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ABSTRACT.

David Smith
Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford

D. Phil Thesis.
Trinity Term, 1992. [i.e. 1993]

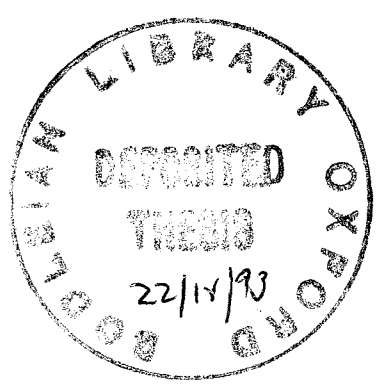
"George Whitefield as Inter-Confessional Evangelist, 1714-1770."

George Whitefield was arguably the most successful evangelist of the eighteenth century. Partly through his brilliant oratory and bold itinerant field preaching he was a catalyst for revival in England, Scotland and America. Though a priest of the Church of England, his appeal was greatest among non-Anglicans: his ability to move so freely among those of different church backgrounds is one of the main features of his inter-confessional ministry.

After a discussion of his early life, conversion and ordination in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 examines the making of the evangelist - the development of his theology, churchmanship and preaching style, as he moved from High Churchmanship to a moderate Calvinism and catholicity of spirit which prepared him to move freely in the transatlantic puritan world. Chapter 3 looks at the opposition he received from the Church of England, Chapter 4 at his leadership of Calvinistic Methodism and Chapter 5 at his role in revitalising English Nonconformity.

Chapter 6 investigates his role as catalyst of revival and schism in Presbyterian Scotland. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 deal with his work in the American Colonies, where his success was greater in the more heterogenous Middle Colonies, and in puritan New England, than in the South, where Anglicanism was dominant.

In summary, perhaps his chief long-term contribution was his success as an evangelist, which inspired many pastors to adopt the conversionist emphasis of his message and the dramatic extempore style of his preaching, thus facilitating the transition from the rather inward-looking, scholastic Puritanism of the seventeenth century to the more missionary-orientated evangelicalism of the nineteenth.



ABSTRACT.

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"George Whitefield as Inter-Confessional Evangelist, 1714-1770."

During the middle years of the eighteenth century, an evangelical religious revival spread through many parts of Britain, the Continent and America. The catalyst in England, Scotland, and the American colonies was a young Anglican clergyman, George Whitefield. Though an ordained priest, his greatest successes were not within the Church of England, but in the old Puritan world of English Nonconformity, Scots Presbyterianism, and New England Congregationalism. The main purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of his inter-confessional ministry, and highlight the extent of opposition which he aroused.

Chapter 1 examines his early life from 1714-36, beginning with his lowly birth at the Bell Inn, Gloucester, his childhood passion for drama, his elevation to Oxford in 1733, his acquaintance with the Methodists, his conversion in 1735 and his ordination in 1736.

Clearly converted in 1735, he nonetheless still retained a largely un-evangelical theology, and began preaching a message of the "new birth" which was largely bereft of a clearly Reformed view of conversion. Chapter 2 examines his transition from Methodist High Churchman to Inter-Confessional Evangelist and includes an examination of his developing moderate Calvinism and his eventual split with John Wesley in 1740-41. His "catholic spirit", so vital for his acceptance in non-Anglican circles, is also assessed, as is his dramatic extempore preaching style and his itinerant field preaching, soon to become the hallmarks of his most successful evangelistic ministry. His reputation was first established among the Bristol and London religious societies in 1737, from which the Methodist Revival began in 1738-39, largely under Whitefield's bold example.

Yet his very success, combined with his adoption of doctrine and practices more in common with Nonconformity than Anglicanism, led to a torrent of criticism from his fellow clergymen, an opposition which is the main theme of Chapter 3. While he looked back to a Church of England, in which the moderate Calvinists of the Reformers held sway, the contemporary Establishment had more in keeping with the post-Restoration Church of Bishop Bull and Archbishop Tillotson. Thus, Whitefield was viewed with fear and suspicion as an "enthusiast", reviving the fanaticism of the Commonwealth; a threat to the stability of the Hanoverian Church and State.

Unlike Wesley, Whitefield did not found a new denomination bearing his name. But, in the early years of the Revival, he headed up a large, well-organised Calvinistic Methodist Connexion, initially at least as numerous as its Wesleyan counterpart. The strength of Calvinistic Methodism centred around London, Bristol, Whitefield's

home county of Gloucestershire, and the South-West, sharing close ties with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodism of Howel Harris and Daniel Rowlands in South Wales. The formation of the English Connexion, Whitefield's role as leader in the 1740s and his eventual decision to relinquish overall responsibility in 1748-49, are the main themes of Chapter 4. After 1749 the Connexion began to break up and the societies began to trickle into Independency.

The greatest beneficiaries of Whitefield's English ministry were the Nonconformists. Whether through the influx of Whitefieldian societies or through the large number of Dissenting ministers who were either awakened or influenced by his ministry, his impact was considerable. Yet the attitude of many pastors was somewhat ambiguous. Not only were they suspicious of his Anglicanism, but many, including Isaac Watts, were wary of Methodist "enthusiasm". Initially, then, the English Revival was not well-received by the English Dissenters; only in the second half of the century did first the Independents and then the Particular Baptists begin fully to embrace the Revival. One of the main influences in this transition was the ministry of Whitefield. Many of his "spiritual children" ended up in the Dissenting ministry, and adopted his emphasis upon evangelism, his "catholic spirit", and his bold extempore preaching. Through such men, and others influenced by Whitefield and the Methodists, the gospel was preached both in English towns and villages and in foreign lands, while Nonconformity entered into a phase of vitality and considerable growth which lasted at least until the mid-nineteenth century.

In Scotland, Whitefield was the catalyst for a shorter but more dramatic Revival which broke out in the small parish of Cambuslang. Inspired by Whitefield's first visit in 1741, the minister there, William MacCulloch, began praying and preaching for an awakening, while two of his parishioners, hearers of Whitefield at Glasgow, organised prayer societies throughout the parish. By early 1742 a Revival had broken out which quickly spread through several lowland towns and villages. One important consequence of the "Cambuslang Wark" was the way it strengthened the cause of the evangelical ministers of the Kirk who supported it, and weakened the cause of their fellow evangelicals, the Erskinite Seceders. Having first invited Whitefield to Scotland, the Seceders soon began denouncing the Revival as the work of the devil, attacking Whitefield the Episcopalian priest as its originator. In 1748, the evangelist aroused new opposition, this time from the Moderate, non-evangelical group within the Kirk. Thereafter his ministry became less controversial and more acceptable. By the time of his death in 1770, his fifteen visits north of the border had earned him the respect and admiration of wide sections of the Presbyterian community.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 examine his ministry in the American colonies. In the South, where the Church of England was largely established and numerically dominant, Whitefield's inter-confessional approach was less well-received. Only in Charleston, South Carolina, where the Dissenting cause was strongest, and, briefly, in Virginia in 1755, did his ministry achieve significant success.

