the  
proper time; that ever since she has been visited with  
lingering sickness, but begs you will not linger in  
coming over to our Macedonia to help us. The  
thought of it seems to refresh her heaven-born soul.  
Blessed be God, her ladyship still takes the lead.

“She is now doing honor to the remains of the  
Earl of Buchan, who sweetly slept in Jesus last week.  
All hath been awful, and more than awful. On Sat-  
urday evening, before the corpse was taken from Bu-  
chan house, a word of exhortation was given, and a  
hymn sung in the room where the corpse lay. The  
young Earl stood with his hands on the head of the  
coffin, the Countess Dowager of Buchan on his right  
hand, Lady Ann Agnes, and Lady Isabella Erskine on  
his left, and their brother the Hon. Thomas Erskine

next to their mother, with Miss 0——, Miss W---,

Miss G --; on one side all the domestics, with a few

friends on the other. The word of exhortation was  
received with great solemnity, and most wept under  
the parting prayer. At ten, the corpse was removed  
to good Lady Huntingdon's chapel, where it was de-  
posited within a place railed in for that purpose, cov-  
ered with black baize, and the usual funeral concomi-  
tants, except escutcheons.

“On Sunday morning, all attended in mourning at  
early sacrament. They were seated by themselves,  
at the feet of the corpse, and with their head servants,  
received first, and a particular address was made to

Whitefield. 13

them. Immediately after receiving, these verses were  
sung for them:

“‘Our lives, our blood, we here present,

If for thy truth they may be spent:

Fulfil thy glorious counsel, Lord;

Thy will be done, thy name adored.

“‘Give them thy strength, 0 God of power,

Then let men rave or devils roar,

Thy faithful witnesses they’ll be;

’Tis fixed, they can do all through thee!’

“Then they received this blessing: ‘The Lord bless  
you, and keep you; the Lord lift up the light of his  
countenance upon you; the Lord cause his face to  
shine upon you, and give you peace;’ and so returned  
to their places.

“Sacrament ended, and a blessed sacrament it was,  
the noble mourners returned to the good Countess of  
Huntingdon’s house, which was lent them for the day.  
At eleven, public worship began. The bereaved rela-  
tives sat in order within, and the domestics round the  
outside of the rail. The chapel was more than crowd-  
ed. Near three hundred tickets, signed by the pres-  
ent earl, were given out to the nobility and gentry,  
to be admitted. All was hushed and solemn. Prop-  
er hymns were sung, and I preached on the words,  
‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.’ Atten-  
tion sat on every countenance, and deep and almost  
universal impressions were made. The like scene,  
and if possible more solemn, was exhibited in the  
evening, and I was enabled to preach a second time,  
and a like power attended the word as in the morn-  
ing. Ever since, there hath been public service and  
preaching twice a day. This is to be continued till

Friday morning, then all is to be removed to Bristol,  
in order to be shipped off to Scotland. The inscrip-  
tion on the coffin runs thus: ‘His life was honorable—·  
his death blessed—he sought earnestly peace with  
God—he found it, with unspeakable joy, alone in the  
merits of Jesus Christ, witnessed by the Holy Spirit  
to his soul—he yet speaketh. Go and do likewise.’

“I have often wished for you here. Congrega-  
tions are very large, attentive, and deeply impressed.  
Great numbers of all ranks crowd to see and hear;  
and I trust many will also feel. Surely the death of  
this noble earl, thus improved, will prove the life of  
many. He behaved like the patriarch Jacob, when  
by faith, leaning upon his staff, he blessed his chil-  
dren. The earl added, ‘Yea, and they shall be bless-  
ed.’ He laid his hands on, and blessed his children,  
assuring them of his personal interest in Jesus. He  
had great foretastes of heaven. ‘Had I strength of  
body,’ cried he, ‘I would not be ashamed, before men  
and angels, to tell what the Lord Jesus hath done for  
my soul. Come, Holy Ghost—come, Holy Ghost;  
happy, happy, happy!’ and then sweetly slept in Jesus.  
All surviving relatives still feel the influence. They  
sit round the corpse, attended by their domestics and

supporters, twice a day. Good Lady S--- gets

fresh spirits. The present noble earl, I believe, hath  
got the blessing indeed, and seems, upon the best evi-  
dence, to determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ,  
and him crucified. He hath behaved in the most del-  
icate manner to the Countess, and other noble survi-  
vors.”

The summer of 1768 brought to Whitefield a se-

ries of changes. For the last time he now visited  
Edinburgh, where he found his congregations as large,  
and his Christian friends as affectionate as ever. Soon  
after his return to London, Mrs. Whitefield was seized  
with inflammatory fever, and died, as we have already  
seen, on the 9th of August. His own health too was  
more than declining. He writes, “I have been in  
hopes of my own departure. Through hard writing,  
and frequent preaching, I have burst a vein. The  
flux is in a great measure stopped; but rest and quiet-  
ness are strictly enjoined.”

“Rest and quietnessl!” With Whitefield such  
things were impossible as long as he could move or  
speak. His fire must burn till its whole material was  
expended; his heart overflowed, and he must labor  
till his body sank under exhaustion. No persecution  
could appall him, no sickness could long keep him  
from his beloved engagements. He would preach till  
he died, being fully assured that his “labor was not in  
vain in the Lord.”

Neither Whitefield nor any of his friends could  
ever be the advocates of an unlearned ministry. Many  
of the men engaged under his direction, and preach-  
ing in what was already called “Lady Huntingdon’s  
connection,” needed, as they well knew, a better edu-  
cation than they possessed. Hence her ladyship ob-  
tained a lease of an old structure, supposed to have  
been part of an ancient castle erected in the reign of  
Henry the Second. The date over the entrance, now  
almost effaced, is 1176. It was called Trevecca  
House, was situated in the parish of Talgarth, in  
South Wales, and was for some time the residence of

Howel Harris. This building was opened as a college  
for religious and literary instruction, and the chapel  
dedicated to the preaching of the everlasting gospel,  
Aug. 24, 1768, the anniversary of the Bartholomew  
act, and of the birth of her ladyship. Mr. Whitefield  
preached from Exod. 24:24: “In all places where I  
record my name, I will come unto thee and bless  
thee;” and on the following Sabbath he addressed a  
congregation of some thousands, who assembled in the  
court before the college. His text on that occasion  
was, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is  
laid, which is Jesus Christ.” “When speaking of the  
dedication of the college, Mr. Whitefield says, “What  
we have seen and felt at the college is unspeakable.”

After her ladyship’s death the institution was re-  
moved to Cheshunt, about thirteen miles north of Lon-  
don, where it still flourishes under the presidency of  
the Rev. Dr. W. H. Stowell.

In the early part of 1769, Mr. Whitefield was for  
some weeks seriously ill, but towards the close of  
March, he was able to write, “Through infinite mercy  
I have been able to preach four days successively.”  
During his illness he received many offers of assist-  
ance from his brethren in the ministry, but from none  
more cordially than from the Honorable and Rev.  
Mr. Shirley. Writing to him, April 1, Whitefield  
says:

“How much am I obliged to you for your two kind  
letters, and more especially for the repeated offers of  
your ministerial assistance. They will be most grate-  
fully accepted, and, I humbly hope, be remarkably suc-  
ceeded by Him who hath promised to be with us al-

ways, even unto the end of the world. Blessed he  
His name, we have been favored with most delightful  
passover feasts. The shout of the King of kings is  
still heard in the midst of our Methodist camps; and  
the shout of, Grace, grace! resounds from many quar-  
ters. Our almighty Jesus knows how to build his  
temple in troublous times. His work prospers in the  
hands of the elect countess, who is gone to Bath, much  
recovered from her late indisposition. Worthy Lady  
Fanny Shirley proposes soon to follow, in order to  
reside there. Some more coronets, I hear, are likely  
to be laid at the Redeemer’s feet. They glitter glo-  
riously when set in and surrounded by a crown of  
thorns.

“‘Subjects of the Lord, be bold;

Jesus will his kingdom hold;

Wheels encircling wheels must run,

Each in course to bring it on.’”

That the friendship of Dr. Franklin towards Mr.  
Whitefield was sincere, cannot be doubted; there is,  
however, somewhat painful in the thought, that even  
in this connection Franklin could not conceal his  
scepticism. In 1769 both these eminent men were in  
London, and every one knows that the state of our  
country was very trying. Franklin thus wrote to  
Whitefield: “I am under continued apprehensions that  
we may have bad news from America. The sending  
soldiers to Boston always appeared to me a dangerous  
step; they could do no good, they might occasion mis-  
chief. When I consider the warm resentment of a  
people who think themselves injured and oppressed,  
and the common insolence of the soldiery, who are  
taught to consider that people as in rebellion, I can-

not but fear the consequences of bringing them to-  
gether. It seems like setting up a smith’s forge in a  
magazine of gunpowder. I see with you that our af-  
fairs are not well managed by our rulers here below;  
I wish I could believe with you, that they are well  
attended to by those above: I rather suspect, from  
certain circumstances, that though the general gov-  
ernment of the universe is well administered, our  
particular little affairs are perhaps below notice,  
and left to take the chance of human prudence or  
imprudence, as either may happen to be uppermost.  
It is, however, an uncomfortable thought, and I leave  
it.”

It would have been strange indeed if Whitefield  
had allowed a letter closing in this manner to pass  
without a remark; hence we are prepared to find that,  
in his own handwriting, at the foot of the autograph  
letter, he wrote, “Uncomfortable indeed! and, blessed  
be God, unscriptural; for we are fully assured that ‘the  
Lord reigneth,’ and are directed to cast all our own  
care on him, because he careth for us.” Could Dr.  
Franklin have seen the splendid results of that man-  
agement which he thought indicated the absence of a  
particular providence—could he have beheld the vast  
Republic, the abode of liberty, commerce, literature,  
and religion, which in less than a century has grown  
out of the insurgent colonies—he would surely have  
exclaimed, in the language of the prophet, “Verily  
there is a God in the earth!”

In July, Whitefield was called by Lady Hunting-  
don to visit Tunbridge Wells, a popular watering  
place in Kent, some twenty or thirty miles from Lon-

don, to dedicate a new and beautiful house to the  
service of God. The congregation was far too large  
to be accommodated within the walls; he therefore  
preached out of doors from a mount in the court be-  
fore the house. His text was, “This is none other  
but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”  
Gen. 28:17. This sermon is said to have been one  
of his most eloquent and thrilling efforts; the lofty  
energy of his tones, the utter forgetfulness of himself  
in the all-absorbing interest of his subject, the very  
impersonation of the truths which he uttered as he  
stretched forth his hand, “Look yonder; what is  
that I see? It is my agonizing Lord! Hark, hark!  
do you not hear? 0 earth, earth, earth, hear the  
word of the Lord!” thrilled the vast congregation,  
riveting the eye, piercing the conscience, and holding  
strong men breathless before the resistless might of  
his inspired eloquence. After the service he delivered  
an exhortation, and on the next day again preached  
and administered the Lord’s supper.

He now began to prepare for his seventh, and as it  
proved, his last voyage to America, especially to visit  
his beloved orphans and friends in Georgia. The  
only thing which seems to have grieved him, was the  
pain of parting for a time from his London friends.  
This was nothing new, but his feelings were even less  
reconciled to the event than formerly. “Oh,” he  
says, “these partings! without a divine support they  
would be intolerable. Talk not of taking 'personal  
leave; you know my make. Paul could stand a whip-  
ping, but not a weeping farewell.”

The text of his last sermon was John 10:27, 28:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they  
follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and  
they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck  
them out of my hand.” The sermon was printed, and  
that very incorrectly; but a few sentences will show  
that it was strikingly characteristic: “These words,  
it will be recollected, were uttered by Christ at the  
feast of dedication. This festival was of bare human  
invention, and yet I do not find that our Lord preached  
against it. And I believe that when we see things as  
we ought, we shall not entertain our auditories about  
rites and ceremonies, but about the grand thing. It  
is the glory of Methodists, that while they have been  
preaching forty years, there has not been, that I know  
of, one single pamphlet published by them about the  
non-essentials of religion. . . . The Lord divides the  
world into sheep and goats. 0 sinners, you are come  
to hear a poor creature take his last farewell; but I  
want you to forget the creature and his preaching. I  
want to lead you further than the Tabernacle—even  
to mount Calvary, to see with what expense of blood  
Jesus Christ purchased ‘his own.’ Now, before I go  
any further, will you be so good, before the world  
gets into your hearts, to inquire whether you belong  
to Christ or not. Surely the world did not get into  
your hearts before you rose from your beds. Many  
of you were up sooner than usual. [The sermon was  
preached at seven o’clock in the morning.] I hope  
the world does not get into your hearts before nine.  
Man, woman, sinner, put thy hand upon thy heart,  
and say, Didst thou ever hear Christ’s voice so as to  
follow him? ... I once heard Dr. Marryatt, who was

not ashamed of ‘market language,’ say at Pinner’s  
Hall, ‘God has a great dog to fetch his sheep back  
when they wander.’ He sends the devil after them,  
to bark at them; but instead of barking them further  
off, he barks them back to the fold. ... ‘None shall  
pluck them out of my hand.’ This implies that there  
is always somebody plucking at Christ’s sheep. The  
lust of the flesh is plucking; the pride of life is pluck-  
ing; and the devil is continually plucking at them;  
‘but nothing shall pluck them out of my hand;’ I  
have bought them, and am gone to heaven to ‘prepare  
a place for them.’”

Of this sermon, as taken in shorthand and printed,  
Whitefield received a copy while at Deal, and was  
much dissatisfied with it. He says, “This morning I  
received a surreptitious copy of my Tabernacle fare-  
well sermon, taken, as the shorthand writer professes,  
verbatim as I spoke it. But surely he is mistaken.  
The whole is so injudiciously paragraphed, and so  
wretchedly unconnected, that I owe no thanks to the  
misguided, though it may be well-meant zeal of the  
writer and publisher, be they who they will.” Had  
Whitefield known that the lad of seventeen who had  
thus taken down his sermon, would hereafter become  
a devoted and useful minister of Christ, the secretary  
of the London Missionary Society, the originator of the  
London Religious Tract Society, and for many years  
the editor of the London Evangelical Magazine, and the  
author of “Tillage Sermons,” which have circulated  
by hundreds of thousands of volumes in both hemi-  
spheres, how would his heart have warmed towards  
him. Let us copy from the journal of George Burder,

as given in his life by his son, the Rev. Dr. H. F.  
Burder, a short passage :

“August, 1769. About this time I heard Mr.  
Whitefield preach several sermons, particularly his  
two last in London; that at Tottenham Court chapel  
on Sabbath morning, and that at the Tabernacle on  
Wednesday morning at seven o’clock. I remember a  
thought which passed my mind, I think, as I was going  
to hear his last sermon—‘Which would I rather be,  
Garrick or Whitefield?’ I thought each, in point of  
oratory, admirable in his way. I doubt not con-  
science told me which was best. I wrote Mr. White-  
field’s sermons in shorthand, though standing in a  
crowd. The latter I copied out, and by the request  
of a friend it was printed in about a week. I remem-  
ber sitting up part of a night to write it out, and at  
the same time I observed the comet which then ap-  
peared. The sermon was very incorrect, and Mr.  
Whitefield being detained at Deal before he left Eng-  
land, saw it, and complained of it.”

Before we entirely separate from the Tabernacle,  
we wish to record some other interesting facts asso-  
ciated with it, especially relating to Thomas Wilson,  
Esq., for many years the treasurer of Hoxton, after-  
wards Highbury college, who gave the ground on  
which the latter building stands, devoted his fortune  
to the extension of the cause of Christ, and in addi-  
tion to many other noble acts, erected five large  
houses of worship in the British metropolis, capable  
of seating eight thousand persons. The father of  
this gentleman was for many years a devoted deacon  
of a Congregational church, but entered into full

sympathy with the labors of Whitefield, attending  
the Tabernacle on Lord’s-day evenings. “To this  
circumstance, perhaps, may be traced much of his own  
zeal for the glory of God, and no inconsiderable por-  
tion of that public spirit which afterwards distin-  
guished his son Thomas, who well remembered being  
carried in his nurse’s arms, in company with his par-  
ents, to the scene of Whitefield’s ministry, and lis-  
tening with such interest as one so young was likely  
to feel, to a preacher of surpassing eloquence and  
power.” The Rev. Dr. Morison, one of his biogra-  
phers, adds: “Thus did he imbibe in early life a  
strong prepossession for animated public address,  
which he never lost in after-years, and which he never  
failed to urge upon all youthful candidates for the  
sacred office. As might have been expected, the Tab-  
ernacle became his Sabbath home, where he was wont  
to listen to men of fervent eloquence, and of purely  
evangelical sentiment. He entered, while very young,  
into communion with the church in that place, and  
afforded a pleasing example of early and consistent  
dedication to the service of Christ.”

Having finished the service of the Tabernacle  
which we just now described, Whitefield went imme-  
diately to Gravesend, twenty miles from London, to  
set sail, embarking in the Friendship, Captain Ball,  
for Charleston. His companions on the voyage were  
Messrs. Winter and Smith, both of them young minis-  
ters of lively zeal; and the former especially, was  
distinguished in after-life by great success in his labors  
for Christ and his church. Whitefield wrote, “I am  
comfortable on every side—a civil captain and pas-

sengers; all willing to attend on divine worship, and  
to hear of religions things.”

But delay was the lot of our evangelist and his  
friends. They arrived in the Downs, and had to stay  
there about a month waiting for a fair wind. While  
here, he was delighted with a most unexpected visit  
from Dr. Gibbons of London, and the Rev. Mr. Brad-  
bury of Ramsgate, who had met at Deal to ordain a  
young minister. He says, “Wednesday, Sept. 13, I  
went on shore, and attended an ordination solemnity  
at the dissenting meeting. Several ministers offici-  
ated. Several important questions were asked and  
answered before, and a solemn charge given after  
imposition of hands. But the prayer put up in the  
very act of laying on of hands, by Dr. Gibbons, was  
so affecting, and the looks and behavior of those that  
joined so serious and solemn, that I hardly know when  
I was more struck under any one’s ministration. The  
ordination being over, at the desire of the ministers  
and other gentlemen, I went and dined with them:  
our conversation was edifying; and being informed  
that many were desirous to hear me preach, I will-  
ingly complied; and I trust some seed was sown  
the same evening at Deal, which, by God’s heavenly  
blessing, will spring up to life eternal. The people of  
Deal seemed very civil, and some came to me who  
had not forgotten my preaching to them, and their  
deceased friends and parents, thirty-two years ago.”  
Whitefield tells a somewhat amusing anecdote of  
Dr. Gibbons, on one of his visits on board. The wor-  
thy doctor was unused to the sea, and became sea-sick,  
so that he was obliged to lie down for some time in

the state-cabin. “There,” says one evangelist, “he  
learned more experimentally to pray for those who  
do business in the great waters.” While yet in the  
Downs, Whitefield preached not only on board, but at  
Ramsgate and elsewhere. On September 25, in com-  
pany with many other ships, they sailed, but soon  
were again compelled to cast anchor over against  
New Romney and Dungenness. At length, however,  
they cleared the channel, and after a long and dan-  
gerous voyage arrived safe at Charleston, S. C. Hap-  
pily, Whitefield’s health had become greatly reno-  
vated, so that he felt better than after any voyage he  
had made for many years. In his memorandum he  
wrote:

“November, 1769. For the last week we were  
beating about our port, within sight of it, and con-  
tinued for two days in Five-fathom hole, just over the  
bar. A dangerous situation, as the wind blew hard,  
and our ship, like a young Christian, for want of  
more ballast, would not obey the helm. But through  
infinite mercy, on November 30, a pilot-boat came and  
took us safe ashore to Charleston, having been on  
board almost thirteen weeks. Friends received me  
most cordially. Praise the Lord, 0 my soul, and for-  
get not all his mercies. Oh, to begin to be a Chris-  
tian and minister of Jesus!” On the very day of his  
landing, Whitefield preached at Charleston, and learn-  
ed from his friend Mr. Wright that all was well at  
Bethesda.

CHAPTER XVI.

SEVENTH VISIT AND LABORS IN AMERICA-DEATH.

**1769, 1770.**

Whitefield now lost no time in proceeding to his  
beloved Bethesda, which at present wore a very invit-  
ing aspect. Writing, January 11, 1770, he says, “Ev-  
ery thing exceeds my most sanguine expectations. I  
am almost tempted to say, ‘It is good for me to he   
here;’ but all must give way to gospel ranging—di-  
vine employ!

“‘For this, let men revile my name,

I’ll shun no cross, I ’ll fear no shame;

All hail, reproach!”

In another letter he says, “The increase of this colony  
is almost incredible. Two wings are added to the  
orphan-house, for the accommodation of students; of  
which Governor Wright laid the foundation, March  
25, 1769.”

An official paper of the Georgia legislature will  
show the esteem in which Whitefield was held by that  
body.

“Commons House of Assembly, Monday, Jan. 29,  
1770. Mr. Speaker reported, that he, with the house,  
having waited on the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, in conse-  
quence of his invitation, at the orphan-house academy,  
heard him preach a very suitable and pious sermon on  
the occasion; and with great pleasure observed the  
promising appearance of improvement towards the

good purposes intended, and the decency and propri-  
ety of behavior of the several residents there; and  
were sensibly affected, when they saw the happy suc-  
cess which has attended Whitefield’s indefatigable  
zeal for promoting the welfare of the province in  
general, and the orphan-house in particular. Ordered,  
that this report be printed in the Gazette.

“JOHN SIMPSON, Clerk.”

In pursuance of this vote, we find in the Georgia  
Gazette as follows: “Savannah, January 31, 1770.  
Last Sunday, his Excellency the Governor, Council,  
and Assembly, having been invited by the Rev. Mr.  
Whitefield, attended divine service in the chapel of  
the orphan-house academy, where prayers were read  
by the Rev. Mr. Ellington, and a very suitable sermon  
was preached by the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, from Zecha-  
riah 4:10, ‘For who hath despised the day of small  
things?’ to the great satisfaction of the auditory; in  
which he took occasion to mention the many discour-  
agements he met with, well known to many there, in  
carrying on the institution for upwards of thirty years  
past, and the present promising prospect of its future  
and more extensive usefulness. After divine service,  
the company were very politely entertained with a  
handsome and plentiful dinner; and were greatly  
pleased to see the useful improvements made in the  
house, the two additional wings of apartments for  
students, one hundred and fifty feet each in length,  
and other lesser buildings, in so much forwardness;  
and the whole executed with taste, and in so masterly  
a manner; and being sensible of the truly generous  
and disinterested benefactions derived to the province

through his means, they expressed their gratitude in  
the most respectful terms.”

On February 10, we find a letter written at Charles-  
ton by Whitefield to his friend Mr. Robert Keen of  
London:

“Through infinite mercy, this leaves me enjoying  
a greater share of bodily health than I have known  
for many years. I am now enabled to preach al-  
most every day, and my poor feeble labors seem not  
to be in vain in the Lord. Blessed be God, all things  
are in great forwardness at Bethesda. I have con-  
versed with the governor in the most explicit manner,  
more than once, concerning an act of Assembly for  
the establishment of the intended orphan-house col-  
lege. He most readily consents. I have shown him  
a draft, which he much approves of, and all will be  
finished at my return from the northward; in the  
meanwhile the building will be carried on. As two  
ministers from New Jersey and Rhode Island have  
been soliciting benefactions for their respective col-  
leges, no application of that nature can be made here;  
but the Lord will provide. ..... Since my being in  
Charleston, I have shown the draft to some persons of  
great eminence and influence. They highly approve  
of it, and willingly consent to be some of the wardens.  
Nearly twenty are to be of Georgia, and about six of  
this place; one of Philadelphia, one of New York,  
one of Boston, three of Edinburgh, two of Glasgow,  
and six of London. Those of Georgia and South  
Carolina are to be qualified; the others to be only  
honorary corresponding wardens.”

Two days afterwards he again writes to the same

friend, “In a few months, I hope all will be complet-  
ed. But what may these few months produce? Lord  
Jesus, prepare us for whatsoever thou hast prepared  
for us, and give peace in our time, for thine infinite  
mercy’s sake. You must expect another draft soon.  
God be praised for that saying, ‘It is more blessed to  
give than to receive.’ You would be pleased to see  
with what attention the people hear the word preach-  
ed. I have been in Charleston near a fortnight—am  
to preach at a neighboring country parish church  
next Sunday, and hope to see Georgia the week fol-  
lowing. Perhaps I may sail from thence to the north-  
ward, and perhaps embark from thence. Lord Jesus,  
direct my goings in thy way. I am blessed with  
bodily health, and am enabled to go on my way rejoic-  
ing. Grace, grace!”

On returning to Bethesda, his heart seems to have  
been full of the orphan-house and the college. For the  
direction of the latter, he prepared a series of rules,  
and especially provided for the reading of the old  
Puritan and Non-conformist writers of the seventeenth  
and eighteenth centuries. Every letter he wrote con-  
tained references to the improved state of his health,  
and the increased number of preaching engagements  
which he was now able to fulfil. His spirits seem to  
have been better, and his exultations in the divine  
kindness more ardent than ever, while his correspond-  
ence indicates much heavenly-mindedness, and lively  
desires for the highest happiness of his friends.

As Whitefield had now been in the south more  
than five months, we are not surprised to find that  
applications poured in from every part of the north,

entreating him to revisit the scenes of other years.  
He left Bethesda and its affairs in the hands of per-  
sons worthy of his confidence, of whom he said, “Such  
a set of helpers I never met with.”

After some hesitation as to where he should first  
go, he set out for Philadelphia, where he arrived on  
the 6th of May. Writing three days afterwards, he  
says, “The evening following, I was enabled to preach  
to a large auditory, and have to repeat the delightful  
task this evening. Pulpits, hearts, and affections, seem  
to be as open and enlarged to me as ever.” On the  
24th he again wrote, “A wide and effectual door, I  
trust, has been opened in this city. People of all  
ranks flock as much as ever. Impressions are made  
on many, and I trust they will abide. To all the  
Episcopal churches, as well as most of the other places  
of worship, I have free access. Notwithstanding I  
preach twice on the Lord’s day, and three or four  
times a week besides, yet I am rather better than I  
have been for many years. This is the Lord’s doing.”  
On June 14, he says, “This leaves me just returned  
from a one hundred and fifty miles’ circuit, in which,  
blessed be God, I have been enabled to preach every  
day. So many new as well as old doors are open,  
and so many invitations sent from various quarters,  
that I know not which way to turn myself.”

Of his last visit to New Jersey, Bishop White of  
Philadelphia, then a young man of twenty-three, says,  
“When he was on his way from Philadelphia to Bos-  
ton, late in the summer, he had been prevailed on to  
promise to cross from Bristol to Burlington, and to  
preach there. I happened to be in the latter place,

and staying in the house of a relative, when it was  
announced that Mr. Whitefield was at a tavern on  
the other side of the river. He was expected to be  
escorted by my relative. I went with him; and we  
returned in a boat with Mr. Whitefield and his com-  
pany. He preached to the assembled citizens in front  
of the court-house, and afterwards dined at the house  
of my relative. During dinner, he was almost the  
only speaker, as was said to be common; all present  
being disposed to listen.”

A few days after this visit, we find him at New  
York, writing, June 30, “I have been here just a  
week. Have been enabled to preach four times; and  
am to repeat the delightful task this evening. Con-  
gregations are larger than ever. Blessed be God, I  
have been strengthened to itinerate and preach daily  
for some time. Next week I purpose to go to Albany;  
from thence, perhaps to the Oneida Indians. There  
is to be a very large Indian-congress; Mr. Kirkland  
accompanies me. He is a truly Christian minister  
and missionary. Every thing possible should be done  
to strengthen his hands and his heart. Perhaps I may  
not see Georgia till Christmas. As yet, I keep to my  
intended plan, in respect to my returning. Lord  
Jesus, direct my goings in thy way. The heat begins  
now to be a little intense; but through mercy I am  
enabled to bear up bravely. What a God do we  
serve!”

On the twenty-ninth of July, he again writes from  
the same city, and it is the last entry in his memoran-  
dum: “Since my last, and during this month, I have  
been above a five hundred miles’ circuit; and have

been enabled to preach and travel through the heat  
every day. The congregations have been very large,  
attentive, and affected; particularly at Albany, Sche-  
nectady, Great Barrington, Norfolk, Salisbury, Sha-  
ron, Smithfield, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, New Rumbart,  
New Windsor, and Peck’s Hill. Last night I return-  
ed hither, and hope to set out for Boston in two or  
three days. 0 what a new scene of usefulness is open-  
ing in various parts of this world! All fresh work  
where I have been. The divine influence has been as  
at first. Invitations crowd upon me both from min-  
isters and people, from many, many quarters. A very  
peculiar providence led me very lately to a place  
where a horse-stealer was executed. Thousands at-  
tended. The poor criminal had sent me several let-  
ters, hearing I was in the country. The sheriff allow-  
ed him to come and hear a sermon under an adjacent  
tree. Solemn, solemn! After being by himself about  
an hour, I walked half a mile with him to the gal-  
lows. His heart had been softened before my first  
visit. He seemed full of solid, divine consolation.  
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. Effec-  
tual good, I hope, was done to the hearers and spec-  
tators. Grace, grace!”

Our local histories seem to delight to honor White-  
field by the introduction of his name whenever they  
have an opportunity. In a notice of Sharon, in “Bar-  
ber’s Historical Collections of Connecticut,” the writer  
says, “In the latter part of July, 1770, the Rev.

George Whitefield passed through this town on a  
preaching tour. There was considerable opposition  
to his being admitted into the meeting-house, and  
arrangements had been made to hold the service in  
an orchard still standing near the meeting-house, in  
case he should be refused. Mr. Smith, [the Rev. Cot-  
ton Mather Smith, a descendant of Cotton Mather,]  
invited him into the pulpit, though strongly opposed  
by a considerable number of influential men. An im-  
mense congregation from this and the neighboring  
towns filled the meeting-house to overflowing. His  
text was, ‘Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must  
be born again.’ He proceeded to discourse on the  
doctrine of the new birth with astonishing power and  
eloquence, and the congregation were much moved  
by the power of the truth and Spirit of God. The  
concluding words of his discourse were a quotation,  
with a little variation, from the close of the fourth  
chapter of Solomon’s Song. ‘Awake, 0 north wind,  
and come, thou south; blow upon this garden, that  
the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved  
come into this garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.’Many of the inhabitants of Sharon followed him for  
several successive days, to hear the word of life from  
this devoted minister of the cross.”

We think it must have been in this journey that  
Whitefield’s ministry was blessed to the conversion  
of a young man who has left his mark on the age.  
Benjamin Randall was born in New Castle, New  
Hampshire, in 1749. In his twenty-second year he  
was brought under the ministry of Whitefield, by  
which means he became deeply convinced of sin, and

was soon after converted to God. In 1776, he united  
with, a Calvinistic Baptist church; but before long  
began to preach what, he accounted more correct doc-  
trines in his native town, and was honored of God to  
effect a very powerful and extensive revival. He is  
considered the founder of the denomination of Free-  
will Baptists, which now comprises from eleven to  
twelve hundred churches, more than a thousand pas-  
tors and licentiates, and upwards of fifty thousand  
communicants. Mr. Randall was a man of strong  
mental powers, and though he had not a classical edu-  
cation, he was a good English scholar, aspired after  
general and religious knowledge, had fine discrimi-  
nating talent, and was remarkable for the persever-  
ance with which he pursued whatever he undertook.  
Above all, like his spiritual father, he possessed what  
a living preacher has well called, “a passion for  
souls.”

From New York Whitefield proceeded to Boston,  
and short extracts from two of his letters, and those  
the last he wrote, will show his position and his feel-  
ings:

September 17, he says to Mr. Wright, at Bethesda,  
“Fain would I come by Captain Souder, from Phila-  
delphia; but people are so importunate for my stay  
in these parts, that I fear it will be impracticable.  
‘My God will supply all my need according to the  
riches of his grace in Christ Jesus.’ Two or three  
evenings ago, I was taken in the night with a violent  
flux, attended with retching and shivering, so that I  
was obliged to return from Newbury; but through  
infinite mercy I am restored, and to-morrow morning

hope to begin again. Never was the word received  
with greater eagerness than now. All opposition  
seems, as it were, for a while to cease. I find God’s  
time is the best. The season is critical as to outward  
circumstances; but when forts are given up, the Lord  
Jesus can appoint salvation for walls and for bul-  
warks; he has promised to be a wall of fire round  
about his people. This comforts me concerning Be-  
thesda, though we should have a Spanish war. You  
will be pleased to hear, I never was carried through  
the summer’s heat so well.”

And finally, to his dear friend Mr. Keen of Lon-  
don, he wrote from Portsmouth, New Hampshire,  
September 23, just one week before his death, “By  
this time I thought to be moving southward. But  
never was greater importunity used to detain me  
longer in these northern parts. Poor New England  
is much to be pitied; Boston people most of all. How  
grossly misrepresented! What a mercy that our  
Christian charter cannot be dissolved! Blessed be  
God for an unchangeable Jesus! You will see, by  
the many invitations, what a door is opened for  
preaching the everlasting gospel. I was so ill on  
Friday that I could not preach, though thousands  
were waiting to hear. Well, the day of release will  
shortly come, but it does not seem yet; for by riding  
sixty miles I am better, and hope to preach here to-  
morrow. I trust my blessed Master will accept these  
poor efforts to serve him. 0 for a warm heart! 0

to stand fast in the faith, to acquit ourselves like  
men, and be strong! May this be the happy experi-  
ence of you and yours. I suppose your letters are

gone for me in the Anderson to Georgia. If spared  
so long, I expect to see them about Christmas. Still  
pray and praise. I am so poorly, and so engaged  
when able to preach, that this must apologize for not  
writing to more friends: it is quite impracticable.”

Whitefield’s hope to “preach here to-morrow” was  
fully realized. In the “Pennsylvania Journal and  
Weekly Advertiser,” we find a letter from Ports-  
mouth, dated Sept. 28, 1770, which says, “Last Sun-  
day morning came to town from Boston, the Rev.  
George Whitefield, and in the afternoon he preached  
at the Rev. Dr. Haven’s meeting-house; Monday  
morning he preached again at the same place, to a  
very large and crowded audience. Tuesday morning  
a most numerous assembly met at the Rev. Dr. Lang-  
don’s meeting-house, which it is said will hold nearly  
six thousand people, and was well filled, even the  
aisles. Evening he preached at the Rev. Mr. John  
Rodgers’ meeting-house in Kittery, and yesterday at  
the Rev. Mr. Lyman’s in York, to which place a  
number of ladies and gentlemen from town accom-  
panied him. This morning [Friday] he will preach  
at the Rev. Dr. Langdon’s meeting-house in this  
town.”

We are now approaching the closing scene, and  
are invited to hear Whitefield’s last sermon. On his  
way to Newburyport, where he had engaged to preach  
on Sunday morning, September 30, he was entreated  
to preach at Exeter. This had been the scene of  
some of his former triumphs. He was once preaching  
here, when a man was present who had loaded his  
pocket with stones to throw at the preacher. He

Whitefield. 19

heard his prayer with patience, but as soon as he had  
read his text, the man took a stone ont of his pocket  
and held it in his hand, waiting for an opportunity to  
throw it. But God sent a word to his heart, and the  
stone dropped from his hand. After the sermon, the  
poor fellow went to Mr. Whitefield, and said, “Sir,  
I came here to-day with the intention of breaking  
your head, but God has given me a broken heart.”  
This man was converted to God, and lived an orna-  
ment to the gospel.

As though it had been felt by the public that this  
might be our preacher’s last sermon, inconvenient as  
Saturday noon must be for the assembling of a con-  
gregation for worship, such a multitude was collected  
that no house could contain them, and Whitefield, for  
nearly two hours, discoursed to an attentive crowd in  
the open air. Of this last sermon at Exeter, a gen-  
tleman who was present has given a deeply interest-  
ing and affecting account. The relator was then in  
his eighty-sixth year, but he retained a strong remem-  
brance of the most trivial incidents connected with  
that extraordinary man. He says:

“It was usual for Mr. Whitefield to be attended  
by Mr. Smith, who preached when he was unable on  
account of sudden attacks of asthma. At the time  
referred to, after Mr. Smith had delivered a short  
discourse, Mr. Whitefield seemed desirous of speak-  
ing; but from the weak state in which he then was,  
it was thought almost impossible. He rose from the  
seat in the pulpit, and stood erect, and his appearance  
alone was a powerful sermon. The thinness of his  
visage, the paleness of his countenance, the evident

struggling of the heavenly spark in a decayed body  
for utterance, were all deeply interesting; the spirit  
was willing, but the flesh was dying. In this situation  
he remained several minutes, unable to speak; he then  
said, ‘I will wait for the gracious assistance of God,  
for he will, I am certain, assist me once more to speak  
in his name.’ He then delivered perhaps one of his  
best sermons, for the light generally burns most splen-  
didly when about to expire. The subject was a con-  
trast of the present with the future, a part of this  
sermon I read to a popular and learned clergyman in  
New York, who could not refrain from weeping when  
I repeated the following: ‘I go, I go to rest prepar-  
ed; my sun has arisen, and by aid from heaven, given  
light to many;’ it is now about to set for—no, it can-  
not be! ‘t is to rise to the zenith of immortal glory; I  
have outlived many on earth, but they cannot outlive  
me in heaven. Many shall live when this body is no  
more, but then—Oh, thought divine!—I shall be in a  
world where time, age, pain, and sorrow are un-  
known. My body fails, my spirit expands; how will-  
ingly would I live for ever to preach Christ! but I  
die to be with him. How brief, comparatively brief,  
has been my life, compared with the vast labors I see  
before me yet to be accomplished; but if I leave now,  
while so few care about heavenly things, the God of  
peace will surely visit you.’ These, and many other  
things he said, which, though simple, were rendered  
important by circumstances; for death had let fly his  
arrow, and the shaft was deeply enfixed when utter-  
ance was given to them: his countenance, his tremu-  
lous voice, his debilitated frame, all gave convincing

evidence that the eye which saw him should shortly  
see him no more for ever. When I visited the place  
where he is entombed, Newburyport, I could not help  
saying, ‘The memory of the just is blessed.’ Few are  
there like George Whitefield; however zealous, they  
do not possess the masterly power, and those who do,  
too often turn it to a purpose that does not glorify  
God.”