In contrast, in the Middle Colonies, where there was an ethnic and religious pluralism, his simple message of the new birth was dramatically effective. For a short period in 1739-40 he seemed to have spanned the denominational divide, bringing Quakers, German

pietists and Calvinistic Presbyterians under one Revival. Yet, as his Calvinism sharpened, by the end of 1740 he had lost many of his Quaker supporters, and in subsequent years he felt he had to break with the Moravians, thus confining himself more exclusively to an alliance with the Presbyterians.

But it was perhaps in New England that his success was greatest. Here, he was instrumental in inspiring a Great Awakening which during 1740-42 saw thousands added to the churches. As in the Middle Colonies, his greatest opponents were his fellow-Anglicans. By contrast he moved freely among the Congregationalists; his greatest supporters, as in Scotland, were a group of evangelical or "New Light" pastors, who embraced his ministry, and enjoyed the greatest fruits from the ensuing Awakening. By 1742-43, however, not only was the Revival largely over, but the fanaticism of some of Whitefield's fellow itinerants, such as James Davenport, led to a violent reaction from "Old Light" pastors, who sought to discredit both the Awakening, and Whitefield, whom they regarded as the major source of the corruptions and separations which had followed his first visit. Although he had not specifically encouraged separation, his ministry had undoubtedly led to many zealous New Lights withdrawing from churches led by "unconverted" ministers. Many Separatists continued to regard this English priest as their "spiritual father", some of them ended up joining or forming new churches which eventually became Baptist.

In the long-run, Whitefield's ministry was decisive in the change among English Nonconformists, Scots evangelicals, and many American Calvinists, from the rather inward-looking, scholastic puritanism of the seveneenth century to the more missionary-oriented evangelicalism of the nineteenth. Scores of ministers imitated his example, adopting a simpler more conversionist message and a bold, extempore preaching style, aimed rather at reaching the heart of the sinner than instructing the elect.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD AS INTER-CONFESSIONAL EVANGELIST, 1714-1770.

D. Phil Thesis

Faculty of Theology

Trinity Term, 1992 (c) 1993 HT

by David Smith

Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

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NOTES ON THE TEXT AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

For dates, the year is taken to begin on 1 January.

For reasons of space, short titles have frequently been used in the footnotes. Fuller titles are cited in the bibliography. Although the bibliography contains a list of the references cited in this thesis, it does not include all the works which were used or consulted.

ABBREVIATIONS.

Accnt. John Lewis, ed., An Account of the Most Remarkable *Particulars Relating to the Present Progress of the Gospel (London, 1742).*

CA *J. Lewis, ed., Christian's Amusement* (London, 1740).

CH J. Lewis, ed., *Christian History* (London, 1743).

C/o G. Thomas Copies of Letter Collection, held by G. Thomas, Aberystwyth.

Diary "Diary of Rev. G. Whitefield, 1736," British Library MS. Add. 34,068.

DNB Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 22 vols. (London, 1908-09).

Glasgow WH William McCulloch, ed., *The Glasgow-Weekly-History* (Glasgow, 1742).

GW A. A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2 vols., (Edin., 1970, 1980).

GWJ George Whitefield, *Journals* (Edin., 1978).

GWL George Whitefield, *Letters*: 1734-1742 (Edin., 1976). Fascimile of Whitefield, *Works*, Vol. 1, but with additional letters.

GWW George Whitefield, *Works*, 6 vols., (London and Edin., 1771-1772).

HHRS Tom Beynon, *Howel Harris, Reformer and Soldier* (Caernarvon, 1958).

HHVL T. Beynon, *Howel Harris's Visits to London* (Aberystwyth, 1960).

"HHVL", Bathafarn. "Extracts from the Diaries of Howel Harris," trans. T. Beynon, Third Visit to London, 1741, *Bathafarn* 10 (1955), pp. 19-44.

M'C MS. "Examination of Persons under Scriptural Concern at Cambuslang during the Revival in 1741-42 by the Revd. William MacCulloch," MS. W. 13. b. 212, in New College Library, Edinburgh.

Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society.*

SCG *The South Carolina Gazette.*

SCHS Records. *Records of the Scottish Church History Society. Edin., 1926-*

SM	*The Scots Magazine.*
TCMC	E. Welch, *Two Calvinistic Methodist Chapels 1743-1811.* London, 1975.
WH	*The Weekly History* (London, 1741).
WHS Proc.	*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 1898.
WM	*Weekly Miscellany* (1732-1741).

PREFACE.

This thesis is not intended to be another biography of Whitefield, but a study of his ability as inter-confessional evangelist to traverse national and denominational boundaries with remarkable ease. Until recently, historiography on the American Great Awakening has treated the colonial revivals in isolation;[1] in the last few years several works have redressed the balance by stressing the transatlantic dimensions of the Revival. Michael Crawford has stressed the links between the Revivals in New England, England and Scotland, while W. R. Ward has sought to place the British and American movements in the wider context of a political crisis for Protestantism in the Holy Roman Empire. Susan O'Brien has provided us with a more in-depth study of the communications and literary network operating between leading Calvinist evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic.[2] One benefit of these newer studies has been a revived interest in Whitefield as the most concrete and direct link between the various sectors of the revival.[3] His role as catalyst of the British and American Revivals is more fully developed here, and is one of the main themes of this study.

Also important is his chameleon-like ability to adapt to very different religious and cultural situations. This helps explain why as a young Anglican priest, he was able to gain such wide acceptance with men so different as the Welsh lay evangelist Howel Harris, the Scots Presbyterian William MacCulloch, the Middle Colonies itinerant Gilbert Tennent, the New England Congregationalist Benjamin Colman and the English Dissenter Philip Doddridge. This study attempts to show

how Whitefield, with his experiential moderate Calvinism, his "catholic spirit", his extempore preaching and ceaseless itinerancy, knit together the Methodist Revival in England in 1739, the Great Awakening in the American Colonies, which peaked in New England in 1740, and a similar outpouring in lowland Scotland in 1742. In the world of Calvinistic revivalism Whitefield acted as a sort of link man. His point of doctrinal entry to the transatlantic religious world was a moderate Calvinism, which aimed at reaching the heart and bringing sinners to conversion. His passport was his success - a phenomenal success which heartened and astonished religious leaders who had long been conscious of spiritual declension in their churches. At a time when biblical piety was being undermined by rationalism, whether Deist or Latitudinarian on the one hand, or being stifled by Puritan scholasticism on the other, evangelical ministers had for years prayed and prepared for a reviving work of the Spirit.[4] They were thus often prepared to welcome a fervent young Anglican clergyman, in gown and cassock, who breathed new life into the old Reformed doctrines and used them to arouse thousands in the fields, and in churches and society meetings. Here, at last, it seemed, was God's instrument for the renewal of his Church.

Although Whitefield was at first immature in his grasp of Reformed theology, by 1740 his doctrine was sufficiently traditional to satisfy the Calvinist world, while his idiom and experiential inflection on the teaching of the new birth was sufficiently fresh to attract congregations who had become "sermon-proof" to conventional expositions. In the opinion of his most recent biographer, Harry Stout, Whitefield was "The Divine Dramatist", who through his bold dramatic extempore preaching reached mass audiences in the open air,

thus transforming the traditional sermon from a medium for instructing the elect into an edifying and entertaining spectacle capable of reaching the unchurched in the marketplace.[5]

His appeal was widened because of his "catholic spirit". Those who like himself had clearly experienced the new birth, were warmly embraced, regardless of their differences in non-essentials such as adherence to a particular form of church government or mode of baptism. Thus, although he died an ordained Anglican, he was able to work freely with evangelical "Dissenters" of all persuasions, men who were still fundamentally opposed to Anglican liturgy and church polity. Ironically, his closest friends, supporters and the greatest long-term fruits of his ministry were to be found not within the bosom of the Church of England, but among English Dissenters, Scots Presbyterians and New England Congregationalists.

By contrast, the majority of fellow-Anglicans on both sides of the Atlantic were deeply critical of him. His emphasis upon religious experience, his Calvinism, his itinerant field preaching, his extemporary praying and his friendship with Dissenters, reminded many a cleric of the enthusiasm of the Puritan sects. One historian has described Whitefield as the "Dissenter Priest of the Great Awakening",[6] suggesting that in America his support derived largely from non-Anglican groups delighted by his attacks upon his mother Church of England. But this is only a partial explanation for his success. It fails to account for the fact that Whitefield produced divisions *within* the the non-Anglican groups, just as bitter as the clashes between the Methodists and Anglicans in England. Part of this thesis is therefore devoted to examining why he was disliked not only by Anglicans, but many old-style English Dissenters, Scots and Middle

Colonies Presbyterians, and New England Congregationalists, some of whom tried to establish an anti-revival network to counter that of evangelicalism. Whereas for his supporters he was the agent of a divine outpouring, to others he was the bringer of discord, "enthusiasm" and fanaticism, which would undermine the stability of the Standing Order.

The materials for the study of this theme are voluminous and no modern biography has yet succeeded in gathering them together and synthesizing the,. Luke Tyerman's two volume *Life of George Whitefield* [7] still remains the best study of Whitefield's life but is written in the Victorian *Life and Letters* genre and is only really sustained as far as 1742. A. A. Dallimore's [8] more recent work is useful, but makes little attempt to come to grips with the vast amount of primary sources available and remains mainly a compilation of the secondary literature, interspersed with matter from Whitefield's published Journals and Letters. There is, however, a wealth of newspaper material on the Calvinistic Methodists, which has hardly been touched, save by Tyerman, while there has been no convincing study of Whitefield's ministry in Scotland, for which extensive newspaper and manuscript holdings survive. Although there has been an increasing interest in Whitefield's specific role in the American Great Awakening, there has been little attempt to integrate this with his work elsewhere. The America chapters in this study not only rely on existing research but draw on some hitherto unused collections of Whitefield manuscript letters as well as pamphlets and early colonial newspaper extracts. There is a large pamphlet material on Whitefield in England which has never been properly used and there are

a considerable number of letters of Whitefield and his associates which have, until recently, remained in obscurity. Although it has not been possible to cover all the sources - this would take far more than the time available for a thesis - with the use of new and old sources I have endeavoured to paint a new portrait of George Whitefield as inter-confessional evangelist.

For reasons of space and the rather draconian word limit I have been forced to concentrate on particular themes and omit or drastically shorten others. In the latter stages it was necessary to excise parts of the thesis which I had hoped to develop; in particular, the relationship between Whitefield and Wesley after their split in 1741. I have also omitted a close consideration of some other aspects of Whitefield's work in England which are currently being researched by others. Apart from some reference to his work with the Moravians in the Middle American colonies, his relationship with the Brethren has been largely passed over, since it is being covered by Colin Podmore in his yet uncompleted thesis on the work of the Unitas Fratrum. Whitefield's connections with Lady Huntingdon, and through her, with some of the rich and great, is under investigation by Alan Harding in his forthcoming study of the Countess's Connexion. Finally, Whitefield's relationship with the Anglican Evangelicals, particularly in the 1750s and 1760s, has also been omitted due to time and space.

A foreshortening of discussion at these points has left more space to incorporate studies of Whitefield's early life, theology and churchmanship. The chapter on the Dissenters assesses his remarkable impact on English Nonconformity, whilst that on Scotland proceeds into largely unchartered territory. Much of the dissertation is focused

deliberately on Scotland and America, partly because this is less well-known to English readers, and partly because it was here, where the Church's hold was weakest, that Whitefield's appeal was strongest and where his inter-confessional ministry was most evident.

Preface - Footnotes.

1. J. M. Bumsted used the phrase "splendid isolation" to describe the historiography of the Great Awakening. See Bumsted, "What must I do to be saved?", *Canadian Association for American Studies Bulletin*, 4, (1969), p. 50.

2. See Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York and Oxford, 1991), and "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival: England and New England Compared," *Journal of British Studies*, 26 (October 1987), pp. 361-397. W. R. Ward, "The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival in Central Europe and in the English-speaking World," in *Reform and Reformation* ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1979), pp. 281-305, "Power and Piety", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*, 63 (1980), pp. 231-252, and "Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival," *Studies of Church History*, 17 (1982), pp. 272-296.