We have already spoken of the Rev. Daniel Rodg-  
ers, a descendant of the martyr of that name, and  
pastor of the second congregational church at Exeter.  
It was this old friend of Whitefield who had impor-  
tuned him to preach at Exeter. The “Almanack  
Journal ” of this excellent man contains the following  
items of the activity of our “eloquent orator” in his  
closing days: “ September 10, 1770, dear Mr. White-  
field preached here, A.M., ten o’clock. 11th, Mr.  
Whitefield preached again in Mr. Parsons’ meeting-  
house. 12th, I rode over to Rowley, Mr. Whitefield  
preached there. 14th, a storm of rain. 15th, the  
rain continues. Mr. Whitefield went to Boston, not  
well. 25th, I heard dear Mr. Whitefield preach.  
26th, he went to Kittery, and preached for brother  
John; P. M.T rode to York. 27th, Mr. Whitefield  
preached at York; P. M. we returned to Portsmouth.  
28th, Mr. Whitefield preached his farewell sermon;  
I returned home. 29th, dear Mr. Whitefield preached  
for me the last sermon he ever preached.”

Mr. Smith’s account of the closing scene will not  
be considered too minute in its details. “Before he  
commenced his journey of fifteen miles from Ports-  
mouth to Exeter, Mr. Clarkson, senior, observing him

more uneasy than usual, said to him, ‘ Sir, yon are  
more fit to go to bed than to preach.’ Whitefield’s  
reply was, ‘True, sir;’ but 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.’ His last sermon was from

1. Cor. 13 :5, ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in  
   the faith. Know ye not your own selves, how that  
   Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?’ He  
   dined at Captain Gillman’s. After dinner, Mr. White-  
   field and Mr. Parsons rode to Newbury. I did not  
   get there till two hours after them. I found them at  
   supper. I asked Mr. Whitefield how he felt after his  
   journey. He said he was tired, therefore he supped  
   early, and went to bed. He ate a very little supper,  
   talked but little, asked Mr. Parsons to discharge the  
   table, and perform family duty, and then retired up  
   stairs.”

The Rev. Dr. Hallock tells us, that, in 1822, he  
visited Newburyport and the tomb of Whitefield. He  
was then told by persons whom he considered reliable,  
that when Whitefield was retiring to his chamber on  
this last evening of his life, many were so desirous to  
see and hear him, that he stood on the stairs with a  
lamp in his hand, and there gave them a tender spir-  
itual address.

We resume Mr. Smith’s account: “He said he  
would sit and read till I came to him, which I did as  
soon as possible; and found him reading the Bible,  
with Dr. Watts’ Psalms lying open before him. He

asked me for some water-gruel, and took about half  
his usual quantity; and kneeling down by his bedside,  
closed the evening with prayer. After a little con-  
versation, he went to rest, and slept till two in the  
morning, when he awoke, and asked for a little cider;  
he drank about a wine-glass full. I asked him how  
he felt, for he seemed to pant for breath. He said to  
me, ‘My asthma is coming on again; I must have two  
or three days’ rest. Two or three days’ riding, with-  
out preaching, would set me up again.’ Soon after-  
wards, he asked me to put the window up a little  
higher, though it was half up all night. ‘For,’ said  
he, ‘I cannot breathe; but I hope I shall be better by  
and by: a good pulpit sweat to-day may give me re-  
lief; I shall be better after preaching.’ I said to him,  
‘I wish you would not preach so often.’ He replied,

I had rather wear out than rust out.’ I then told  
him, I was afraid he took cold in preaching yesterday.  
He said he believed he had; and then sat up in bed,  
and prayed that God would be pleased to bless his  
preaching where he had been, and also bless his  
preaching that day, that more souls might be brought  
to Christ. He prayed for direction whether he should  
winter in Boston, or hasten to the southward; and he  
prayed for a blessing on his Bethesda college, and his  
dear family there, for the Tabernacle and Chapel con-  
gregations, and all connections on the other side of  
the water; and then he laid himself down to sleep  
again.

“This was near three o’clock. At a quarter past  
four he awoke, and said, ‘My asthma, my asthma is  
coming on; I wish I had not given out word to

preach at Haverhill on Monday I don’t think I  
shall be able; but I shall see what to-day will bring  
forth. If I am no better to-morrow, I will take two  
or three days’ ride!’ He then desired me to warm  
him a little gruel; and in breaking the fire-wood, I  
waked Mr. Parsons, who thinking I knocked for him,  
rose and came in. He went to Mr. Whitefield’s bed-  
side, and asked him how he felt. He answered,’ I  
am almost suffocated. I can scarcely breathe, my  
asthma quite chokes me.’ I was then not a little sur-  
prised to hear how quickly, and with what difficulty  
he drew his breath. He got out of bed, and went to  
the open window for air. This was exactly at five  
o’clock. I went to him, and for about the space of  
five minutes saw no danger, only that he had a great  
difficulty in breathing, as I had often seen before.  
Soon afterwards, he turned himself to me, and said,

‘1 am dying,’ I said, ‘I hope not, sir.’ He ran to  
the other window, panting for breath, but could get  
no relief. It was agreed that I should go for Dr.  
Sawyer; and on my coming back, I saw death on his  
face; and he again said, ‘I am dying.’ His eyes were  
fixed, his underlip drawing inward every time he  
drew breath. I persuaded him to sit down in the  
chair, and have his cloak on; he consented by a sign,  
but could not speak. I then offered him a glass of  
warm wine; he took half of it, but it seemed as if it  
would have stopped his breath entirely. He went  
towards the window, and we offered him some warm  
wine, with lavender drops, which he refused.

“In a little time he brought up a considerable  
quantity of phlegm. I then began to have some small

hopes. Mr. Parsons said he thought Mr. Whitefield  
breathed more freely than he did, and would recover.  
I said, ‘No, sir, he is certainly dying.’ I was contin-  
ually employed in taking the phlegm out of his mouth  
with a handkerchief, and bathing his temples with  
drops, rubbing his wrists, etc., to give him relief, if  
possible, but all in vain; his hands and feet were as  
cold as clay. When the doctor came in, and saw him  
in the chair leaning upon my breast, he felt his pulse,  
and said, ‘He is a dead man.’ Mr. Parsons said, ‘I  
do not believe it; you must do something, doctor.’  
He said, ‘I cannot; he is now near his last breath.’  
And so indeed it was; for he fetched but one gasp,  
and stretched out his feet, and breathed no more.  
This was exactly at six o’clock. We continued rub-  
bing his legs, hands, and feet, with warm cloths, and  
bathed him with spirits for some time, but all in vain.  
I then put him into a warm bed, the doctor standing  
by, and often raised him upright, continued rubbing  
him and putting spirits to his nose for an hour, till  
all hopes were gone. The people came in crowds to  
see him.’

Whitefield seems to have had somewhat of a pre-  
sentiment that his death would be unattended with  
any remarkable expression of spiritual enjoyment.  
In his last preceding visit to this country, he had  
spent a day or two under the roof of the Rev. Dr.  
Finley, then president of the college at Princeton,  
New Jersey. One day Dr. Finley said at the dinner-  
table, “Mr. Whitefield, I hope it will be very long  
before you will be called home; but when that event  
shall arrive, I shall be glad to hear the noble testimony

you will bear for God.” Whitefield replied, “You  
would be disappointed, doctor; I shall die silent. It  
has pleased God to enable me to bear so many testi-  
monies for him during my life, that he will require  
none from me when I die. No, no. It is your dumb  
Christians, who have walked in fear and darkness,  
and thereby been unable to bear a testimony for God  
during their lives, that he compels to speak out for  
him on their death-beds.”

We resume Mr. Smith’s narrative: “The Rev. Mr.  
Parsons, at whose house my dear master died, sent for  
Captain Fetcomb, and Mr. Boadman, and others of  
his elders and deacons, and they took the whole of  
the burial upon themselves, prepared the vault, and  
sent and invited the bearers. Many ministers of all  
persuasions came to the house of the Rev. Mr. Par-  
sons, where several of them gave a very particular  
account of their first awakenings under his ministry  
several years ago, and also of many in their congrega-  
tions that, to their knowledge, under God, owed their  
conversion to his coming among them, often referring  
to the blessed seasons they had enjoyed under his  
preaching; and all said, that this last visit was attend-  
ed with more power than any other, and that all oppo-  
sition fell before him. Then one and another would  
pity and pray for his dear Tabernacle and Chapel  
congregations, and it was truly affecting to hear them  
bemoan America and England’s loss. Thus they  
continued for two hours, conversing about his great  
usefulness, and praying that God would scatter his  
gifts, and drop his mantle among them.”

Dr. Gillies says, “Early next morning, Mr. Sher-  
 19\*

burn of Portsmouth, sent Mr. Clarkson and Dr.  
Haven with a message to Mr. Parsons, desiring that  
Mr. Whitefield’s remains might be buried in his own  
new tomb, at his own expense; and in the evening  
several gentlemen from Boston came to Mr. Parsons,  
desiring the body might be carried there. But as  
Mr. Whitefield had repeatedly desired to be buried  
before Mr. Parsons’ pulpit, if he died at Newburyport,  
Mr. Parsons thought himself obliged to deny both  
these requests.”

Mr. Parsons, in a note to his funeral sermon, says,  
“At one o’clock all the bells in the town were tolled  
for half an hour, and all the vessels in the harbor  
gave their proper signals of mourning. At two o’clock  
the bells tolled a second time. At three the bells  
called to attend the funeral. The Rev. Dr. Haven  
of Portsmouth, and the Rev. Messrs. Rodgers of Ex-  
eter, Jewet and Chandler of Rowley, Moses Par-  
sons of Newbury, and Bass of Newburyport, were  
pall-bearers. Mr. Parsons and his family, with many  
other respectable persons, followed the corpse in  
mourning.”

“The procession,” says Mr. Smith, “was only one  
mile, and then the corpse was carried into the Pres-  
byterian church, and placed at the foot of the pulpit,  
close to the vault; the Rev. Daniel Rodgers made a  
very affecting prayer, and openly declared, that, un-  
der God, he owed his conversion to that dear man  
of God whose precious remains now lay before them.  
Then he cried out, ‘0 my father, my father!’ then  
stopped and wept as though his heart would break;  
the people weeping all through the place. Then he

recovered, and finished his prayer, and sat down and  
wept. Then one of the deacons gave out the hymn,  
 Why do we mourn departing friends?’

some of the people weeping, some singing, and so on  
alternately. The Rev. Mr. Jewet preached a funeral  
discourse; and made an affectionate address to his  
brethren, to lay to heart the death of that useful man  
of God, begging that he and they might be upon their  
watchtower, and endeavor to follow his blessed exam-  
ple. The corpse was then put into the vault, and all  
concluded with a short prayer, and dismission of the  
people, who went weeping through the streets to their  
respective places of abode.”

The Rev. Mr. Rodgers, from whose “Almanack  
Journal” we have quoted, records that the vast assem-  
bly at the funeral consisted of “four, since thought  
five thousand people,” and adds, Oct. 7, “I preached  
from those words in the first Philippians, ‘Having a  
desire to depart and be with Christ,’ etc. I spoke  
extempore, somewhat largely, of dear Mr. Whitefield’s  
character.”

The late venerable Mr. Bartlet of Newburyport,  
some years ago, erected a monument to the memory  
of Whitefield in the church beneath which his remains  
are interred. The cenotaph was executed by Mr.  
Struthers of Philadelphia, after a design of. Strick-  
land, and the inscription which follows was written  
by the late Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Porter, of the Theo-  
logical seminary at Andover.

**HIS CENOTAPH**

IS ERECTED, WITH AFFECTIONATE VENERATION,

**To the Memory**

**OF**

**THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,**

BORN AT GLOUCESTER, ENGLAND, DECEMBER 16, 1714;  
 EDUCATED AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY; ORDAINED 1736.

IN A MINISTRY OF THIRTY-FOUR YEARS,

HE CROSSED THE ATLANTIC THIRTEEN TIMES,

AND PREACHED MORE THAN EIGHTEEN THOUSAND SERMONS.

AS A SOLDIER OP THE CROSS, HUMBLE, DEVOUT, ARDENT,

HE PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD:

PREFERRING THE HONOR OF CHRIST TO HIS OWN INTEREST, REPOSE,  
 REPUTATION, AND LIFE.

AS A CHRISTIAN ORATOR, HIS DEEP PIETY, DISINTERESTED ZEAL,  
 AND VIVID IMAGINATION,

GAVE UNEXAMPLED ENERGY TO HIS LOOK, UTTERANCE, AND ACTION.

BOLD, FERVENT, PUNGENT, AND POPULAR IN HIS ELOQUENCE,

NO OTHER UNINSPIRED MAN EVER PREACHED TO SO LARGE ASSEMBLIES,  
 OR ENFORCED THE SIMPLE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL BY MOTIVES  
 SO PERSUASIVE AND AWFUL, AND WITH AN INFLUENCE SO POWER-  
 FUL, ON THE HEARTS OF HIS HEARERS.

HE DIED OF ASTHMA, SEPTEMBER 30, 1770.  
 SUDDENLY EXCHANGING HIS LIFE OF UNPARALLELED LABORS  
 FOR HIS ETERNAL REST.



OLD SOUTH CHURCH, BOSTON, p. 172

MONUMENT

OLD SOUTH, AT NEWBURYPORT

CHAPTER XVII.

TESTIMONIES AND FACTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF WHITE-  
FIELD’S CHARACTER.

“Last evening,” says a letter from Boston, Octo-  
ber 1, 1770, to the “Pennsylvania Journal,” “we were  
informed by a melancholy messenger from Newbury-  
port, that yesterday morning about six o'clock, at that  
place, the renowned and Rev. George Whitefield,  
chaplain to the Right Hon. the Countess of Hunting-  
don, etc,, was, by a sudden mandate, summoned to the  
bosom of his Saviour. He had been preaching in  
divers parts of this province since his arrival from  
the southward, with his usual diligence and energy;  
was now from a tour to the province of New Hamp-  
shire on his return to this town, but being seized with  
a violent fit of the asthma, was in a short space trans-  
lated from the labors of this life to the enjoyment of  
a better.

“Of this truly pious and very extraordinary per-  
sonage, little can be said but what every friend to  
vital Christianity who has sat under his ministry will  
readily attest. In his public performances through-  
out Europe and British America, he has, for a long  
course of years, astonished the world as a prodigy of  
eloquence and devotion. With what frequency and  
cheerfulness did he ascend the desk, the language of  
his actions being ever, ‘Wist ye not that I must be  
about my Master's business?’ With what divine pa-  
thos did he plead with, and persuade by the most engag-

ing incitements, the impenitent sinner to the practice  
of piety and virtue. Filled with the spirit of grace,  
he spoke from the heart; and with a fervency of zeal  
perhaps unequalled since the apostles, ornamented  
the celestial annunciations of the preacher with the  
graceful and most enticing charms of rhetoric and  
oratory. From the pulpit he was, unrivalled in the  
command of an ever-crowded and admiring auditory;  
nor was he less entertaining and instructive in his  
private conversation and deportment. Happy in a  
remarkable ease of address, willing to communicate,  
studious to edify, and formed to amuse—such, in  
more retired life, was he whom we lament. And while  
a peculiar pleasantry enlivened and rendered his com-  
pany agreeable, his conversation was ever marked  
with the greatest objects of his pursuit—virtue and  
religion. It were to be wished that the good impres-  
sions of his ministry may be long retained; and that  
the rising generation, like their pious ancestors, may  
catch a spark of that ethereal flame which burnt with  
such lustre in the sentiments and practice of this  
faithful servant of the most high God.”

Another contemporaneous article says, “Dr. Coop-  
er of Brattle-street, called an enthusiast by none, won  
early to serious religion by his [Whitefield’s] instru-  
mentality, delivered a sermon upon his death, in which  
he pronounced a strong eulogy in favor of his holy  
and successful activity in the cause of vital and prac-  
tical religion through the English dominions. Pews,  
aisles, and seats were so crowded, and heads and  
shoulders were in such close phalanx, that it looked  
as though a man might walk everywhere upon the up-

per surface of the assembly, without finding an open-  
ing for descending to the floor.”

When the news of Mr. Whitefield’s death reached  
Georgia, its inhabitants vied with each other in show-  
ing him the highest respect. All the black cloth in  
the stores was bought up the pulpit and desk of the  
church, the branches, the organ-loft, and the pews of  
the governor and council were covered with black.  
The governor and council in deep mourning convened  
at the state-house, and went in procession to church,  
where they were received by the organ playing a fu-  
neral dirge. Two funeral sermons were there listened  
to by the authorities. In the Legislature high eulo-  
giums were pronounced on the admirable preacher,  
and a sum of money was unanimously appropriated  
for removing his remains to Georgia, to be interred  
at his orphan-house; but the inhabitants of Newbury-  
port strongly objected, and the design was relinquish-  
ed. Forty-five years later when a new county was  
formed in Georgia, it received the name of White-  
field in commemoration of his worth and useful ser-  
vices.

In a letter from Dr. Franklin to a gentleman in  
Georgia, he says, “I cannot forbear expressing the  
pleasure it gives me to see an account of the respect  
paid to his memory by your assembly. I knew him  
intimately upwards of thirty years; his integrity, dis-  
interestedness, and indefatigable zeal in prosecuting  
every good work, I have never seen equalled, I shall  
never see excelled.”