3. Susan Durden, "Transatlantic Communications and Influence during the Great Awakening, 1730-1760," (Ph. D. diss., Hull University, 1978), and Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints, 1735-1755", *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), pp. 811-832. See also John W. Raimo, "Spiritual Harvest: The Anglo-American Revival, 1739-1742" (Ph. D. diss., University of Wisonsin, 1974); Robert S. Rutter, "The New Birth: Evangelicalism in the Transatlantic Community, 1739-1745" (Ph. D. diss., Rutgers University, 1982).

4. See for example Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," pp. 364, 386, 392-393; O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints," pp. 816-817.

5. Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991).

6. William H. Kenney, "George Whitefield, Dissenter Priest of the Great Awakening, 1739-1741," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d. ser., 26 (1969), pp. 75-93.

7. Luke Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield*, 2 vols. (London, 1876) (hereafter *LGW*).

8. Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Banner of Truth Trust, 1970, 1980) (hereafter *GW*).

CHAPTER ONE: WHITEFIELD's EARLY LIFE, 1714-1736.

1. From the Bell Inn to the Holy Club , 1714 - 1732.

The life of George Whitefield got off to an inauspicious start. The youngest of seven children, he was born in December 1714 at the Bell Inn, Gloucester. His father died while he was only two, leaving his mother not only a widow [1] but proprietor of the Inn. To Whitefield the evangelist, however, these comparatively lowly origins appeared, like the rungs of Jacob's ladder, merely steps to his future greatness. In his autobiographical *Short Account of God's Dealings with George Whitefield*, written in 1739 when his fame was already considerable, he reflected upon how the circumstance of his being born in an inn had been a frequent encouragement to follow the example of a Saviour, who, like himself, "was born in a manger belonging to an inn."[2] This unusually self-conscious identification with Christ introduces us to a man so assured of his divine call that before he was thirty he was able to shake the English-speaking world with his evangelical message, yet at times sufficiently indiscreet to publicise his private reflections in a manner which ensured that he was at the centre of controversy wherever he travelled.

Information concerning Whitefield's childhood is limited and what little we can discover relates largely to his early spiritual biography. The main source up to 1735 is the *Short Account*, written in a way that tended to reflect back onto his early life the distinctly Calvinistic outlook of his mature years. Yet although this autobiography concentrated on the events of his childhood in a manner calculated to emphasize his natural depravity, the overall picture

presented by it is in fact of a conventionally religious child. At a very early stage in his life he seems to have been profoundly remorseful at some of his actions, recalling:

> "I was always fond of being a clergyman, used frequently to imitate the ministers reading prayers, etc. Part of the money I used to steal from my parent I gave to the poor, and some books I privately took from others..I remember were books of devotion."3.

One of these works was Ken's *Manual for Winchester Scholars*, a High Church devotional work which included a long treatise on preparation for the Holy Sacrament. Whitefield described it as a book which "much affected me" and "of great benefit" to his soul.[4].

This early religious development needs some explanation. It was no doubt in part encouraged by the strong Church of England attachments of the Whitefield family and it seems probable that from an early age Whitefield was expected to have an Oxford University education and pursue a career in the Church of England. Although his father, Thomas Whitefield, was a tradesman, the family had a long history of Oxonian clerical links reaching at least as far back as the sixteenth century. George's great uncle and uncle, Samuel Whitefield and Samuel Whitefield junior, had been Rectors of Rockhampton between 1683-1728 and 1728-1741 respectively.[5]. The direct influence of this clerical background is difficult to ascertain but was probably considerable. George's father seems to have been a committed churchgoer and is known to have been one of the wardens of St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, in 1712.[6]. The Crypt church was the parish church in which George and the rest of the children were baptised and it seems likely that the family continued to be regular attenders there even after their father's death, for it stood only a couple of hundred yards away from the Bell Inn. George's mother seems to have had

aspirations that her son would continue the family tradition and become ordained. Certainly he seems to have been his mother's favourite, recalling how even as a young boy she would tell him "that she expected more comfort from me than from any other of her children". There are hints throughout the *Short Account* that she hoped her son would have a University education, presumably in preparation for ordination.[7]

Whitefield's schooling no doubt encouraged the development of religious ideas that were specifically Anglican. The first school that he is known to have attended was the King's School, Gloucester. This was the official school of Gloucester Cathedral and the schoolroom adjoined the main cathedral building. It was run by one of the cathedral staff; in Whitefield's case, the Rev. William Alexander. Whitefield is on record as having attended the King's School during the year 1725/6 when he was eleven years old.[8] The following year he was transferred to the school of St. Mary de Crypt. The Crypt school was founded upon the understanding that it should always be linked with the parish church, to which it was contiguous. Whenever possible, the local priest would teach the children. In Whitefield's day the master was Daniel Bond, graduate of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, who, although not a clergyman, held the "Readership of Prayers" at St. Michael's Church, and later became Rector of Norton and Leigh.[9] It is thus safe to assume that he would have had a considerable religious influence upon the young Whitefield.

In particular, Bond seems to have encouraged Whitefield's undoubted prowess in the field of acting and public speaking. Whitefield wrote of how "Having a good elocution and memory, I was remarked for making speeches before the corporation at their annual

visitation."[10] He also noted his fondness for reading plays. Although there is no evidence at this stage that he was intending to pursue a career on the stage;[11] we can detect a precocious interest in self presentation and the development of the natural gift of oratory which was so remarkably to complement his supernatural gift of evangelism.

He seems to have made fair progress at school in learning to "speak and write correctly", but due to the family's financial difficulties he persuaded his mother to allow him to discontinue his schooling and prepare him to become a tradesman. Therefore, before he was yet fifteen, he gave up school and went to work in the Bell Inn as a domestic employee. [12]

This period of his mid-teens was marked by an increase in the intensity of the struggle between his natural tendencies to sin - at one time falling into "abominable secret sin"[13] - combined with periodic attempts to pursue a religious life. While visiting his brother in Bristol, he went to St. John's Church, recalling later how he "felt great hungerings and thirstings after the blessed Sacrament" and eagerly attended the Church services.[14]

Like most who had been brought up in the Church, Whitefield seems to have shared the traditional Anglican prejudice against the Dissenters. He was taught to ridicule the Independent minister of Gloucester Thomas Cole, and as a boy, used to

> "run into his meeting-house, and cry *Old Cole! old Cole! old Cole!* Being asked once by one of his congregation, what business I would be of? I said, "a minister, but I would take care never to tell stories in the pulpit, like old Cole.""

Yet his fascination with the preaching of this old Dissenter was not without influence; twelve or so years later, Cole heard Whitefield preaching in a Gloucester church and noted that he, "as well as old Cole" had developed a unique ability for pulpit "story-telling". So affected was Cole by the evangelist's preaching that he linked up with Whitefield's Calvinistic Methodists in promoting the revival in Gloucestershire: in Whitefield's words, "he used to subscribe himself *my Curate*, and went about preaching after me, from place to place."[15]. Thus, although outwardly the young Whitefield was a staunch Anglican, this incident foreshadows the symbiotic relationship he was later to enjoy with English Nonconformity.

Even as a child, his sense of his unique calling began occasionally to strike him. Once, while reading a play to his sister, he informed her that God intended something for him "which we know not of."[16]. On another occasion he was apparently struck a premonition that he would soon become a preacher, but on telling his mother of this was chided for his presumption. Writing in 1739, he concluded "God has since shown her from Whom that impression came."[17]. This growing awareness of the hand of God upon his life was confirmed when an old school friend of his came to visit his mother. A servitor of Pembroke College, Oxford, he suggested a servitorship as a way of fulfilling both George's and his mother's long-term ambitions that he would attend the University. They took up this suggestion with enthusiasm, and George returned to school to finish his studies.[18].

Once back at school his spiritual conflicts returned. He "continued in secret sin" and became involved with "a set of debauched, abandoned, atheistical youths." After he had once more

been "delivered out of the snare of the Devil" he began to pursue a religious life with a new seriousness, focussing his piety on the Sacrament. As in the case of the Welsh evangelist, Howel Harris,[19] an emphasis upon sacramental preparation played an important, although here a less direct role, in setting Whitefield's evangelical conversion in motion. As he wrote:

> "Being now near the seventeenth year of my age, I was resolved to prepare myself for the holy Sacrament, which I received on Christmas Day. I began now to be more and more watchful over my thoughts, words and actions. I kept the following Lent, fasting Wednesday and Friday thirty-six hours together. My evenings...were generally spent in acts of devotion...and I constantly went to public worship twice a day."[20]

This round of religious duties continued for the year prior to his arrival at Oxford in 1732, and gave him strength to resist the temptation of undergraduate life. He continued to engage seriously in devotional activities, praying and singing psalms three times a day as well as morning and evening, fasting every Friday and receiving the Sacrament on a regular basis.[21]

2. Oxford Methodist, 1733-1736.

It is not surprising that in late 1733 this increasingly devout young man became acquainted with Charles Wesley, and through him, with the rest of the Oxford Methodists; an encounter that was profoundly to affect his future life and ministry.

R.P.Heitzenrater has recently exposed the inaccuracy of the traditional picture of the "Holy Club" as a single group meeting in John Wesley's room and under his sole direction.[22] The origins of the Oxford Methodists can be traced back to an informal gathering of

William Morgan, Robert Kirkham and Charles Wesley in 1728-29, meeting for study and religious devotions. They were joined by John Wesley from the summer of 1729. By 1732 a core group of six persons had gathered around John Wesley, but already by this stage other sub-groups had began to form, one led by John Clayton at Brasenose, another by Charles Wesley at Christ Church and a further one at Queen's under Benjamin Ingham's leadership. It seems likely that due to his acquaintance with Charles Wesley and his proximity to Christ Church, Whitefield was introduced to the small group at Christ Church and not the main body under John's leadership. Certainly this would explain why Whitefield was not immediately well-acquainted with John and continued to regard him with a reserved respect, in contrast to his intimate fellowship with Charles.

The groups met together, following the *Country Parson's Advice* to unite in friendly societies "engaging each other in their several and respective combinations to be helpful and serviceable to one another in all good Christian ways."[23] The aim for meeting varied from group to group, but usually included some form of study, Bible study and confession. The devotional life of the Methodists was grounded in personal and private exercises of meditation, self-examination, prayer and Bible-reading and broadly followed the mystic, holy living tradition of Thomas a Kempis, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis de Sales and Jeremy Taylor.[24] In these spiritual exercises, self-examination was regarded as an important means to the attainment of holiness of heart. One particular facet of this was a "general examination" of thoughts, words and actions, similar to that set out in Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*.[25] The only major extract of Whitefield's diary that has survived contains a list of typical questions used by the Methodists

in this process, for example: "Have I been simple and recollected in everything?"[26].

Like the Anglican Religious Societies of Woodward and Horneck, the aim of the Oxford societies was to strengthen the Church of England.[27]. The Wesleys, Morgan and Clayton were all High Churchmen and committed to a regular receipt of the Sacrament. On arriving in Oxford, Whitefield began to receive:

> "the Sacrament at a parish church near our college, and at the castle, where the despised Methodists used to receive once a month."

He was impressed as he saw them "go through a ridiculing crowd to receive the Holy Eucharist at St. Mary's".[28]. He himself first attracted the attention of Charles Wesley because of his frequent attendance upon the Sacrament. Once he joined them, the Wesley's strict adherence to the instructions of the Prayer Book began to affect him. He wrote:

> "Like them, having no weekly sacrament, although the Rubric required it, at our own college, I received every Sunday at Christ Church."[29].

The central theme of the Oxford Methodists was the "new birth", or an inward renewal of the heart. All their personal and social activities were directed towards this end. John Wesley's early sermons demonstrate this point. In "The One Thing Needful" he describes being "born again" as being "formed anew after the likeness of our Creator."[30]. While Luke Tyerman and other Methodist historians have dismissed the Oxford Methodist system as one of works righteousness,[31]. it is clear that while individuals were expected to endeavour to work out their salvation with diligence, this was protected from an outright Pelagianism by a firm understanding of prevenient grace. Salvation was not seen as a momentary event but

as a process by which the image of God, once lost in the fall of man, would be restored. The emphasis of the Christian life was therefore on sanctification, as the Christian pressed on, with the assistance of God's grace, toward perfection in love and final justification.

It in this context that Whitefield's early understanding of the "new birth" must be seen. Shortly after his acquaintance with Charles Wesley, he was given a copy of Henry Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man.*[32] Scougal was a late seventeenth century Scots Episcopalian who had been influenced by the Cambridge Platonists and the mysticism of Jacob Boehme. In *The Life of God*, Scougal begins by a definition of true religion. It was not, as sectarians maintained, the "placing it in the Understanding, in Orthodox Notions and Opinions," neither did it consist of a "constant course of external duties," nor was it centred "in the affections, in rapturous heats and extatick devotions"; rather it was a mystical "union of the Soul with God".[33] Whitefield's initial reaction to *The life of God* was one of dismay:

> "At my first reading it, I wondered what the author meant by saying, "That some falsely placed religion in going to church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the duties of the closet, and now and then reaching out their hands to give alms to their poor neighbours.""[34]

This, it seems, was the basic tenor of his religious life prior to joining the Holy Club. It was a devotional way which by no means excluded the experiential. Although thrown into despair at the seeming worthlessness of his previous efforts, when he prayed to be shown the true nature of religion he recorded that

> "God soon showed me; for in reading a few lines further, that "true religion was union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us", a ray of Divine light was instantaneously darted in

> upon my soul, and from that moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a new creature."[35].