Of course it would be expected that the sermons  
at Savannah would be of great interest. Such a dis-

course was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Ellington, who  
very truly said, “Whitefield’s longing desires for the  
salvation of immortal souls would not admit of his  
being confined within the limits of any walls. How  
he has preached, with showers of stones, and many  
other instruments of malice and revenge about his  
ears, many of his surviving friends can witness. But  
having the salvation of sinners at heart, and a great  
desire to rescue them from the power of an eternal  
death, he resolved to spend and be spent for the ser-  
vice of precious and immortal souls; and spared no  
pains and refused no labor, so that he might adminis-  
ter to their real and eternal good. He died like a  
hero on the field of battle. Thousands in England,  
Scotland, and America have great reason to bless  
God for his ministrations.”

Who shall attempt to describe the feelings of the  
congregations at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court  
chapels, when the news of their pastor’s death first  
reached them? All were indeed clothed in mourn-  
ing. By Whitefield’s own previous appointment, the  
Rev. John Wesley preached the funeral sermon at  
Tottenham Court-road chapel. The preacher bore  
this testimony: “In his public labors he has for many  
years astonished the world with his eloquence and  
devotion. With what divine pathos did he persuade  
the impenitent sinner to embrace the practice of early  
piety and virtue. Filled with the spirit of grace, he  
spoke from the heart with a fervency of zeal perhaps  
unequalled since the days of the apostles; and adorn-  
ed the truths he delivered with the most graceful  
charms of rhetoric and oratory. From the pulpit he

was unrivalled in the command of an ever-crowded  
auditory. It was the love of God shed abroad in his  
heart by the Holy Ghost which filled his soul with  
tender, disinterested love to every child of man. . . .  
Mention has been already made of his unparalleled  
zeal, his indefatigable activity, his tender-heartedness  
to the afflicted, and charitableness towards the poor.  
But should we not likewise mention his deep grati-  
tude to all whom God had used as instruments of  
good to him? of whom he did not cease to speak in  
the most respectful manner, even to his dying day.  
Should we not mention that he had a heart suscepti-  
ble of the most generous and the most tender friend-  
ship? I have frequently thought that this, of all oth-  
ers, was the distinguishing part of his character. How  
few have we known of so kind a temper, of such large  
and flowing affections! Was it not principally by  
this that the hearts of others were so strongly drawn  
and knit to him? Can any thing but love beget love?  
This shone in his very countenance, and continually  
breathed in all his words, whether in public or pri-  
vate. Was it not this which, quick and penetrating  
as lightning, flew from heart to heart; which gave  
that life to his sermons, his conversation, his letters?  
Ye are witnesses.”

The Rev. John Newton preached a funeral sermon  
at Olney, where he was then settled, from the highly  
appropriate text, “He was a burning and a shining  
light,” John 5:35, in which he thus speaks of White-  
field: “Some ministers are burning and shining lights  
in a peculiar and eminent degree. Such a one, I doubt  
not, was the servant of God whose death we now la-

ment. I have had some opportunities of looking over  
the history of the church in past ages. I am not back-  
ward to say that I have not read or heard of any  
person, since the apostles’ days, of whom it may be  
more emphatically said,’ He was a burning and a shin-  
ing light,’ than the late Mr. Whitefield; whether we  
consider the warmth of his zeal, the greatness of his  
ministerial talents, or the extensive usefulness with  
which the Lord honored him. I do not mean to praise  
the man, but the Lord who furnished him, and made  
him what he was. He was raised up to shine in a  
dark place. The state of religion when he first ap-  
peared in public, was very low in our established  
church. I speak the truth, though to some it may be  
an offensive truth. The doctrines of grace were sel-  
dom heard from the pulpit, and the life and power of  
godliness were little known. Many of the most spir-  
itual among the dissenters, were mourning under a  
sense of a great spreading declension on their side.  
What a change has taken place throughout the land  
within a little more than thirty years; that is, since  
the time when the first set of despised ministers came  
to Oxford! And how much of this change has been  
owing to God’s blessing on Mr. Whitefield’s labors,  
is well known to many who have lived through this  
period, and can hardly be denied by those who are

least willing to allow it His zeal was not like

wildfire, but directed by sound principles, and a sound

judgment The Lord gave him a manner of

preaching which was peculiarly his own. He copied  
from none, and I never met with any one who could  
imitate him with success.”

With regret we tear ourselves away from Romaine  
and Toplady, from Pemberton and Parsons, and from  
a multitude of others who bore testimonies like those  
we have given, but which would exceed the limits of  
our narrative.

Mr. Newton, after his removal to London, once  
breakfasting with a company of noblemen and gentle-  
men, was asked if he knew Mr. Whitefield. He  
answered in the affirmative, and remarked, that as a  
preacher Mr. Whitefield far exceeded every other  
man of his time. Mr. Newton added, “I bless God  
that I lived in his time: many were the winter morn-  
ings I rose at four o'clock to attend his Tabernacle  
discourses at five; and I have seen Moorfields as full  
of lanterns at these times, as I suppose the Hay market  
is full of flambeaux on an opera night." As a proof  
of the power of Mr. Whitefield's preaching, Mr. New-  
ton said, that a military officer at Glasgow, who had  
heard him preach, laid a wager with another, that at  
a certain charity sermon, though he went with preju-  
dice, he would be compelled to give something. The  
other, to make sure that he would not, laid aside all  
the money out of his pockets; but before he left the  
church, he was glad to borrow some, and lose his bet.  
Mr. Newton mentioned as another striking illustration  
of Mr. Whitefield's persuasive oratory, his collecting  
after one sermon £600, or about $3,000, for the inhab-  
itants of an obscure village in Germany, that had been  
burned down. After this sermon, Whitefield said,  
We shall sing a hymn, during which those who do  
not choose to give their mite on this awful occasion,  
may sneak off." Not one moved; he came down

from the pulpit, ordered all the doors to be shut but  
one, at which he held the plate himself, and collected  
the large sum we have named. Mr. Newton farther  
stated what he knew to be a fact, that at the time  
of Whitefield’s greatest persecution, when obliged  
to speak in the streets, in one week he received  
not fewer than a thousand letters from persons dis-  
tressed in their consciences by the energy of his  
preaching.

A gentleman of title in England was one day ex-  
amining some works of the distinguished sculptor,  
John Bacon. Among them he observed a bust of Mr.  
Whitefield, which led him to remark, “After all that  
has been said, this was truly a great man; he was  
the founder of a new religion.” Mr. Bacon replied,  
“A new religion, sir?” “Yes,” said the baronet;  
“what do you call it?” “Nothing,” was the re-  
ply, “but the old religion revived with new energy,  
and treated as though the preacher meant what he  
said.”

Several interesting narratives have been given of  
visits to the tomb of Whitefield, which show the pre-  
ciousness of his memory.

In 1834, the Rev. Andrew Reed, D. D., of Lon-  
don, and the late Rev. James Matheson, D. D., of  
Durham, visited this country as a deputation to its  
churches from the Congregational Union of England  
and Wales. In describing their visit to Newbury-  
port, Dr. Reed says, “We had a conference with the  
pastors here, and afterwards went to the church  
which is enriched with the remains of Whitefield.  
The elders of the church were present in the porch

to receive us. We descended to the vault. There  
were three coffins before us. Two pastors of the  
church lay on either side, and the remains of White-  
field in the centre. The cover was slipt aside, and  
they lay beneath my eye. I had before stood in his  
pulpits; seen his books, his rings, and chairs; but  
never before had I looked on part of his very self.  
The skull, which is perfect, clean, and fair, I received,  
as is the custom, into my hand. I could say nothing;  
but thought and feeling were busy. On returning to  
the church, I proposed an exercise of worship. We  
collected over the grave of the eloquent, the devoted,  
and seraphic man, and gave expression to the senti-  
ments that possessed us, by solemn psalmody and fer-  
vent prayer. It was not an ordinary service to any  
of us.”

In the year 1835, a similar deputation visited this  
country from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and  
Ireland. It consisted of the late Rev. F. A. Cox,  
D. D., of London, and the Rev. James Hoby, D. D.,  
then of Birmingham. They also visited the tomb of  
our never-to-be-forgotten evangelist. We give a few  
sentences from their report: “We made an excursion  
to Newburyport, thirty-nine miles from Boston, to see  
the tomb of Whitefield. On our arrival, we hastened  
to the depository of the precious remains of that emi-  
nent servant of God. . . We descended with some  
difficulty into the subterraneous vault, which is imme-  
diately behind the pulpit, in a small chamber like a  
vestry, external to the body of the church. Deep ex-  
pectant emotions thrilled through our bosoms, while  
a kind of trap-door was opened, and we descended

beneath the floor to another door, which stood per-  
pendicularly, by which we entered, or rather crept,  
into the awful and silent sepulchre. There were three  
coffins placed in parallel lines; two of them contain-  
ing the mortal part of Mr. Parsons and Mr. Prince,  
pastors of the church. We instinctively took our  
seats, the one on the one coffin, the other on the other,  
with the coffin of Whitefield between, over which,  
when the upper part of the lid was removed, to reveal  
the skeleton secrets of the narrow prison-house, we  
bent in solemn stillness and awe. We gazed on  
the fragments—we contemplated and handled the  
skull of that great preacher of righteousness—we  
thought of his devoted life, his blessed death, his high  
and happy destiny; and whispered our adorations  
of the grace that formed him both for earth and  
heaven.”

The following lines were written by the departed  
and amiable William B. Tappan, on visiting this spot  
in September, 1887.

“ And this was Whitefield!—this, the dust now blending  
With kindred dust, that wrapt his soul of fire-—

Which, from the mantle freed, is still ascending  
Through regions of far glory, holier, higher.

Oh, as I gaze here with a solemn joy  
And awful reverence, in which shares Decay,

Who, this fair frame reluctant to destroy,

Yields it not yet to doom which all obey—

How follows thought his flight, at Love’s command,

From hemisphere in sin, to hemisphere,

Warning uncounted multitudes with tears—

Preaching the risen Christ on sea and land—

And **now** those angel journeyings above!

Souls, his companions, saved by such unwearied love!”

In December, 1845, one of the London daily papers,  
“The Sun,” contained a somewhat extended account  
of Whitefield in New England, and especially his  
death, funeral, and tomb, from which we borrow me-  
mentos that in both hemispheres may be interesting  
“for generations to come.”

“I was spending Sunday at Old Ipswich, in the  
latter part of last September, when by accident I fell  
in with an old inhabitant of the town who had heard  
Whitefield preach there. He was a sort of patriarch  
of the place, and as he sat on one of the stones which  
surrounded the ancient orthodox meeting-house, his  
grey locks streaming from beneath his queerly shaped  
hat, and attired in his primly cut old-fashioned coat,  
he appeared no bad representative of the departed  
Puritans who, in former days, had soberly and decently  
obeyed the call of the Sabbath bell, and worshipped in  
the same temple whose steeple now casts its shadow  
athwart the green sward beneath. . . As the bell of  
Old Ipswich church swung out that bright Sabbath  
morning, it was a pretty sight to see the village peo-  
ple coming from different points to the decaying old  
church, which was situated, as most country churches  
in New England are, on a hill-top. While I was en-  
joying the scene, the old man to whom I have alluded,  
and who was sitting on a stone, accosted me, and  
asked me if I was not a stranger ‘in these parts.’ On  
my informing him that I was, he pointed out to me the  
‘lions’ of the neighborhood, and wound up by asking,

‘I suppose, sir, you’ve heard of Whitefield?’

“‘Of Whitefield? to be sure I have.’

“‘Well, I’ve seen Whitefield, George White-

field stood on this very stone.’ (dropping his stick  
feebly from his shaking hands,) ‘and I heard him  
preach here.’

‘“And do you remember any thing about him?’ I  
asked.

“‘Well, I guess I do. I was but a bit of a boy  
then; but here he stood on this stone, looking like a  
flying angel, and we call this Whitefield’s pulpit to  
this day. . . There was folks here from all parts  
to hear him; so he was obliged to preach outside, for  
the church was n’t half big enough for ‘em, and no  
two ways about it. I’ve heard many parsons sin’that time, but none on ‘em could come nigh him, any  
how they could fix it.’

“‘Do you remember any thing of his sermons?’I inquired.

“‘Oh, I was too young to notice aught, sir, but the  
preacher hisself and the crowds of people, but I know  
he had a very sweet voice; and as I said, when he  
spread his arms out, with a little Bible in his hand,  
he looked like a flying angel. There never were so  
many people, afore nor since, in Old Ipswich. I sup-  
pose, sir, you’ll be going to see his bones? He was  
buried at Newburyport, and you can see ‘em if you  
like.’

“I made up my mind that I would see them, if  
possible. On the following day, I went over to New-  
buryport by railroad, and proceeded first to the house  
in which Whitefield died. It was at the time the  
residence of the Rev. Jonathan Parsons, the first reg-  
ular pastor of the Presbyterian Society in the town.  
It is a plain unpretending structure, possessing no

other claims to attention than its being the spot where  
the last scene of Whitefield’s career was enacted. I  
knocked, and asked of a lady who answered my sum-  
mons, if I might be allowed to see the room in which  
Mr. Whitefield died. She very courteously showed  
me up a flight of stairs into a chamber, which, she  
said, Mr. Whitefield used to sleep in. ‘Here is the  
place he died in,’ said the lady, as she showed me a  
little entry just outside the door of the chamber, di-  
rectly over the entrance to the house. ‘He lay the  
night before he died,’ said the lady, ‘in that bed-cham-  
ber; and when he was struck with death, he ran out  
to this entry window for breath, and died while sitting  
in a chair opposite to it.’

“The Federal-street church, where Whitefield was  
buried, was but a short distance from the house in  
which he died, and on my way to it I called on the  
sexton. . . He preceded me through the aisle of the  
church, and opening a little narrow door by the side  
of the pulpit, we passed into a dim gloomy room  
behind it, and from thence descending four or five  
steps, found ourselves in a brick vault which lay di-  
rectly under the pulpit. It was two or three minutes  
before my eyes got accustomed to the gloom; but  
soon objects became discernible, and I saw three old  
coffins, two of them serving as supporters to the third,  
which lay across them. . . . The sexton trimmed his  
lamp, then lifted the lid of an old coffin, and holding  
the flame close to it, said, ‘Here, look in, . . . that’7s  
THE MAN.’

“Yes, there lay the man, or at least, all that re-  
mains of the once mighty preacher. A strange awe

Whitefield 20

came over me at his words, ‘That’s the man.’ I took  
the skull in my hands, and examined it carefully. The  
forehead was rather narrow than broad, and by no  
means high. I soon put it back again to the coffin.”

Among the more prominent traits in the character  
of Whitefield, we may designate his indifference to his  
own honor and ease, of which his narrative contains  
almost innumerable illustrations. In the preparation  
of the deed of trust for his intended college, he en-  
tirely omitted his own name, that the proposed trus-  
tees might accept the office without suffering contempt  
for being connected with him. It was not pretence  
which led him often to say. “Let the name of George  
Whitefield perish, if God be glorified.” On the same  
principle of almost self-annihilation he acted in refer-  
ence to the accumulation of money. He secured noth-  
ing for himself. It does not seem that what he left  
to his friends by his will was or could be paid; what  
had been left him as legacies had been nearly all  
expended, and would have been entirely, had he lived  
to return to his beloved Bethesda. By his will he  
placed the institution in the hands of Lady Hunting-  
don, who sent out ministers and other persons to con-  
duct it. But soon after this, the buildings were, burnt  
down. After the fire, came the Revolutionary war,  
which tended to unsettle the tenure of property, and  
at the time of its close, the whole plans, alike of the  
orphan-house and the college, were nearly unknown.  
The authorities of Savannah, in accordance with the  
high regard which they still entertained for White-  
field’s memory, secured whatever they could of the

wreck, the proceeds of which they invested in a school  
for the young, which yet flourishes.

Perhaps no man was ever more thoroughly fond of  
labor. From a memorandum in which Mr. Whitefield  
recorded the times and places of his ministerial labors,  
it appears that from the period of his ordination to  
that of his death, which was thirty-four years, he  
preached upwards of eighteen thousand sermons. It  
would be difficult to imagine how many thousand  
miles he travelled. When he ascertained that his  
physical powers began to fail, putting himself on what  
he called “short allowance,” he preached only once on  
every week-day, and three times on the Sabbath. In view  
of his various journeyings in the slow and inconven-  
ient modes of travelling then in use, his thirteen voy-  
ages across the Atlantic, and all that he accomplished,  
it appears that few men ever performed so much labor  
within the same period.

Nearly every one who has attempted a description  
of Whitefield has said much of his extraordinary voice.  
It is known that Garrick was heard to say that he  
would give a hundred guineas if he could say “Oh!”  
as Whitefield did. The late Rev. Dr. Haweis, speak-  
ing of his “wonderful voice,” and of its sweetness and  
variety of tone, said he believed on a serene evening  
it might be distinctly heard for nearly a mile. Others  
have given similar evidence.

The late Sir George Beaumont, no mean authority  
on such a subject, thus familiarly speaks: “Oh yes; I  
heard that young gentleman this morning allude to  
‘roaring Whitefield,’ and was amused at his mistake.  
It is a common one. Whitefield did not roar. I

have been his auditor more than once, and was de-  
lighted with him. Whitefield's voice could be heard  
at an immense distance; but that was owing to its  
fulness, roundness, and clearness. It was a perfectly  
sound voice. It is an odd description, but I can hit  
upon no better; there was neither crack nor flaw.  
To describe him as a bellowing, roaring field preach-  
er, is to describe a mountebank, not Whitefield. He  
had powers of pathos of the highest order. The ten-  
der, soft, persuasive tones of his voice were melodious  
in the extreme. And when he desired to win, or per-  
suade, or plead, dr soothe, the gush of feeling which  
his voice conveyed at once surprised and overpowered  
you.”

Speaking on the authority of his tutor, the Rev.  
Cornelius Winter, the late excellent Mr. Jay says that  
Whitefield's voice was incomparable: not only distinct  
and loud, but abounding with every kind of inflection,  
and perfectly under his power; so that he could render  
every thing he expressed, however common or insig-  
nificant in itself, striking and affecting.

This distinguished man had a peculiar talent for  
making the narration of facts tell in the pulpit. Nothing  
occurred among even his own family connections, but  
he would make it contribute to the edification of his  
auditors. One Lord's day morning, with his usual  
fervor he exhorted his hearers to give up the use of  
means for the spiritual good of their relatives and  
friends only with their lives. He told them he had a  
brother, for whose spiritual welfare he had very long  
used every possible means. He had warned him, and  
prayed for him, but all apparently to no purpose, till

a few weeks previous; when that brother, to his as-  
tonishment and joy, came to his house, and with many  
tears declared that he had come up from the country  
to testify to him the great change which divine grace  
had wrought in his heart, and to acknowledge with  
gratitude his obligation to the man by whom God had  
wrought. Mr. Whitefield added, that he had that  
morning received information, that on his brother’s  
return to Gloucestershire, where he resided, he drop-  
ped down dead as he was getting out of a stage-  
coach. “Let us pray always,” said he, “for our-  
selves, and for those who are dear to us, and never  
faint.”