This was written in 1739, in the *Short Account*.

Traditional interpretations of Whitefield's "new birth", by focussing too exclusively on this retrospective evidence, have misunderstood the spirituality of Oxford Methodism and have crudely assumed that Scougal was an evangelical who supplied Whitefield with his understanding of evangelical conversion. Instead, Scougal urged the need for the ascetic inward renewal which was at the centre of the Oxford Methodist theology and practice. This becomes clear from the contemporary evidence of Whitefield's letters. In a letter of February 20th, 1735, only a few months before the date of his "conversion", he wrote to his friend Gabriel Harris recommending *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, which would show him that true religion was not a "mere model of outward performances" but rather "an entire renewal of our natures into the image of God." Thus

> "All our corrupt passions must be subdued, and a complex habit of virtues, such as meekness, holiness, faith, hope, and the love of GOD and of man, be implanted in their room, before we can have the least title to the kingdom of GOD. Our divine master having expressly told us, that "unless we renounce ourselves, and take up our cross daily, we cannot be his disciples".[36].

This emphasis upon self-denial, visible in other ascetical writers studied by the Oxford Methodists, including Scougal, was particularly evident in the influential writings of William Law. A Non-Juror, at this stage of his remarkable spiritual odyssey, Law was a somewhat extreme representative of the stern, objective, old-fashioned High Church piety in an accentuated form. His two major works, *Christian Perfection (1726)* and the *Serious Call* (1729) were widely read by the Oxford Methodists and had such a profound influence upon

Whitefield that long after he had broken with Law, he still felt compelled to produce a long "Gospelised" version of the *Serious Call* (1756).[37] Law's theology centred around the Fall of Man in Adam and the redemption or new birth available through union wih Christ; the principal means of overcoming the corrupt nature and nurturing the grace of God, implanted in the human soul at baptism, lay through a stern programme of self-denial.[38]

Whitefield's conversion occurred in the late spring of 1735. For the preceding twelve months he had engaged in a round of heavy fasting and other acts of self-denial, which not only left him emaciated, but seemingly without the relief for which his soul yearned. Like some other members of his group, he veered for a period into Quietism and began to abandon outward forms of religion completely. At one time, while reading Castaniza's *Spiritual Combat*,[39] he became so convinced of the need to subdue his own will that he shut himself in his room for days until he felt sufficiently purified. On another occasion he felt "led" to abandon one of his college exercises, which got him into considerable trouble. He deliberately wore the ragged clothes befitting a penitent and on one occasion spent several hours lying flat on his face in Christ Church Walk. Finally he decided to leave off all outward forms of religion, scarcely even using his voice in prayer, and began to abstain from the fellowship of his Methodist companions.[40] Whitefield later attributed these extreme actions to satanic deception, but to hostile High Churchmen it was further evidence of the "enthusiasm", which came to characterise Methodism.

Charles Wesley, who seems to have remained a sort of spritual overseer of the young Whitefield, was soon alerted to the danger of

his state and sent him to his more experienced brother John for advice. John advised him to resume all his "externals" but not to depend on them in the least;[41]. - thus summing up the Methodist attitude towards the means of grace. Whitefield followed this advice. Soon afterwards he was instrumental in the conversion of a prisoner and his wife.[42]. This contact with the "unrespectable" poor of Bocardo and Oxford prison was a Methodist activity which was of some significance, for it encouraged the gift of "exhorting", and brought Whitefield in touch with the kind of plebeian audience he was soon to address.

After several months of severe self-discipline, a crisis-point was reached during a long partial fast in the Lenten period of 1735. A letter to Wesley, written on April 1st, revealed the extreme gravity of his situation. It was apparent from this that the long months of heavy self-denial and fasting had seriously impaired Whitefield's health, for he sought advice on how to avoid "falling into a fit of sickness" which would enable his enemies to rejoice at the failure of his Methodist excesses.[43]. Whatever advice Wesley offered, it was insufficient to prevent a severe illness which lasted for seven weeks, but turned out, in retrospect, to be the prelude to a "glorious visitation". He wrote:

> "The blessed Spirit was all this time purifying my soul. All my former gross and notorious, and even my heart sins also, were now set home upon me, of which I wrote down some remembrance immediately, and confessed them before God morning and evening."

At the end of this period of prolonged repentance, came freedom. Identifying with the suffering Christ on the Cross, he cried out "I thirst, I thirst":

> "Soon after this I felt that I was delivered from the burden that had so heavily oppressed me. The spirit of mourning was taken

from me, and I knew what it was to rejoice in God my Saviour; and, for some time, could not avoid singing psalms wherever I was; but my joy gradually became more settled, and, blessed be God, has abode and increased in my soul, saving a few casual intermissions, ever since."[44]

3. Ordination, 1736.

Within a year of his conversion, he was ordained. The childhood dream of becoming a clergyman had been heightened by his contact with the High Church Wesley brothers,[45] and moved towards realization during a nine-month stay (June 1735 - March 1736), in his home city of Gloucester, to which he returned to recover from his pre-conversion debility. Although he was reluctant to commit himself to the ministry, both the importunity of friends and a "providential" meeting with Bishop Benson convinced him that he should offer himself for ordination. Despite the fact that he failed to satisfy the minimum age requirement of twenty-three, Benson agreed to ordain him and in addition gave him a gift of five guineas. As he basked in the sunshine of official favour, Whitefield's reluctance soon melted away.[46]

In the meantime he returned to Oxford in March 1736, to finish his studies and prepare for ordination. This he took very seriously, spending hours in secret prayer and in reading appropriate religious works, such as Burnet's *Pastoral Care*.[47] He read the Homilies of the Church of England, which he found "exceedingly good" and to his own satisfaction proved the validity of the thirty-nine articles by Scripture.[48]

He returned to Gloucester on June 1st and spent an uneasy three weeks making final preparations for the forthcoming event. On the eve of his ordination he prepared himself with a day of prayer and

fasting and then rose early on the morning of the 20th June and prayed over Paul's *Epistle to Timothy*, especially the verse "Let no man despise thy youth". He was ordained by Benson in Gloucester Cathedral, familiar ground for an ex-King's Boy. Whitefield recorded in his diary how he was "solemnly admitted by the Bishop before many witnesses into Holy Orders", that he he was "pure and composed" and "kept from trembling" while he read the Gospel "pretty boldly". Suitably aware of the "the greatness of this new office", as he put on his surplice he compared himself to prophet Samuel in his linen ephod.[49].

However, Whitefield's aspirations for ecclesiastical preferment went much further than mere ordination as deacon or priest. As early as the spring of 1735 he was troubled by premonitions that he himself would become a bishop. In a letter to Wesley in the summer of 1735 he wrote: "I have been continually disturbed with thoughts that I, a worm, taken from a common public-house...should be a bishop."[50]. These ideas were to grow.[51]. Following his ordination he was invited to dine at the Bishop's palace, and wrote of the occasion:

> "I was mercifully preserved from sensuality at the Bishop's...Though perhaps I may be too stiff in my spirit, yet *I would by all means lead the clergy an example of abstinence and self-denial*...Alas every now and then something suggests to me that I shall be a Bishop..but I endeavour to debase myself before God knowing that God resisteth the proud. However if I am preferred in the Church...it shall be God's own doing." (my italics).

He added that the importunity of his friends and "great ones" made such preferment likely.[52]. Needless to say Whitefield never was to become a bishop and it can be said that at this stage of his life he similarly misinterpreted his calling, taking it to lie within the boundaries of the Anglican church, without as yet recognising the

wider call to be an evangelist. Yet, remarkably, even after his ministry had expanded to include "Dissenters" on both sides of the Atlantic, he still continued to hold out hopes of promotion to the episcopal bench. In 1743, for example, he resisted pressure from within the Calvinistic Methodist movement for secession from the Church, on the grounds that he would be made a bishop;[53] a hope that was finally dashed with the death in 1751 of the Prince of Wales, from whom he believed his elevation might come.

In the late spring of 1735 Whitefield had gone through a conversion which was profoundly to influence the rest of his life and ministry, providing the basis of a message through which countless others were to undergo a similar experience. At this stage, however, he was still tied to a theology of ascetic inward renewal, and several years elapsed before he developed a view of the "new birth" closely consonant with an evangelical or Reformed theology. In 1736 he received Anglican ordination and although his ministry was soon to develop beyond the boundaries of the Established Church, he was as yet committed to Anglican ideals and shared Church prejudices against the Dissenters. But although Whitefield's conversion did not immediately lead to changes in his theology or ecclesiology, it was the essential starting point for his contact with non-Anglicans and for developments in doctrine, preaching style and churchmanship which were to be the making of the inter-confessional evangelist.

CHAPTER ONE: EARLY LIFE - FOOTNOTES.

1. Whitefield's mother married a second time in 1722 one Capel Longdon, a Gloucester ironmonger, but it was apparently an unhappy match, see "A Short Account of God's Dealings with George Whitefield from his Infancy to his Ordination, 1714-1736", *George Whitefield's Journals* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), p. 39 (hereafter *GWJ*). For information on Whitefield's family background, see Roy Huddleston, "George Whitefield's Ancestry", ed. Roland Austin, *The Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaelogical Society*, 37 (1937), pp. 221-242. Longdon died in 1738, Elizabeth Whitefield in 1751. For details on George's five older brothers and his sister see Huddleston, pp. 229-30.

2. The autobiographical *Short Account* of his early life was written in the autumn of 1739, during his second voyage to America. When it was published it added to the opposition against Methodist "enthusiasm". Whitefield himself later apologised for some of the more exceptionable passages, which were deleted in the 1756 version. Despite its flaws and its retrospective emphasis, the *Short Account* nevertheless remains an essential source, particularly for his early life up to 1734.

3. *GWJ*, p. 38.

4. Ibid., p. 39. Thomas Ken, *Manual of Prayers for the Use of Winchester Scholars*, (1674). Ken [1637-1711], Bishop of Bath and Wells, was a High Churchman and Non-juror.

5. Huddleston, in "George Whitefield's Ancestry", pp. 223-226 has explained that Samuel Whitefield was George's great uncle, *not* his grandfather, as John Gillies stated in *his Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield* (Boston, 1813), p. 1.

6. *GW*, 1, p. 45.

7. *GWJ*, pp. 37, 40, 42.

8. Roland Austin, "George Whitefield's Schooldays", *Notes and Queries*, 7, 11th ser. (London, May 1913), pp. 384-385.

9. For the Crypt school and Daniel Bond in particular, see Roland Austin, *Crypt School Gloucester, 1539-1939* (Gloucester, 1939), pp. 114-115, 130-131.

10. *GWJ*, p. 39.

11. Arnold Dallimore, *GW*, 1, p. 52, seems to imply that Whitefield intended to make a career out of the stage, but gives no evidence. Harry Stout makes this one of the central themes in *The Divine Dramatist*.

12. *GWJ*, pp. 39-40.

13. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

14. Ibid., p. 41.

15. *George Whitefield, Works*, 6 vols. (London, 1771-1772), 2, p. 28 (hereafter *GWW*).

16. *GWJ*, p. 42.

17. Ibid., p. 45.

18. Ibid., p. 42.

19. Geraint Tudur, "A Critical Study, based on his own Diaries, of the Life and Work of Howell Harris, 1735 and 1750", (Oxford University, D.Phil. diss., 1989), pp. 22-26.

20. *GWJ.*, pp. 43-44.

21. Ibid., pp. 44-46.

22. Richard P. Heitzenrater, ed., *Diary of an Oxford Methodist, Benjamin Ingham, 1733-1734* (Durham, 1985), pp. 7-11. Heitzenrater's introduction provides an excellent summary of his research into Oxford Methodism.

23. Op. cit. ibid., p. 17. The Country Parson's advice to His Parishioners (1680).

24. Jeremy Taylor 1613-1667, Bishop of Down and Connor, Chaplain both to Archbishop Laud and Charles I, was a High Churchman and mystic who had a great influence on John Wesley.

25. *Heitzenrater, Diary*, pp. 18-19, 32-33.

26. George Whitefield, "Diary of Rev. G. Whitefield, 1736", British Library MS. Add. 34,068. Despite its short duration (February-June 1736) it is a valuable primary source and a useful check upon the *Short Account*.