This habit of making every occurrence bear on his  
ministry, Mr. Winter, who knew him more intimately,  
and has told us more of his private life and conduct  
than any other man, tells us was “perfectly in charac-  
ter with Mr. Whitefield. He turned every thing into  
gold; he improved every thing for good. Passing  
occurrences determined the matter of his sermons,  
and, in some degree, the manner of his address. Thus,  
if he had read on astronomy in the course of the week,  
you would be sure to discover it. He knew how to  
convert the centripetal motion of the planets to the  
disposition of the Christian towards Christ; and the  
fatal attraction of the world was very properly repre-  
sented by a reference to the centrifugal. If he attend-  
ed any extraordinary trial, he would avail himself of  
the formality of the judge in pronouncing sentence.  
It would only be by hearing him, and by beholding  
his attitude and tears, that a person could well con-  
ceive the effect; for it was impossible but that solem-

nity must surround him who, under God, became the  
means of making all solemn.”

He sometimes made use of an incident of history  
in the reign of Henry VIII. The apprentices of Lon-  
don appeared before that monarch, pleading his par-  
don for their insurrections, manifesting intense feeling  
on the matter, and praying for “mercy, mercy.” “Take  
them away, take them away,” was the monarch’s re-  
quest, moved by the sight and the cries of these youths,  
“I cannot bear it.” The application, as will be read-  
ily supposed, was, that if an earthly monarch of Hen-  
ry’s character could be so moved, how prevalent must  
be the plea of the sinner in the ears of infinite Love.

The case of two Scotchmen in the convulsion of the  
state at the time of Charles II. served him on more  
than one occasion. These men, having to pass some  
of the troops, were thinking of their danger, and med-  
itating the best way of escape, when one of them pro-  
posed wearing a skullcap; but the other, thinking  
that would imply distrust of the providence of God,  
determined to proceed bareheaded. The last was  
the first laid hold of, and being asked, “Are you for  
the covenant?” replied, “Yes;” and being further  
asked, “What covenant?” answered, “The covenant  
of grace;” by which reply, eluding farther inquiry, he  
was allowed to pass; but the other, not answering  
satisfactorily, received a blow from the sabre, which  
penetrating through the cap, struck him dead. In the  
application, Mr. Whitefield, warning against vain  
confidence, exclaimed, “Beware of your skullcaps.”

An American clergyman has told us that he once  
related to Whitefield an affecting occurrence, but did

it with the ordinary brevity and feeling of common  
conversation. Afterwards he heard Mr. Whitefield  
preach, and tell this same story with such nature,  
pathos, and power, that the clergyman found himself  
weeping like a child. It has been well said, that he  
spoke with the tones of the soul and that his gestures  
were impelled by the same spontaneous magical influ-  
ence which made them, as well as his words, seem part  
of his soul. Indeed, he threw his soul into every  
thing he did and said.

It is said that,Whitefield would sometimes rise in  
the sacred desk, and for a minute or two looking in  
silence around his vast audience, as if salvation or  
perdition teemed in every cast of his eye, would burst  
into tears, while the swift contagion, before he uttered  
a word, had reached every heart that could feel, and  
dimmed every eye that could weep.\*

While his path to the sinner’s heart was thus met  
with tears, he was never without strength or aim.  
He struck everywhere. He swung his glittering  
weapon, “the sword of the Spirit,” in every direction,  
the same whether he preached in the cushioned and  
carpeted pulpit to lords, ladies, and gentlemen, or en-  
countered a mob of stage-players and merry-andrews  
in the open field. He insisted on instant, visible,  
decisive action in his hearers. All was commotion  
where he moved. The very earth would seem to be  
shaken with the thunder of his eloquence; the heav-

ens seemed, in the bold metaphor of Isaiah, to “drop  
down from above, and the skies to pour down right-  
eousness,” when he set the trumpet of the gospel to  
his lips, and made the notes of salvation or perdition  
ring in the ears of dying men. Such unwonted sounds  
startled the multitude into life, rousing energies that  
were forthwith enlisted either for or against the  
mighty cause which he advocated, with the boldness  
and fervor of one who had received immediate com-  
mission from heaven. His sacred ambition was con-  
tent with nothing short of the conquest of thousands.

It has been well said by a living American, writer,  
that “Whitefield was, in sacred eloquence, what Han-  
del was in sacred music. There was an air, a soul,  
and a movement in his oratory, which created inde-  
scribable emotion in his vast assemblies, and if Han-  
del, with a thousand auxiliary voices and instruments,  
astonished the multitude in Westminster Abbey, even  
to raising them on their feet, by the performance of  
his Messiah, Whitefield did greater wonders in his  
single person by preaching the Messiah to the immense  
crowds in Tottenham Court-road and Moorfields.”

The same writer has said elsewhere, “The influ-  
ence of Whitefield and Edwards, on theology and pul-  
pit eloquence were immense. There was in those  
two men indeed ‘a diversity of gifts, but the same  
spirit.’ The intellect prevailed in Edwards, the im-  
passioned in Whitefield. Pure truth came forth from  
the mind of the one as nakedly demonstrated as it  
ever was on the pages of Newton and Locke; for Ed-  
wards, when but a child, read Locke with enthusiasm.  
From the soul of Whitefield it came forth arrayed in

the gorgeous robes of his own many-colored imagina-  
tion, baptized in the tenderness of his own sympa-  
thetic spirit. At times, indeed, the thunders of Sinai  
seemed to shake the sacred desk, but the softer music  
of the harp of Zion was more congenial with his com-  
passionate spirit, though he was always bold for God,  
and braved danger in every form for the salvation of  
sinners. It is not strange that American preachers  
venerate, even to enthusiasm, the memory of such a  
man, and visit his dust, enshrined as it is in the bosom  
of New England, with feelings of indescribable inter-  
est. His labors were for us; his rest is with us; his  
example is before us. The first were indefatigable;  
the second is peaceful; the last is glorious.”

The Rev. Mr. Winter says, “I hardly ever knew  
him to go through a sermon without weeping more or  
less,” and again, “It was only by beholding his atti-  
tude and tears, that one could well conceive of the  
effect.” No doubt there was a connection between  
the tears of Whitefield and his piety; but it must not  
be supposed that he was always “the weeping proph-  
et;” he could smile as well as weep. A venerable  
lady in New York, known to some yet living, speak-  
ing of the influence which first won her heart to God,  
said that “Mr. Whitefield was so cheerful that it  
tempted her to be a Christian.”

Every thing about this distinguished man excited  
attention. His voice, accompanied by his look from  
crossed eyes, and proceeding from a man of his robust  
frame, produced wonderful effects. It is said that  
when once preaching in a graveyard, two young men  
conducted themselves improperly, when he fixed his

20\*

eyes upon them, and with, a voice resembling thunder,  
said, “Come down, ye rebels.” They instantly fell,  
neither of them being inclined again to come into  
contact with such a look, or to hear such a voice.

He was once preaching to a vast crowd of people  
in southern Pennsylvania, which was at that time  
ignorant and uncivilized. He was incessantly dis-  
turbed by their noise, and twice reproved them with  
great severity. At length he was so overcome by  
their noisy and irreverent conduct, that he stopped  
short, dropped his head into his hands, burst into a  
flood of tears, and exclaimed, “Oh, Lord God, I am  
ashamed that these people are provoking thy wrath,  
and I dare not reprove them a third time.” Such was  
the effect of his conduct and feeling, that his audience  
became perfectly quiet, and remained so till the end  
of his discourse.

We have before us two narratives of his preaching  
during very heavy storms. Dr. Campbell, a successor  
of Whitefield in the Tabernacle in London, and whose  
ministry has been marked by much of the power and  
success of his great predecessor, has given to the first  
of these narratives the title of “Thunder and Elo-  
quence,” Before he commenced his sermon on this oc-  
casion, long darkening columns crowded the bright  
sunny sky of the morning, and swept their dull shad-  
ows over the building, in fearful,augury of the storm.

His text was, “Strive to enter in at the strait  
gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter  
in, and shall not be able.” “See,” said he, pointing  
to a shadow that was flitting across the floor—“see  
that emblem of human life. It passed for a moment,

and concealed the brightness of heaven from our view;  
but it is gone. And where will ye be, my hearers,  
when your lives have passed away like that dark  
cloud? Oh, my dear friends, I see thousands sitting  
attentively, with their eyes fixed on the poor unwor-  
thy preacher. In a few days, we shall all meet at  
the judgment-seat of Christ. We shall form a part  
of that vast assembly that will gather before the  
throne; and every eye will behold the Judge. With  
a voice whose call you must abide and answer, he  
will inquire whether on earth you strove to enter in  
at the strait gate; whether you were supremely de-  
voted to God; whether your hearts were absorbed in  
him. My blood runs cold when I think how many of  
you will then seek to enter in, and shall not be able.  
Oh, what plea can you make before the Judge of the  
whole earth? Can you say it has been your whole  
endeavor to mortify the flesh, with its affections and  
lusts—that your life has been one long effort to do  
the will of God? No; you must answer, ‘I made  
myself easy in the world by flattering myself that  
all would end well; but I have deceived my own  
soul, and am lost.’

“You, 0 false and hollow Christian, of what avail  
will it be that you have done many things—that you  
have read much in the sacred word—that you have  
made long prayers—that you have attended religious  
duties, and that you have appeared holy in the eyes  
of men? What will all this be, if, instead of loving  
Him supremely, you have been supposing you should  
exalt yourself in heaven by acts really polluted and  
unholy?

“And you, rich men, wherefore do you hoard your  
silver? Wherefore count the price you have received  
for Him whom you every day crucify in your love of  
gain? Why—that when you are too poor to buy a

drop of cold water, your beloved son may be rolled  
to hell in his chariot, pillowed and cushioned around  
him.”

The eye of the preacher gradually lighted up as  
he proceeded, till towards the close it seemed to spar-  
kle with celestial fire. With his whole energy he  
exclaimed, “0 sinners, by all your hopes of happiness,  
I beseech you to repent. Let not the wrath of God  
be awakened. Let not the fires of eternity be kindled  
against you. See there!” pointing to the lightning,  
which played on the corner of the pulpit, “it is a  
glance from the angry eye of Jehovah !” Raising his  
finger in a listening attitude, as the distant thunder  
grew louder and louder, and broke in one tremendous  
crash over the building, he continued, “Hark! It was  
the voice of the Almighty as he passed by in his an-  
ger!” As the sound died away, he covered his face  
with his hands, and knelt beside his pulpit, apparently  
lost in inward and intense prayer. The storm passed  
rapidly away, and the sun, beaming forth in his might,  
threw across the heavens a magnificent arch of peace.  
Rising, and pointing to the beautiful object, he ex-  
claimed, “Look upon the rainbow, and praise Him  
who made it. Very beautiful it is in the brightness  
thereof. It compasseth the heavens about with glory;  
and the hands of the Most High have bended it!”

On another occasion, as Mr. Whitefield was  
preaching in Boston, on the wonders of creation,

providence, and redemption, a violent storm of'thun-  
der and lightning came on. In the midst of the ser-  
mon it attained to so alarming a height that the con-  
gregation sat in almost breathless awe. The preacher  
closed his note-book, and stepping into one of the  
wings of the desk, fell on his knees, and with much  
feeling and fine taste repeated:

“ Hark, **the Eternal** rends the sky!

A mighty voice before him goes—

A voice of music to his friends,

But threatening thunder to his foes:

‘Come, children, to your Father’s arms;

Hide in the chambers of my grace,

Till the fierce storm be overblown,

And my revenging fury cease—’

“Let us devoutly sing to the praise and glory of God  
this hymn, Old Hundred.”

The whole congregation instantly rose, and poured  
forth the sacred song, in which they were accompa-  
nied by the organ, in a style of simple grandeur and  
heartfelt devotion that was probably never surpassed.  
By the time the hymn was finished the storm was  
hushed. The remainder of the services were well  
adapted to sustain the elevated feeling which had  
been produced; and the benediction with which the  
good man dismissed the flock was universally received  
with streaming eyes, and hearts overflowing with ten-  
derness and gratitude.

Another writer has thus described his appearance  
in the pulpit. There was nothing in the appearance  
of this extraordinary man which would lead you to   
suppose that a Felix would tremble before him. He  
was something above the middle stature, well propor-

tioned, and remarkable for a native gracefulness of  
manner. His complexion was very fair, his features  
regular, and his dark blue eyes small and lively. In  
recovering from the measles he had contracted a  
squint with one of them; but this peculiarity rather  
rendered the expression of his countenance more re-  
markable, than in any degree lessened the effect of its  
uncommon sweetness. His voice excelled both in  
melody and compass; and its fine modulations were  
happily accompanied by that grace of action which  
he possessed in an eminent degree, and which has  
been said to be the chief requisite in an orator. To  
see him when he first commenced; one would have  
thought him any thing but enthusiastic and glowing;  
but as he proceeded, his heart warmed with his sub-  
ject, and his manner became impetuous and animated   
till, forgetful of every thing around him, he seemed to  
kneel at the throne of Jehovah, and to beseech in  
agony for his fellow-beings.

After he had finished his prayer, he knelt for a  
long time in profound silence, and so powerful was  
the effect on the most heartless of his audience, that a  
stillness like that of the tomb pervaded the whole  
house.

Mr. Tracy, in his narrative of “the Great Awak-  
ening” about 1740, has admirably remarked, “It is  
often said that Whitefield cannot have been a very  
great man, because his printed sermons contain only  
plain, common thoughts, such as men of ordinary  
minds habitually use. But what made those thoughts  
so common? They were not common when he began  
to utter them. In England especially, and to a con-

siderable extent here also, they astonished his hearers  
by their strangeness. What is more common than a  
voyage across the Atlantic? But was Columbus,  
therefore, only an ordinary man? The case of Co-  
pernicus is more nearly parallel. He reasserted a  
truth which had been uttered, repudiated, and for-  
gotten. That truth is now common, even among  
school-boys. But was he, therefore, only a child in  
intellect?”

There are yet extant about eighty of the sermons  
by which Whitefield agitated nations, and the more  
remote influence of which is still distinctly to be  
traced, in the popular divinity and national character  
of Great Britain and of the United States. Of these  
compositions, Sir James Stephen, an evangelical Epis-  
copalian of London, wrote at some length in the  
“Edinburgh Review,” 1838, and we shall make no  
apology for borrowing a portion of his remarks, com-  
bining them with some of our own.

It is true, that these sermons have fallen into very  
general neglect; for to win permanent acceptance  
for a book, into which the principles of life were not  
infused by its author, is a miracle which not even the  
zeal of religious proselytes can accomplish. Yet, in-  
ferior as were his inventive to his mimetic powers,  
Whitefield is entitled, among theological writers, to  
a place which, if it cannot challenge admiration, may  
at least excite and reward curiosity. Many, and those  
by far the worst of his discourses, bear the marks of  
careful preparation. Take at hazard a sermon of one  
of the preachers usually distinguished as evangelical,  
add a little to its length, and subtract a great deal

from its point and polish, and you have one of his  
more elaborate common topics discussed in a common-  
place way; a respectable mediocrity of thought and  
style; endless variations on one or two cardinal  
truths—in short, the task of a clerical Saturday even-  
ing, executed with piety, good sense, and exceeding  
sedateness. But open one of that series of White-  
field’s sermons which bears the stamp of having been  
conceived and uttered at the same moment, and imag-  
ine it recited to myriads of eager listeners with every  
charm of voice and gesture, and the secret of his  
unrivalled fascination is at least partially disclosed.  
He places himself on terms of intimacy and unre-  
served confidence with you, and makes it almost as  
difficult to decline the invitation to his familiar talk  
as if Montaigne himself had issued it. The egotism  
is amusing, affectionate, and warm-hearted, with just  
that slight infusion of self-importance without which  
it would pass for affectation. In his art of rhetoric,  
personification holds the first place; and the prosopo-  
poeia is so managed as to quicken abstractions into  
life, and to give them individuality and distinctness  
without the exhibition of any of those spasmodic and  
distorted images which obey the incantations of vul-  
gar exorcists. Every trace of study and contrivance  
is obliterated by the hearty earnestness which per-  
vades each successive period, and by the vernacular  
and homely idioms in which his meaning is conveyed.

It is in the grandeur and singleness of purpose  
that the charm of Whitefield’s preaching seems to  
have consisted. You feel that you have to do with  
a man who lived and spoke, and who would gladly

have died, to deter his hearers from the path of destruc-  
tion, and to guide them to holiness and peace. His  
gossipping stories, and dramatic forms of speech, are  
never employed to hide the awful realities on which  
he is intent. Conscience is not permitted to find an  
intoxicating draught in even spiritual excitement, or  
an anodyne in glowing imagery. Guilt and its pun-  
ishment, pardon and spotless purity, death and an  
eternal existence, stand out in bold relief on every  
page. From these the eye of the teacher is never  
withdrawn, and to these the attention of the hearer is  
riveted. All that is poetic, grotesque, or rapturous  
is employed to deepen these impressions, and is dis-  
missed as soon as that purpose is answered. Deficient  
in learning, meagre in thought, and redundant in lan-  
guage as are these discourses, they yet fulfil the one  
great condition of genuine eloquence. They propa-  
gate their own kindly warmth, and leave their stings  
behind them.

The enumeration of the sources of Whitefield’s pow-  
er is still essentially defective. Neither energy, nor  
eloquence, nor histrionic talents, nor any artifices of  
style, nor the most genuine sincerity and self-devoted-  
ness, nor all these united, would have enabled him to  
mould the religious character of millions in his own  
and future generations. The secret lies deeper. It  
consisted in the theology he taught—in its perfect  
simplicity and universal application. “Would minis-  
ters,” says he, “preach for eternity, they would then  
act the part of true Christian orators; and not only  
calmly and coolly inform the understanding, but by  
pathetic and persuasive address, endeavor to move

the affections and to warm the heart. To act other-  
wise, betrays a sad ignorance of human nature, and  
such an inexcusable ignorance and indifference in a  
preacher, as must constrain the hearers to suspect,  
whether they will or not, that the preacher, let him  
be whom he will, only deals in the false commerce of  
unfelt truth.” His eighteen thousand sermons were  
but so many variations on two key-notes: man is  
guilty, but may obtain forgiveness; he is immortal,  
and must ripen here for endless weal or woe hereafter.  
Expanded into innumerable forms, and diversified by  
infinite varieties of illustration, these two cardinal  
principles were ever in his heart and on his tongue.  
Let who would invoke poetry to embellish the Chris-  
tian system, or philosophy to explore its esoteric  
depths, from his lips it was delivered as an awful and  
urgent summons to repent, to believe, and to obey.  
To set to music the orders, issued to seamen in a  
storm, or to address them in the language of Aris-  
totle or Descartes, would have seemed to him not a  
whit more preposterous than to divert his hearers  
from their danger and their refuge, their duties and  
their hopes, to any topics more trivial or more ab-  
struse. In fine, he was thoroughly and continually  
in earnest, and therefore possessed that tension of  
the soul which admitted neither of lassitude nor re-  
laxation, few and familiar as were the topics to which  
he was confined. His was, therefore, precisely that  
state of mind in which alone eloquence, properly so  
called, can be engendered, and a moral and intellec-  
tual sovereignty won.

Nor less important is it to remark, though we

need not illustrate it at length, that much was effect-  
ed by every one seeing that he always forgot himself  
in his subject, and rested only on heaven for success.  
He felt himself called to serve Christ, and gave him-  
self to his task, to save sinners, and he cared for  
nothing else. No one ever doubted his sincerity  
when he prayed, “Help me, Friend of sinners, to be  
nothing, to say nothing, that thou mayest say and do  
everything, and be my all in all.” If the same feel-  
ings were fully shown by the ministry at present,  
our messages would tell more on the hearts of our  
hearers.

We need hardly remind the reader that White-  
field was remarkable for a devotional spirit. Probably  
no man ever lived nearer to God. Had he been less  
prayerful, he would have been less powerful. It has  
been said that during a few of the last years of his  
life he read the voluminous exposition of Matthew  
Henry, comprising six quarto volumes, in a kneeling  
posture, pausing and praying that God would engraft  
upon his mind the instructions of that extraordinary  
man. When he came before his auditors, he looked  
like one who had been with God. This it was which  
won for him the title of seraphic—he was a human  
seraph, and burnt out in the blaze of his own fire.  
Usually for an hour or two before he went into the  
pulpit, he claimed retirement. In this claim he was  
imperative, and would not be interrupted in his sea-  
sons of hallowed intercourse with God.

Engaged almost incessantly in preaching, or in  
preparation for it, it was impossible, however much  
he desired it, to pay many private visits of a relig-

ions nature. We are told, however, that on one occa-  
sion, when a young minister, afterwards exceedingly  
popular and useful, was once visiting him, he was  
sent for to visit a poor woman who had been so  
dreadfully burnt that she could not survive many  
hours. He went immediately, and prayed with her.  
He had no sooner returned, than she called out, “Oh,  
where is Mr. Whitefield?” Urged by her entreaty,  
her friends requested him to visit her a second time.  
He complied, and again prayed with her. The poor  
afflicted woman continued still to desire his presence.  
When her friends came for him a third time, “I begged  
of him,” said the young clergyman, “not to go; for  
he could scarcely expect to do any good. ‘Your  
nerves are too weak, your feelings are too acute to  
endure such scenes.’ I shall never forget his mild  
reproof: ‘Leave me; my Master can save to the utter-  
most, to the very uttermost.’”

In conversation with his friends, Whitefield was  
as far removed as possible from duplicity and mere  
compliment. He invited from his friends whatever of  
instruction and of reproof they considered him to  
need. And while he was always ready to receive re-  
proof, he was, when called to the duty, ready to give  
it, and often in a way which his friends did not expect.  
A censorious professor of religion, knowing the doc-  
trinal differences between the two men, asked White-  
field if he thought they would see Mr. John Wesley  
in heaven. His answer was truly admirable: “No,  
sir, I fear not; for he will be so near the throne, and  
we shall be at such a distance, we shall hardly get  
sight of him.”

It is said, that when he was once travelling in  
company with a Christian man, they had occasion to  
stay for a night at a road-side tavern. After they  
had retired, they were greatly annoyed by a company  
of gamblers, who were in an adjoining room. "White-  
field could not rest, and told his friend that he would  
go into the room and reprove them for their conduct.  
The other remonstrated against his doing so, but in  
vain. He went; and unhappily, his words fell appar-  
ently powerless upon them. Returning, he laid down  
to sleep. “What,” asked his companion, “did you  
gain by your trouble?” Whitefield characteristically  
answered, “A soft pillow.”

In his intercourse with general society, Mr. White-  
field never forgot his dignity as a servant of Jesus  
Christ. When he was in the zenith of his popularity,  
Lord Clare, who knew that his influence was consid-  
erable, applied to him by letter, requesting his influ-  
ence at Bristol at the ensuing general election. To  
this request Mr. Whitefield replied, that in general  
elections he never interfered; but he would earnestly  
exhort his lordship to use great diligence to make his  
own particular “calling and election sure.”

Mr. Whitefield was greatly distinguished, even  
from early life, for neatness in his person, order in  
his apartments, and regular method in the manage-  
ment of all his affairs. He was accustomed to say  
that a minister should be “without a spot;” and on  
one occasion remarked, that he could not feel comfort-  
able if he knew that his gloves were out of their proper  
place. The advantages of such habits are numerous.  
They save time, give a degree of comfort which can

**478 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.**

only be known by experience, and add not a little to  
the dignity of the Christian minister.

The device npon Whitefield’s seal, of which prob-  
ably few impressions are now to be found, was truly  
characteristic. It was a winged heart soaring above  
the globe, and its motto was, “Astra petamus”—Let  
us seek heaven.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHARACTER OF WHITEFIELD AS A PREACHER—  
CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS.

In suggesting a few of the characteristics of   
Whitefield’s preaching, we are very greatly in-  
debted to an excellent anonymous writer in the Lon-  
don Evangelical Magazine for 1853. We consider as  
among the reasons of his success, and as worthy of  
our imitation,

First, the prominence given to the leading truths of  
salvation, and the constant exaltation of Christ in them.  
There needs no minute inquiry, or great analytical  
care, to ascertain what was the pervading theme of  
this popular minister: it was “Christ, and him cruci-  
fied,” and the glorious truths that hover around the  
cross, and derive from it their being and lustre.  
There was no other subject, in Whitefield’s estimation,  
that was worthy of preeminence, and to unfold, eluci-  
date, and apply it, was the great design of his labors.  
He saw in it such a wonderful adaptation to the  
necessities and condition of fallen humanity, that he  
stood in the midst of its wants and woes with all the  
confidence of a good physician who had a sovereign  
and sufficient remedy to propose. He knew that  
there was no case which it could not meet, no moral  
disease from which it would not recover, no spiritual  
need which it would not supply; and therefore, how-  
ever far gone men might be from original righteous-  
ness, however hardened in sin, sunk in iniquity, or

**480 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.**

however elevated by the delusions of a false morality  
and fancied self-righteousness, he propounded this as  
the only and all-sufficient antidote, at once to destroy  
and heal, to kill and to make alive. As to the spuri-  
ous production of a rationalistic theory on the one  
hand, or the prescriptions of ceremonial virtue and  
sacramental grace on the other, he knew them not.  
He saw at once their hollowness and insufficiency,  
and would not mock the necessities of our fallen na-  
ture, or aggravate the wounds which sin had made by  
a proposal of them. His acquaintance with the hu-  
man heart was deep, and his knowledge of the differ-  
ent modifications of the original disease was so great,  
that he despaired of relief from any expedients save  
that which infinite Wisdom had devised, and which  
“the gospel of the grace of God” revealed. Philoso-  
phy with all its discoveries, and reason with all its  
powers, the law with all its authority, and virtue  
with all its rewards, he knew could only, like the  
priests and the Levites, have passed the patient by,  
and left him to despair, till a greater than they should  
arrive, and say, “I will come and heal you.” On that  
adorable Personage, therefore, and the wonders of his  
skill and love, he delighted to dwell. Every sermon  
was full of Christ; every discourse was odorous of  
him. From whatever part of revealed truth he de-  
rived his text, and with whatever, peculiar develop-  
ment of man’s moral physiology he had to do, there  
was something to suggest, to demonstrate the need,  
or the suitableness, or the all-sufficiency of the Saviour  
of the world. To set him forth, in the glories of his  
wonderful person, the variety of his offices, the perfec-

**CHARACTER AS A PREACHER. 481**

tion of his righteousness, the completeness of his  
atonement, and the plenitude of his grace, was his  
perpetual aim. To these he gave continual promi-  
nence, at all times, and in every place. There was  
no reserve, no equivocation, no partial statement on  
such themes. It was a full, clear, consistent gospel.  
From his lips the gospel gave no “uncertain sound.”  
This made him a welcome messenger of glad tidings  
to all. This gave him a key to the hearts of many,  
who, as they stood around him, and wondered at him,  
like those five thousand whom the Redeemer fed with  
“five loaves and two small fishes,” found all their  
appetites suited, and all their necessities supplied.  
It was the magic power which arrested them; the  
centre of gravitation which attracted them; the bread  
of life which fed them. “As Moses lifted up the ser-  
pent in the wilderness,” so now was the Son of man  
lifted up by the ministry of this his devoted herald;  
and far as the camp extended, and wide as the circum-  
ference of poison and death was spread, the wounded  
looked thereon and lived. A restorative virtue issued  
from it. The hardest heart was softened. The most  
obstinate in rebellion was overcome. The blindest  
saw. The moral lepers were cleansed. The broken  
in heart were made whole, and the spiritually dead  
were raised to life. “This was the Lord’s doing, and  
it was marvellous in their eyes.” They beheld the  
man. They heard him preach. They felt the power.  
It was because He was exalted among them who had  
said, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw  
all men unto me.”

Secondly, the glow of feeling, the melting compas-

Whitefield 21

**482 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.**

sion, which pervaded his own soul. Oh, it is supremely  
delightful and deeply affecting to observe the tender  
affection and melting pathos with which Whitefield  
propounded and proclaimed the precious truths and  
everlasting verities of the gospel to his fellow-men.  
He stood among them as one of their race, one of their  
number, conscious of the common misery into which  
all had fallen, and weeping over the miseries and ruin  
in which by nature they were alike involved. As he  
opened up the treasures of infinite mercy, and the  
riches of redeeming love to their view, he wept to  
think how long they had been unknown or despised  
by many, and with what base ingratitude thousands  
would probably still turn away from them. As one  
who saw their immortal being in jeopardy, and their  
souls standing on the verge of irretrievable ruin, he  
hastened, with joy in his countenance and tenderness  
in his heart, to tell them of One who was “mighty to  
save,” and that “now was the accepted time, and now  
the day of salvation.” Not as one who had a cold  
lecture on ethics to deliver, or a dissertation on phi-  
losophy to expound, or a problem in mathematics to  
solve, did he proceed to such a work; but as one who  
felt the weight of his great commission, and knew the  
worth of never-dying souls. The evil of sin, the dan-  
ger of impenitence, the powers of the world to come,  
the glories of heaven, and the unutterable miseries of  
the regions of woe, were visibly present to his own  
mind; and of these, “out of the abundance of his  
heart,” he spoke to others. He could not be calm,  
he could not be apathetic on such themes as these.

“Passion was reason, transport temper, here.”

**CHARACTER AS A PREACHER. 483**

And with much of the melting tenderness of Him  
who wept over Jerusalem, he spoke of these things  
to all that resorted to him. What moving words did  
he utter on Blackheath hill, in the Tabernacle pulpit,  
and on Kingswood mount! His vivid eye beamed  
with the glow of tenderness, and his tears, as he  
spoke, oft-times moistened his little Bible or bedewed  
the ground. In his printed sermons, which doubtless  
are but feeble specimens of his free and fervent man-  
ner, there are strains of tender pathos and impas-  
sioned oratory, which it is almost impossible to read  
even now without being moved to share in his feel-  
ings and in the emotions which they must have en-  
kindled around; and in the perusal of which we  
wonder not that, in all the circumstances, the place  
in which he stood was a Bochim—a place of weeping.  
Oh, the melting power, the exquisite pathos, the ten-  
der expostulation of this preeminent man, and unri-  
valled preacher of the gospel of our salvation! We  
wish we could catch them now—that all preachers  
possessed them; that the rising ministry especially  
would emulate him in these things. Whitefield show-  
ed his intense feeling, not from the mere power of  
ratiocination, or from the poetic memento, or for the  
sake of producing effect by the tears that were unfelt,  
or which only flowed from the surface; but from the  
meltings of a tender heart, influenced by a Saviour’s  
love, and overflowing with the commiseration of a  
benign compassion for dying multitudes around. Dod-  
dridge’s beautiful hymn,

“Arise, my tenderest thoughts, arise,"  
one might almost think was written at Whitefield’s

**484 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.**

side. The tenderness of John, and the “weeping ” of  
Paul, were blended in him with the boldness of Peter.  
The love that agonized in the garden of Gethsemane,  
and bled on the cross of Calvary, was largely diffused  
through all his powers.

Thirdly, the direct address of his ministry. The  
characteristic mode of his preaching, and the style of  
his public ministrations, was, to direct his appeal to  
the hearts and consciences of his hearers, and to  
“preach to the people all the words of this life.” It  
was not an harangue before them. It was not an  
oration beautifully prepared, read, or delivered in  
their hearing, and presented simply for their accept-  
ance and admiration; but a direct address, an affec-  
tionate appeal, a solemn and earnest communication  
of the message he had received from God to them.  
Oh, we have sometimes thought, what a marked dif-  
ference there ought to be between the ministrations of  
a servant of Christ to his fellow-immortals, on things  
of eternal importance in which they are personally  
and deeply concerned, and the delivery of a lecture  
from the philosopher’s desk, or even of a dissertation  
on theology from the professorial chair. So thought  
the apostles. So thought the prophets and public  
teachers of sacred mysteries of old. They had the  
“burden of the Lord” to deliver, and it was unto the  
people. They had an embassy to execute, and it was  
by negotiating directly with, and in the consciences  
of their hearers. Whitefield caught their spirit, pro-  
ceeded in their way, and did such mighty execution,  
not by the mere symmetrical illustration of divine  
truth, but by the direct presentation of it to their

**CHARACTER AS A PREACHER. 485**

minds. They had not to ask, “For whom is all this  
intended?” and, “Is it designed for us?” They felt  
that it was. It came home to their consciences, and  
to their very hearts. They could not transfer it to  
others, nor avoid the application of it to themselves.  
Had the preacher called them by-name, which in his  
skilful delineation of character, he sometimes virtually  
did, they could not have been more certain that he  
intended it for them, and that it was at their peril to  
neglect or pass it by. “I have a message from God  
unto thee,” he substantially said in every discourse he  
uttered, and the people were compelled to believe it.  
“Go, and tell this people,” said the divine voice to  
Isaiah, “Ye hear indeed, but do not understand; ye  
see indeed, but do not perceive.” “Therefore,” said  
Peter, “let all the house of Israel know assuredly that  
God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have cruci-  
fied, both Lord and Christ.” “Now then,” said Paul,  
“we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did  
beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, he  
ye reconciled to God.” Such was the tenor of the  
apostolic ministry. Such the secret of its mighty

power and success. And such also was the charac-  
teristic of the faithful and seraphic Whitefield, by  
which he knocked at the door of many hearts, and  
those hearts were opened to him, to his message, and  
to his Lord. His plan was that of heavenly wisdom;  
his appeal was the same. “Unto you, 0 men, I call,  
and my voice is to the sons of men.” In him were  
verified the poet's graphic lines:

“There stands the messenger of truth; there stands  
The legate of the skies: his theme divine,

**486 GEORGE WHITEFIELD.**

His office sacred, his credentials clear.

By him the violated law speaks out

Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet

As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.

He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,

Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,

And sues the sinner to return to God.”

Fourthly, his habitual dependence on the Spirit of  
God, and his earnest aspirations for the manifestation of  
his power. That he was conscious of his own superior  
talents as an orator, and knew how to employ them on  
sacred themes; that he skilfully wielded all the weap-  
ons of a well-studied eloquence to gain access to the  
human mind, and knew both how to alarm and how to  
persuade, and could attempt both with as much success  
probably as any speaker, either of ancient or modern  
times; that he had a large and minute acquaintance  
with the powers and passions of the human soul, and  
knew well when and how to touch the hidden springs  
of its energies and actions; that he had a good amount  
of common and sacred learning at his command, and  
like that Apollos whom among the early teachers of  
Christianity he most resembled, was “mighty in the  
Scriptures and that he delighted to expatiate on  
the wonders and glories of redemption as a restorative  
scheme preeminently adapted to interest and attract,  
to impress and rule our common nature—are facts  
open to all who inspect his writings and accompany  
him in his labors, and will be denied by none. But  
with all these, and amid all, in every sermon he com-  
posed and delivered, and in his most impassioned  
addresses to his hearers, there is manifested an under-  
lying and all-pervading dependence on the power and

grace of the Spirit of God, which was in character, if  
not in degree, meek, humble, genuine, entire, like that  
of the most eminent apostle or adoring saint at the  
foot of the divine throne. With him it was not  
merely a sentiment, but a feeling; and that feeling  
constant and habitual, as it was in him who in the  
review of his labors said, “I have planted, Apollos  
watered, but God gave the increase.” He knew that  
none but the almighty Spirit could gain effectual  
access to the spirit of man; and that not even a Me-  
lancthon, a Luther, or a Whitefield, could make old  
Adam yield, unless constrained by a superior power.  
He seemed to stand in the valley of vision among the  
dry bones, as the prophet did, and while he addressed  
them with something like a prophet's power, he had  
no expectation or hope of success until the wind of  
heaven came down and blew upon them. Therefore  
he prophesied to it as well as to them. “Come from  
the four winds, 0 breath, and breathe upon the slain,  
that they may live,” was often the mighty cry of his  
soul, before preaching, while preaching, and after  
preaching. It seemed to be his joy, his only, his all-  
sustaining confidence, that he lived under “the dis-  
pensation of the Spirit,” and wrought in a day, and  
preached upon a theme, in connection with which “the  
ministration of the Spirit” was to be “glorious,” by  
his wonderful works of conviction, conversion, and  
sanctification, among the children of men. To that  
Spirit, as the glorifier of Christ, he often devoutly  
and earnestly appealed. Sometimes, in the midst of  
an unusual flow of tender and eloquent address to his  
hearers on his favorite theme of the glories and grace

of his divine Master, he would pause in solemn silence,  
and lifting up his hands and his voice to heaven, and  
carrying the hearts of his audience with him, invoke  
aloud the descending and all-consuming fire. The  
present God was acknowledged and felt. The word  
came “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” And while the habitual aim of his preaching was to  
exalt “Christ Jesus the Lord,” and while he reasoned,  
and opened the Scriptures, and taught and alarmed  
or invited his hearers, in the most touching strains of  
urgent remonstrance and tender entreaty, to accept  
now “the great salvation,” the inward state of his soul  
was that of entire reliance on the presence and co-  
operation of the Holy Spirit of God. To him were  
sent up his most intense aspirations. In all the rec-  
ords of his success, to that Spirit the honor is always  
ascribed. “Not I, but the grace of God which was  
with me,” is the grateful acknowledgment he makes in  
the review of every field occupied and every triumph  
won. And thus it was that the fabric of his ministry,  
and of all his ministrations, in the multitudinous la-  
bors which he directed against the kingdom of dark-  
ness and of Satan in his day, was like the mystic  
vision which Ezekiel saw, instinct with life. The spirit  
of the living creatures was in the wheels. “When  
this went, those went; when this stood, those stood;  
when this was lifted up from the earth, those were  
lifted up.” It was all life. A living preacher; a liv-  
ing theme; a living power, giving life, and spreading  
it all around. Therefore it was that life followed in  
the region of death, and at his coming the desert re-  
joiced, and the wilderness blossomed as the rose.

“Dry bones were raised, and clothed afresh,

And hearts of stone were turned to flesh.”

By preaching such as we have now attempted to  
describe, thousands and tens of thousands were gath-  
ered to Christ. “An exceeding great army” stood up.  
Slumbering churches were awakened, religion was  
revived, and “righteousness and praise” were caused  
to “spring forth before all the nations.” And as this  
apostolic man surveyed the amazing scene, and glanced  
at the wide circumference of his labors, in the British  
Isles and in the New World, he might have exclaimed,  
as one before him had done, “Now thanks be unto  
God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and  
maketh manifest the savor of his name by us in every  
place.” “Through mighty signs and wonders, by the  
power of the Spirit of God, from Jerusalem round  
about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel  
of Christ.” “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of  
Christ: for it is the power of God to salvation; to the  
Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Who, in the remem-  
brance of Whitefield and his times, will not long for  
their return, and exclaim, “Awake, awake; put on  
strength, 0 arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient  
days.” “0 that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that  
thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might  
flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire  
burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make  
thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations  
may tremble at thy presence!” Spirit of the living  
God, descend and replenish with thy power all our  
souls, our ministry, our temples, our land.

21\*

In estimating the character of Whitefield, it should  
be observed that he dealt with his hearers, individually  
and collectively, as immortal beings. To use the lan-  
guage of Isaac Taylor, “ he held man as if in the ab-  
stract, or as if whatever is not common to all men  
were forgotten. The most extreme diversities, intel-  
lectual and moral, differences of rank, culture, nation-  
al modes of thought, all gave way and ceased to be  
thought of; distinctions were swept from the ground  
where he took his position. At the first opening of  
his lips, and as the rich harmony of his voice spread  
its undulations over the expanse of human faces, and  
at the instant when the sparkle of his bright eye  
caught every other eye, human nature, in a manner,  
dropped its individuality, and presented itself in its  
very elements to be moulded anew. Whitefield,  
although singularly gifted with a perception of the  
varieties of character, yet spoke as if he could know  
nothing of the thousands before him but their immor-  
tality and their misery; and so it was that these  
thousands listened to him.

“No preacher whose history is on record, has trod  
so wide a field as did Whitefield, or has retrod it so  
often, or has repeated himself so much, or has carried  
so far the experiment of exhausting himself, and of  
spending his popularity, if it could have been spent,  
but it never was spent. Within the compass of a few  
weeks he might have been heard addressing the ne-  
groes of the Bermuda islands, adapting himself to  
their infantile understandings, and to their debauched  
hearts; and then at Chelsea, with the aristocracy of  
rank and wit before him, approving himself to listen-

ers such, as the lords Bolingbroke and Chesterfield.  
Whitefield might as easily have produced a Hamlet  
or a Paradise Lost, as have excogitated a sermon  
which, as a composition, a product of thought, would  
have tempted men like these to hear him a second  
time; and as to his faculty and graces as a speaker,  
his elocution and action, a second performance would  
have contented them. But in fact Bolingbroke, and  
many of his class, thought not the hour long, time  
after time, while, with much sameness of material and  
of language, he spoke of eternity and of salvation in  
Christ. ... Floods of tears moistened cheeks rough  
and smooth; and sighs, suppressed or loudly uttered,  
gave evidence that human nature is one and the same  
when it comes in presence of truths which bear upon  
the guilty and the immortal without distinction.”

The Rev. Dr. James Hamilton of London has ad-  
mirably delineated Whitefield, in a passage which must  
be admired by all who read it: “Whitefield was the  
prince of English preachers. Many have surpassed  
him as sermon-makers, but none have approached him  
as a pulpit Orator. Many have outshone him in the  
clearness of their logic, the grandeur of their concep-  
tions, and the sparkling beauty of single sentences;  
but in the power of darting the gospel direct into the  
conscience, he eclipsed them all. With a full and  
beaming countenance, and the frank and easy port  
which the English people love—for it is the symbol  
of honest purpose and friendly assurance—he com-  
bined a voice of rich compass, which could easily thrill  
over Moorfields in musical thunder, or whisper its ter-

rible secret in every private ear; and to this gainly  
aspect and tuneful voice he added a most expressive  
and eloquent action. Improved by conscientious prac-  
tice, and instinct with his earnest nature, this elocu-  
tion was the acted sermon, and by its pantomimic  
portrait enabled the eye to anticipate each rapid  
utterance, and helped the memory to treasure up the  
palatable ideas. None ever used so boldly, nor with  
more success, the highest styles of impersonation: as  
when he described to his sailor-auditors a storm at  
sea, and compelled them to shout, ‘Take to the long-  
boat, sir!’ His ‘hark, hark!’ could conjure up Geth-  
semane with its faltering moon, and awake again the  
cry of horror-stricken innocence; and an apostrophe  
to Peter on the holy mount would light up another  
Tabor, and drown it in glory from the opening heav-  
en. His thoughts were possessions, and his feelings  
were transformations; and he spoke because he felt,  
his hearers understood because they saw. They were  
not only enthusiastic amateurs, like Garrick, who ran  
to weep and tremble at his bursts of passion, but even  
the colder critics of the Walpole school were surpris-  
ed into momentary sympathy and reluctant wonder.  
Lord Chesterfield was listening in Lady Huntingdon’s  
pew when Whitefield was comparing the benighted  
sinner to a blind beggar on a dangerous road. His  
little dog gets away from him when skirting the edge  
of a precipice, and he is left to explore the path with  
his iron-shod staff. On the very verge of the cliff this  
blind guide slips through his fingers and skims away  
down the abyss. All unconscious, the owner stoops  
down to regain it, and stumbling forward—‘Good

God, he is gone!’ shouted Chesterfield, who had been  
watching with breathless alarm the blind man’s move-  
ments, and who jumped from his feet to save the catas-  
trophe.

“But the glory of Whitefield’s preaching was his  
heart-kindled and heart-melting gospel. But for  
this, all his bold strokes and brilliant surprises might  
have been no better than the rhetorical triumphs of  
Kirwan and other pulpit dramatists. He was an ora-  
tor, but he only sought to be an evangelist. Like a  
volcano where gold and gems may be darted forth as  
well as common things, but where gold and molten  
granite flow all alike in fiery fusion, bright thoughts  
and splendid images might be projected from his pul-  
pit, but all were merged in the stream which bore  
along the gospel and himself in blended fervor. In-  
deed, so simple was his nature, that glory to God and  
good will to man had filled it; there was room for lit-  
tle more. Having no church to found, no family to  
enrich, and no memory to immortalize, he was simply  
the ambassador of God; and inspired with its genial  
piteous spirit—so full of heaven reconciled and hu-  
manity restored—he soon himself became a living  
gospel. Radiant with its benignity, and trembling  
with its tenderness, by a sort of spiritual induction a  
vast audience would speedily be brought into a frame  
of mind—the transfusing of his own; and the white  
furrows on their sooty faces told that Kingswood col-  
liers were weeping, or the quivering of an ostrich  
plume bespoke its elegant wearer’s deep emotion.  
And coming to his pulpit direct from communion with  
his Master, and in the strength of accepted prayer,

there was an elevation in his mien which often para-  
lyzed hostility, and a self-possession which made him  
amid uproar and confusion the more sublime. With  
an electric bolt he would bring the jester in his fool's  
cap from his perch on the tree, or galvanize the brick-  
bat from the skulking miscreant's grasp, or sweep  
down in crouching submission and shamefaced silence  
the whole of Bartholomew fair; while a revealing  
flash of sententious doctrine, of vivified Scripture,  
would disclose to awe-struck hundreds the forgotten  
verities of another world, or the unsuspected arcana  
of their inner man. ‘I came to break your head, but,  
through you, God has broken my heart,' was a sort  
of confession with which he was familiar; and to see  
the deaf old gentlewoman who used to mutter impre-  
cations at him as he passed along the streets, clam-  
bering up the pulpit stairs to catch his angelic words,  
was a sort of spectacle which the triumphant gospel  
often witnessed in his day. And when it is known  
that his voice could be heard by twenty thousand, and  
that ranging all the empire, as well as America, he  
would often preach thrice on a working-day, and that  
he has received in one week as many as a thousand  
letters from persons awakened by his sermons, if no  
estimate can be formed of the results of his ministry,  
some idea may be suggested of its vast extent and  
singular effectiveness.”

Very admirably has a writer in the North British  
Review compared and contrasted Whitefield and Wes-  
ley. He says, “Few characters could be more com-  
pletely the converse, and in the church's exigencies,

more happily the supplement of one another, than  
were those of George Whitefleld and John Wesley;  
and had their views been identical, and their labors  
all along coincident, their large services to the gospel  
might have repeated Paul and Barnabas. Whitefleld  
was soul, and Wesley was system. Whitefleld was a  
summer cloud which burst at morning or noon a fra-  
grant exhalation over an ample track, and took the  
rest of the day to gather again; Wesley was the pol-  
ished conduit in the midst of the garden, through  
which the living water glided in pearly brightness  
and perennial music, the same vivid stream from day  
to day. After a preaching paroxysm, Whitefleld lay  
panting on his couch, spent, breathless, and deathlike;  
after his morning sermon in the foundry, Wesley  
would mount his pony, and trot and chat, and gather  
simples, till he reached some country hamlet, where  
he would bait his charger, and talk through a little  
sermon with the villagers, and remount his pony and  
trot away again. In his aerial poise, Whitefield’s  
eagle eye drank lustre from the source of light, and  
loved to look down on men in assembled myriads;  
Wesley’s falcon glance did not sweep so far, but it  
searched more keenly and marked more minutely  
where it pierced. A master of assemblies, Whitefleld  
was no match for the isolated man. Seldom coping  
with the multitude, but strong in astute sagacity and  
personal ascendency, Wesley could conquer any num-  
ber one by one. All force and impetus, Whitefleld  
was the powder-blast in the quarry, and by one explo-  
sive sermon would shake a district, and detach mate-  
rials for other men’s long work—deft, neat, and pains-

taking, Wesley loved to split and trim each fragment  
into uniform plinths and polished stones. Or, taken  
otherwise, Whitefield was the bargeman or the wag-  
oner who brought the timber of the house, and Wesley  
was the architect who set it up. Whitefield had no  
patience for ecclesiastical polity, no aptitude for pas-  
toral details—with a beaver-like propensity for build-  
ing, Wesley was always constructing societies, and  
with a king-like craft of ruling, was most at home  
when presiding over a class or a conference. It was  
their infelicity that they did not always work togeth-  
er—it was the happiness of the age, and the further-  
ance of the gospel, that they lived alongside of one  
another.”

CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS.

When a century had elapsed from the commence-  
ment of Whitefield’s public labors, it was deemed de-  
sirable by many in England to hold public services  
of a devotional and practical character, in celebration  
of the event. Especially was it designed that such  
celebrations should have a reference, as far as possible,  
to advance open-air preaching. The first services of  
this character were very properly held in the Taber-  
nacle, London, on May 21, 1839, and well do we  
remember with what intense interest, in common with  
thousands, we attended them. Ministers and laymen  
of at least four religious denominations assisted in  
them, and eloquently discoursed on subjects illustrat-  
ing the grace of God in connection with Whitefield,  
but still more intent were they on benefiting the pres-

ent and future generations of men. Dr. Campbell  
delivered a sermon on the character and labors of  
Apollos, illustrated by those of Whitefield; the late  
Dr. Cox discoursed on the genius and labors of White-  
field; the late Rev. John Blackburn described the past  
and present state of religion in England; and the Rev.  
John Young, LL. D., urged the propriety, duty, and  
necessity of open-air preaching. In addition to these  
sermons, several admirable speeches were made, and  
every thing was marked by a spirit of earnest devo-  
tion. A small volume, containing the sermons and  
speeches, was printed, and put into extensive circula-  
tion.

About the same time, a number of ministers of the  
Congregational order met in a central town of Glou-  
cestershire, when one of them suggested, that “as the  
present year was the centenary of the Rev. George  
Whitefield’s labors in reviving the apostolic practice  
of open-air preaching, it might be desirable to com-  
memorate them by a special religious open-air celebra-  
tion. It was further remarked, that Whitefield was  
a native of Gloucester; that as many ministers pres-  
ent presided over churches instituted by his ministry;  
that as Stinchcombe hill, in the very centre of the  
county, presented a most beautiful and eligible spot  
for a public meeting; and as upon its summit, a cen-  
tury ago, Whitefield himself had preached and showed  
the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, it seemed a  
duty to improve the opportunity it offered of address-  
ing, on the gracious persuasives of the cross, a large  
concourse of persons, many of whom might never hear  
the gospel, and of promoting in the county the revival

of evangelical religion, which God so highly honored  
his devoted servant in commencing in our land.”

The suggestion was most cordially received, ar-  
rangements were made, and, July 30,1839, though the  
weather was unfavorable, the meeting was attended  
by at least seven thousand persons. A large preach-  
ing stand was erected for the ministers, nearly one  
hundred of whom were present. Sermons were  
preached by the Rev. Drs. Matheson and Ross, and by  
the Rev. Messrs. T. East, J. H. Hinton, and J. Sibree;  
and addresses were given, and the devotional exercises  
led by many others. The services were solemnly im-  
pressive. The late Josiah Conder, Esq., wrote two  
hymns especially for the occasion, which are well  
worthy of preservation; we therefore transfer them  
to our pages. I.

How sweet from crowded throngs,

Zion, ascend thy songs,

With choral swells through echoing aisles!

Where brethren, brethren meet,

These songs rise doubly sweet,

From humbler rooms or loftier piles.

But here, not made with hands,

A nobler temple stands;

Here, ’mid thy works, 0 God, we bow,

Where all around, above,

Proclaims thy power and love;

Oh, tune our hearts to praise thee now.

We bless thy gracious care,

For many a house of prayer,

Where saints may meet with conscience free,

To keep thy simple rites,

In which thy church delights,

And unforbidden, wait on thee.

But now, beneath the sky,

We raise our songs on high,

To Him who gave all nature birth;  
While the free air wafts round  
To distant vales the sound—

Praise to the Lord of heaven and earth.

So to the mountain air

The Saviour breathed his prayer;

So ’mid green hills or deserts rude,

The poor he meekly taught,

And gracious wonders wrought,

Or fed the famished multitude.

So did apostles teach;

So did our Whitefield preach;

These hills have heard his fervent prayer:  
Oh, let the saving word  
Throughout our land be heard,

Free as the light, and open as the air.

II.

Where is the voice of Whitefield now?

Where does his mantle rest?

Oh, for Elisha’s from the plough,

With kindred zeal possessed!

Apostles of heroic mould,

With love seraphic fired,

Divinely called, like those of old  
At Pentecost inspired!

Oh Thou, our Head, enthroned on high,  
By whom thy members live,

Wilt thou not hear our fervent cry,

The holy unction give?

In all the plenitude of grace  
Thy gifts of might bestow;

And by us, Lord, in every place,

Thy saving virtue show.

This Christian land with error teems,

The blind by blinder led;

The sophist weaves his Atheist schemes;

Wide has the poison spread.

Arise, 0 Lord, send forth thy word;

Thy faithful heralds call;

And while the gospel trump is heard,

Let Satan’s bulwarks fall.

Free, pure, and vital as the light,

God’s message to our race;

Like genial gales the Spirit’s might,

Sovereign, mysterious grace.

Breathe forth, 0 wind, and to new birth  
Quicken the bones of death;

Regenerate this withered earth;

Give to the dying breath.

It is pleasant to add to this account, that satisfac-  
tory evidences were given that some, during these ser-  
vices, were brought to the saving knowledge of “the  
truth as in Jesus.” And it may be mentioned as a  
singular circumstance, that an old man one hundred  
and three years of age attended on this occasion,  
who had been carried in his mother's arms to this  
same spot to hear Whitefield preach just a century  
before.

The last centenary service to which we shall make  
reference, is the one held at the Bristol Tabernacle,  
November 25, 1853. The sermon on The Character  
of Whitefield, by the Rev. John Angell James, was  
from the text, “This one thing I do.” Phil. 3:13.  
In it he said:

“We hear much in our days about the adaptation  
of the gospel to the age. There is no word I more  
hate or love, dread or desire, according to the sense

in, or the purpose for which it is used, than this word  
adaptation as applied to preaching. Now, if by adap-  
tation be meant, more philosophy, and less Christian-  
ity; more of cold abstract intellectualism, and less of  
popular, simple, earnest statement of gospel truth;  
more profound discussion and artificial elaboration  
addressed to the learned few, and less of warm-  
hearted appeal to the multitude, may God preserve  
us from such adaptation, for it is high-treason  
against truth and the salvation of souls. But if by  
this be meant a stronger intelligence, a chaster com-  
position, a sterner logic, a more powerful rhetoric, a  
more correct criticism, and a more varied illustra-  
tion, but all employed to set forth the gospel as com-  
prehending those two great words, redemption and  
regeneration, let us have it; we need it; and come in  
ever such abundance, it will be a blessing.

“Adaptation! the gospel is adaptation, from be-  
ginning to end, to every age of time, and to all con-  
ditions of humanity. It is God’s own adaptation. It  
is he who knows every ward of the lock of man’s  
nature, who has constructed this admirable key; and  
all the miserable tinkering of a vain and deceitful  
philosophy can make no better key, nor can all the  
attempts of a philosophizing theology make this key  
better fit the wards of the lock.

“Adaptation! was not the gospel in all its purity  
and simplicity adapted to human nature as it existed  
in commercial, scholastic, philosophical Corinth?  
And did not Paul think so when he determined to  
know nothing there, but ‘Christ, and him cruci-  
fied?’ Was it not by this very gospel, which many

are beginning to imagine is not suited to an intellect-  
ual and philosophical age, that Christianity fought its  
first battles, and achieved its victories over the hosts  
of darkness? Against the axe, the stake, the sword  
of the gladiator, and the lions of the amphitheatre;  
against the ridicule of wits, the reasoning of sages,  
the interests, influence, and craft of the priesthood;  
against the prowess of armies, and the brute passions  
of the mob, Christianity, strong in its weakness, sub-  
lime in its simplicity, potent in its isolation, asking  
and receiving no protection from the sceptre of the  
monarch or the sword of the warrior, went forth to do  
battle with the wisdom of Greece and the mythology  
of Rome. Everywhere it prevailed, and gathered its  
laurels from the snows of Scythia, the sands of Africa,  
the plains of India, and the green fields of Europe,  
With the gospel alone she overturned the altars of  
impiety in her march. Power felt his arm wither at  
her glance. She silenced the lying oracles by the  
majesty of her voice, and extinguished the deceptive  
light of philosophy in the schools, till at length she  
who went forth forlorn and weeping from Calvary  
to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, ascended, upon  
the ruins of the temples, the idols, and the altars she  
had demolished, to the throne of the Caesars, and with  
the diadem on her brow, and the purple on her shoul-  
ders, gave laws to the world from that very tribunal  
where she had been dragged as a criminal and con-  
demned as a malefactor.\*

“ Adaptation! is not justification by faith the  
very substance of the gospel, and was it not by this

\*See Dr. John M. Mason’s Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Graham.

doctrine that Luther effected the enfranchisement of  
the hitman intellect, from the chains of slavery which  
had been forged in the Vatican; achieved the liber-  
ation of half Europe from the yoke of Borne, and gave  
an impulse to human thought and vital Christianity  
which has not yet spent itself, and never will, till it  
issues in the jubilee of the nations and the glories of  
the millennium?

“Adaptation! did not Whitefield move this king-  
dom almost to its centre, and equally so our then  
great transatlantic colony to its extremities, fasci-  
nating alike the colliers of Kingswood and the citi-  
zens of the metropolis; and by this mighty theme  
enable myriads to burst the chains of sin and Satan,  
and to walk abroad disenthralled by the mighty  
power of redeeming grace?

“Adaptation! is not this gospel now proving its  
power in heathen countries to raise the savage into  
civilized man, the civilized man into the saint, and in  
this ascending scale of progression, the saint into the  
seraph?

“And yet, with these proofs of the power of the  
gospel to adapt itself to every age of the world, and  
to every condition of humanity, there are those who  
want something else to effect the regeneration of  
mankind. ‘And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all  
men unto me.’ So said the Saviour of men. The  
cross is the great moral magnet for all ages and all  
countries, to draw men from barbarism to civiliza-  
tion, from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness,  
and from earth to heaven and it were as rational to  
say the loadstone had lost its original power of polar

attraction, and the mariner's compass is an old, stale  
invention, and must now be replaced with some new  
device, better adapted to the modern light of science,  
as to suppose that the doctrine of the cross had be-  
come effete, and must give way to some new phase of  
theological truth.

“I now consider the manner in which Whitefield  
carried out his own purpose into action. ‘One thing  
I do:’ and how did he accomplish it?

“Never was the joyful sound sent over the world  
by a more magnificent voice. All his biographers  
labor, as do the historians of Greece in describing the  
power of Demosthenes, to make us understand his  
wondrous oratory. Perhaps, after all, that which  
gives us the most vivid idea of it is, not the crowds  
it attracted, moved, and melted, but that it warmed  
the cold and calculating Franklin, and fascinated the  
philosophical and sceptical Hume. Heaven rarely  
ever gave, or gives to man the faculty of speech in  
such perfection. But what is particularly worthy of  
notice is, that he trusted not to its native power, but  
increased that power by assiduous cultivation. His  
matchless elocution was not only an endowment, but  
an acquirement. If he preached a sermon twenty  
times, he went on to the last improving his method of  
delivering it, both as to tones and action; not for  
theatrical display—no man was ever more free from  
this—but to carry out his ‘one thing’—the salvation  
of souls. He knew, and deeply and philosophically  
entered into the meaning of that text,‘Faith cometh  
by hearing;’ and he also knew that attentive hearing  
comes by the power of speaking. With such a theme

as the gospel, with such an object as salvation, with  
such an aim as eternity, and such a Master to serve  
as Christ, he would not give utterance to such sub-  
jects, and for such purposes, in careless and slovenly  
speech. He studied to be the orator, that he might  
thus pluck souls as brands from the burning. In this  
let us imitate him. Of all our faculties, that of speech  
is perhaps least cultivated, yet is most susceptible of  
cultivation, and pays best for the pains bestowed upon  
it. My brethren, speech is the great instrument of  
our ministerial labor. Our assault upon the rebel  
town of Mansoul is to be carried on, and our entrance  
to be effected, to use the language of Bunyan, at ear-  
gate. The tongue, rather than the pen, is the weapon  
of most of us. For the love of souls, let us endeavor  
to be good speakers. With the loftiest themes in the  
universe for our subjects, do, do let us endeavor to  
speak of them in some measure worthily. It is an  
instructive and astounding, and to us humiliating and  
disgraceful fact, that the stage-player, whether in  
comedy or in tragedy, takes ten times more pains to  
give effective utterance to his follies, vices, and pas-  
sions, for the amusement of his audience, than we do  
to eternal and momentous truths for the salvation of  
ours. The stage seems the only arena where the  
power of oratory is much studied. Should this be?

“A few characteristics of Whitefield’s manner de-  
serve emphatic mention and particular attention, as  
connected with the execution of his one great purpose.  
The first I notice is solemnity. He never, as did some  
of his followers, degraded the pulpit by making it the  
arena of low humor and wit; abounding in anecdote,

Whitefield. 22

and even in action, he was uniformly solemn. His  
deep devotional spirit contributed largely to this, for  
his piety was the inward fire which supplied the ardor  
of his manner. He was eminently a man of prayer;  
and had he been less prayerful, he would also have  
been less powerful. He came into the pulpit from the  
closet, where he had been communing with God, and  
could no more trifle with merry humor at such a time  
than could Moses when he came down from the mount  
to the people; or than the high-priest when he came  
out from the blazing symbols of the divine presence  
between the cherubim in the holy of holies; or Isaiah  
when he saw the Lord of hosts, high and lifted up,  
with his train filling the temple. Happily the age  
and taste for pulpit buffoonery is gone, I hope never  
to return.

‘ ‘T is pitiful to count a gain when you should woo a soul.’

It was the stamp and impress of eternity upon his  
preaching, that gave Whitefield such power. He spoke  
like a man that stood upon the borders of the unseen  
world, alternately rapt in ecstasy as he gazed upon  
the felicities of heaven, and convulsed with terror as  
he seemed to hear the howlings of the damned, and  
saw the smoke of their torment ascending from the  
pit for ever and ever. His maxim was to preach, as  
Apelles painted, for eternity, and he said, if ministers  
preached for eternity, they would then act the part of  
true Christian orators. And tell me, my brethren,  
what are all the prettinesses, the beauties, or even  
sublimities of human eloquence—what the similes,  
metaphors, and other garniture of rhetoric—what the

philosophy and intellectualities which many in this  
day are aiming at, to move and bow and conquer  
the human soul, compared with ‘the powers of the  
world to come?’

“But there was another characteristic of White-  
field’s manner, and that was its tenderness. Our Lord,  
as to his humanity, was a man of sorrows, and there-  
fore of tears; so was Paul, so was Whitefield. Per-  
haps the latter somewhat too much so, at any rate far  
too much so for any preacher but himself, and with  
him the fountain of his tears was somewhat too full  
and flowing. But Oh, what an apology for this, and  
what a stroke of pathetic eloquence was that appeal  
when on one occasion he said, ‘You blame me for  
weeping, but how can I help it, when you will not  
weep for yourselves, although your immortal souls  
are on the verge of destruction, and for aught I know  
you are hearing your last sermon, and may never more  
have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you.’Man is an emotional as well as an intellectual crea-  
ture, and sympathy is one of the powers of our physi-  
cal and mental economy. The passions are of an  
infectious nature, and men feel more in a crowd than  
in solitude. The adage of the ancient elocutionist is  
still true, ‘If you wish me to weep, weep yourself.’Whitefield’s tears drew forth those of his audience,  
and his pathos softened their hearts for the impres-  
sions of the truth. It is forgotten by many preachers  
that they may do much by the heart, as well as by the  
head. We are not the teachers of logic, mathematics,  
metaphysics, or natural philosophy, which have noth-  
ing to do with the heart, but of religion, the very seat

of which is there; and we address ourselves not only  
to the logical, but to the aesthetical part of man’s  
complex nature. By argument, I know we must con-  
vince, but we must not stop in the judgment, but go  
on to reach the heart, and we ourselves must feel as  
well as reason. Clear, but cold, is too descriptive of  
much modern preaching. It is the frosty moonlight  
of a winter’s night, not the warm sunshine of a sum-  
mer’s day. A cold preacher is likely to have cold  
hearers. Cold! What, when the love of God, the  
death of Christ, the salvation of souls, the felicities  
of heaven, and the torments of hell are the theme?  
Enthusiasm here is venial, compared with lukewarm-  
ness.

“Need I say that earnestness was characteristic of  
Whitefield’s preaching? Yes, that one word, perhaps,  
more than any other in our language, is its epitome.  
An intense earnestness marked its whole career, and  
was carried to such a pitch as to subject him, as did  
that of Paul, to the imputation of madness. The sal-  
vation of souls was so entirely the one thing that  
engrossed his soul, his time, his labors, that not a step  
deviated from it. Every moment, every day, was an  
approximation to it. His devotions, his recreations,  
if any such he had, his journeys, his voyages, his ser-  
mons, his correspondence, were all referred to this  
one end. His exertions never relaxed for a moment,  
and he, with his great compeer Wesley, made the  
trial so seldom made, what is the utmost effect which,  
in the way of saving souls, may be granted to any one  
preacher of the gospel in any age or country.

“What may not be done, and is not done by ear-

**CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS. 509**

nestness? It gives some success to any error, how-  
ever absurd or enormous, and to any scheme of wick-  
edness, however flagrant and atrocious. What is it  
that has given such success to popery, to infidelity, to  
Mormonism? Earnestness. And shall the apostles  
and advocates of error be more in earnest than the  
friends of truth? Whitefield often quoted Betterton  
the player, who affirmed that the stage would soon be  
deserted if the actors spoke like the preachers. And  
what would empty the play-house, that is, dulness and  
coldness, does often empty the meeting-house. ‘Mr.  
Betterton’s answer to a worthy prelate,’ says White-  
field, ‘is worthy of lasting regard. When asked how  
it is that the clergy, who speak of things real, affected  
the people so little, and the players, who speak only  
of things imaginary, affected them so much, replied.

‘My lord, I can assign but one reason—we players  
speak of things imaginary as though they were real,  
and too many of the clergy speak of things real as  
though they were imaginary.’ It is not always so.  
Many a preacher, even in our own day, by the unaf-  
fected earnestness of his manner, carries away his  
audience upon the tide of his own feeling. They hear  
what he says, they see what he feels, his eye helps his  
tongue, the workings of his countenance disclose the  
feelings of his heart; his manner is a lucid comment  
upon his matter, breaks down the limits which words  
impose upon the communication of ideas, and gives  
them not only an apprehension of the meaning, but a  
sense of the importance of his subject, which unimpas-  
sioned language and manner could not have done.

“I name but one thing more as characteristic of  
22\*

510 GEORGE WHITEFIELD

this great man, and which it would be well for us to  
imitate, and that is, his dauntless courage. See him not  
only facing mobs, defying threats, and even lifting up  
his pulpit amid the wild uproar of a London fair, the  
boldest achievement that a speaker ever accomplished,  
but holding on his noble career unterrified, and work-  
ing amid the storm of obloquy that came upon him  
from so many quarters. Who that has ever read, can  
ever forget Cowper's exquisite description of him?

“ ‘ Leuconomus—beneath well-sounding Greek  
I show a name a poet must not speak—

Stood pilloried on infamy’s high stage,

And bore the pelting storm of half an age,

The very butt of slander, and the blot  
For every dart that malice ever shot.

The man that mentioned him at once dismissed  
All mercy from his lips, and sneered and hissed.

His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,

And perjury stood up to swear all true;

His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,

His speech rebellion against common-sense:

A knave when tried on honesty’s plain rule,

And when by that of reason, a mere fool.

The world’s best comfort was, his doom was passed,

Die when he might, he must be damned at last.

Now truth, perform thine office, waft aside  
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride,

Reveal—the man is dead—to wondering eyes,

This more than monster, in his proper guise.

He loved the world that hated him; the tear  
That dropped upon his Bible was sincere:

Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,

His only answer was—a blameless life;

And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,

**CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS. 511**

Had each a brother’s interest in his heart.

Paul’s love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,

Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.

He followed Paul—his zeal a kindred flame,

His apostolic charity the same.

Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,

Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease.

Like him he labored, and like him, content  
To bear it, suffered shame where’er he went.

Blush, calumny! and write upon his tomb,

If honest eulogy can spare the room,

Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,

Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies;  
And say, Blot out my sin, confessed, deplored,

Against thine image, in thy saint, 0 Lord.’

“What but a guilty cowardice is it, a false and  
pusillanimous shame, that keeps us in these days from  
some novel and bolder method of aggression upon the  
domain of darkness? Are we not wanting here in  
that moral courage which would make us, when con-  
scious of doing right, indifferent to the stare of the  
ignorant, and the wonder of the timid; to the shaft  
of ridicule, and the malignant censure of the cynic?  
How enslaved are we by the fetters of custom, or re-  
strained by the trammels of conventiality! How lit-  
tle are we disposed to go out of the usual track, even  
in saving souls! Very few are disposed to imitate  
the boldness, ingenuity, and novelty of that noble-  
hearted brother,\* who hired a disengaged theatre in  
the city where he dwelt, and for four months preached  
there to listening and well-behaved crowds, the gospel

512 GEORGE WHITEFIELD

of salvation; and for his reward had very many given  
to him, who are his joy now, and will be his crown of  
rejoicing in the presence of Christ at his coming.  
Who can see Paul on Mars-Hill, addressing himself

\* The Rev. Richard Knill of Chester, formerly a missionary in  
India, and afterwards in Russia, since deceased.—B.

to the sages and their followers of all sects, and  
preaching to them a doctrine so repugnant to the  
mythology of the temple and the philosophy of the  
schools, as Christ, the last judgment, and the resur-  
rection of the body, without being impressed with the  
moral courage of such an act? It is this spiritual  
heroism that is wanted in our modern preaching, and  
indeed, which was no less needful when the Method-  
istic company commenced their preaching.

“Nor is it only in this unwillingness to go off from  
our own ground for saving souls that our guilty cow-  
ardice is seen, but in the disposition to shirt the more  
solemn and searching truths of revelation. Are we  
not giving way too much to the fastidiousness of  
modern taste and refinement, which is craving after  
smooth things; which desires the sentimental, the  
picturesque, the imaginative, but turns with disgust  
from the solemn, the alarming, the awakening? Are  
we not too gentle and courteous to mention such a  
word as ‘hell’ to modern ears polite? Are we not  
too fearful to break in with the thunders of a violated  
law upon those who are at ease in Zion? I do not  
ask for a gross, revolting method of describing the  
punishment of the wicked, as if the preacher delighted  
in harrowing up the feelings of his audience. This is  
as disgusting as if, in order to keep men from crime,

**CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS. 513**

our judges and magistrates were ever and anon giving  
a minute detail of the process of an execution, and the  
convulsive pangs of an expiring wretch suspended to  
the beam of the gibbet. We ask not for a harsh,  
scolding, and denunciating style of preaching; but  
we do want more of the unflinching boldness, and the  
dauntless courage, which, are necessary to fidelity,  
and absolutely essential to him who would win souls  
to Christ. It is too generally forgotten, that our  
Lord Jesus, who was incarnate love, was the most  
solemn and awful of all preachers. He whose gentle  
spirit so often breathed out itself in invitation, and  
whose compassion melted into tears, at other times  
robed himself in terror, and uttered the most alarm-  
ing peals of divine indignation. What we need for  
our ministry is this mixture of tenderness and solem-  
nity, which entered so deeply into the ministry of  
Christ, and was so characteristic of his servant, whose  
labors we this day commemorate and commend.”

Hear also the Rev. John Glanville, the present  
successor of Whitefield in the Tabernacle at Bristol:  
“And such preaching must continue, if the world is to  
be saved. Nothing but this is suited to man’s neces-  
sities; nothing else can meet man’s miseries. The  
battle must be fought with the old, well-tried, but not  
worn-out weapons. God has provided them, and we  
must use them. We require nothing else; the world  
has not outgrown the old gospel, so as to need some-  
thing new to soothe its sorrows and satisfy its wants.

“Not that ministers can now produce the effect  
Whitefield did. He was a man standing alone. The

514 GEORGE WHITEFIELD   
  
charm and power of his preaching have never been  
explained. It was all fire and flame, shooting out  
red-hot thunderbolts against the citadels of sin. It  
was an undivided soul, solemnly consecrated to one  
object—an entire life, zealously employed in one thing.  
As he preached, every feature spoke, the whole man  
became vocal, and the truth of God stood out in its full  
proportions and beauty, in the bright and broad day-  
light of heaven. So unreserved was his self-consecra-  
tion, that every thing was deemed impertinent which  
obtruded upon, or interfered with the one great end  
of his existence. He lived in communion with God-  
more in heaven than on earth. He was much at the  
foot of the throne, and got his strength there; he  
prevailed with men, because he had prevailed with  
God. His whole soul was filled with life, and fired  
with love, from being in habitual contact with the  
cross.

“And we must pursue the same course, and try to  
do the same thing. We have the power, and we must  
bring it forth and use it. God has given the machin-  
ery, and it is for us to set it in motion. The world  
is perishing, and we must save it; it is dying, and we  
must give it life. God from his eternal throne calls  
us—Christ from his bleeding cross speaks to us—  
voices from the abodes of sin, and the regions of de-  
spair, sound in our ears. And we all, as ministers  
and as members, must rise up in the vigor of piety  
and the fervor of prayer. We must rise up from the  
slumbers of selfishness, and tear off the fetters of the  
world, and act as those who believe in the existence  
of an eternal heaven and an eternal hell, and that all  
souls will be found in the one or in the other—as  
CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS. 515

those who have a great work to do, and but a short

and uncertain time to do it in. Awake, awake, put  
on strength, 0 arm of the Lord; awake, as in the  
ancient days, in the generations of old.”

1. Dr. Prince, in a note, here says, “Though people were **then”**in the time of the earthquake, “generally frightened, and many  
   awakened to such a sense of their duty as to offer themselves to our  
   communion, yet very few came to me **then** under deep convictions  
   of their unconverted and lost condition, in comparison of what  
   came **now.** Nor did those who came to me **then,** come so much  
   with the inquiry, ‘What shall we do to be saved?’ as to signify  
   they had such a sense of their duty to come to the Lord’s table  
   that they dare not stay away any longer.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)