27. See Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London, 1970), p. 26.

28. *GWJ*, p. 46. Baker, op. cit., p. 27 states that the Methodists were first called "Sacramentarians". Wesley rigidly followed the Prayer Book rubric of weekly communion and continued to receive weekly, or more frequently, to the end of his life.

29. *GWJ*, p. 47.

30. See Sermon 146, "The One Thing Needful" in *The Works of John Wesley*, 4, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville, 1987), pp. 351-359.

31. See, for example, *LGW*, 1, pp. 35-36.

32. *GWJ*, p. 46.

33. Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (London, 1707), pp. 2-4.

34. *GWJ*, p. 47.

35. Ibid.

36. George Whitefield, *Letters, 1734-1742* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), reprinted from *GWW*, 1, p. 6 (hereafter *GWL*). Gabriel Harris was one of Whitefield's Gloucester friends.

37. George Whitefield, *"Law Gospelized", in GWW*, 4, pp. 377-437.

38. W. Law, *Christian Perfection* (1726), and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729). Law's ideas concerning the Fall of Man and the Christian New Birth were more fully developed in *The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration* (London, 1739), partly in reaction to the growth of evangelical ideas among his former "pupils" such as Wesley and Whitefield.

39. *[Lorenzo Scupoli], The Spiritual Combat* (London, 1698), was falsely attributed to John de Castaniza. It was recommended to Whitefield by Wesley and provided instruction to the spiritual warrior in his battle against the World, the Flesh and the Devil.

40. *GWJ*, pp. 51-55.

41. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

42. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

43. MS. "Letter to John Wesley, April 1st, 1736", in Whitefield to Wesley letter collection in the Methodist Archives, Manchester.

44. *GWJ*, pp. 57-58.

45. Ibid., p 65.

46. Ibid., pp 65-67. Martin Benson, 1689-1752, Bishop of Gloucester from 1735.

47. Burnet, *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care*, 3rd edn. (London, 1713). Whitefield clearly read the *Pastoral Care* conscientiously: see his "Diary" for March 30th, 31st, April 1st, 3rd and 5th. Gilbert Burnet 1643-1715, was Bishop of Sarum.

48. "Diary", 31st March; *GWJ*, p. 68.

49. "Diary", June 20th, 1736; *GWJ*, p. 69.

50. *GWL*, p. 485.

51. Whitefield's "Diary" makes several explicit references to his becoming a bishop: on March 21st, 1736, he wrote "Thought today much in reading Joseph's story of my being a Bishop. O God for thy mercies' sake keep me from Climbing thro' Xt"; on March 28th "thts about being a Bishop"; see also April 7th and June 6th, 1736.

52. "Diary", June 20th 1736. Dallimore fails to cite these striking references to Whitefield's hopes for ecclesiastical preferment.

53. Tom Beynon, *Howel Harris, Reformer and Soldier* (Caernarvon, 1958), August 31, 1743, p. 51 (hereafter *HHRS*). See also ibid., November 7, 1742, p. 41; Tom Beynon, *Howel Harris's Visits to London* (Aberystwyth, 1960), January 15, 1744, p. 41 (hereafter *HHVL*). For more on Whitefield's hopes for a bishopric see ch. 4, pp. 155, 165-166.

CHAPTER TWO: THE MAKING OF THE EVANGELIST.

1. From Methodist High Churchman to Inter-Confessional Evangelist, 1735-40: The Development of Whitefield's Theology, Churchmanship and Evangelistic Ministry.

The years 1735-40 were decisive in the formation of Whitefield's inter-confessional ministry. At the time of his conversion he was still a staunch Anglican and committed to a theology of ascetic inward renewal. By 1740 he was able to move freely in the Puritan world in America, appearing as a "Dissenter Priest" to his fellow Anglicans, and now fully committed to a Reformed, distinctly Calvinist theology. During these years too, his unique extemporary preaching style was moulded and he began his bold itinerant field ministry, which enabled him to reach thousands in a single sermon, and was to become the hallmark of his most successful evangelistic ministry.

a) New Birth to Moderate Calvinism.

Whitefield had clearly undergone a spiritual conversion by the late spring of 1735. Both his letters and diary, while reticent at the time about a conscious conversion experience,[1] clearly reveal that he was indeed in spirit a new creature. The mourning and agonising of the previous year were gone, replaced by a new peace and joy. On June 11, 1735, for example, shortly after the event, he wrote, no doubt with his own experience in mind, to encourage his friend, Gabriel Harris, and assure him that "after a few strugglings with corrupted nature, the Holy Ghost will replenish your heart with

comfort and peace".[2] Likewise his Diary for 1736 contains abundant references to a new life, often filled with bursts of joy.

There is evidence, too, that by the spring of 1736 he had begun to move towards an evangelical view of assurance. His Diary for April-May gives clear indication of his increasing sense of having received the Spirit of sonship. On April 13th, for example, he read to friends the passage concerning Nicodemus and Christ (probably from Matthew Henry's *Commentary*) and reported:

> "O what a blessed doctrine is regeneration. God grant for Xt's sake I may experimentally feel what it is. Blessed be his Free Grace in Xt Jesus I do in some measure. I mourn for my sins, I breath after Xt and can cry Abba Father."

In similar language on 26th he wrote "Surely God is very Good to such a sinner. For he has given forever adored be Free Grace, the Spirit of adoption."[3].

But if he had a clear assurance of salvation, it was several years before he was to develop a fully Reformed theology. If we take the evidence of his letters, written between 1735-38, there is little indication of a decisive break with the theology of the Oxford Methodists. He continued to correspond with the Wesleys from the summer of 1735,[4] with no sign of any likely areas of disagreement, despite the fact that neither John nor Charles had a similar conversion experience until the summer of 1738. In a letter to John Wesley, for example, written on June 11, 1735, Whitefield makes reference to an old friend who:

> "now seems to perceive some pangs of the new birth. His greatest struggle is to leave the world. I believe he will soon get over it."[5].

The evidence from this and other letters show that his understanding of the new birth was still within the context of the ascetical "holy living" tenets of the Oxford Methodists.

From his early sermons of 1736-37 a similar picture emerges. The most famous sermon of these was *The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in order to Salvation*, which has been used by uncritical biographers as evidence of an evangelical theology at this early stage. However, while this was welcomed by orthodox Dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic because of its insistence on the new birth, it is clear that Whitefield still did not advocate the necessity of what he would later consider a normative conversion experience. Rather, as he explains in his preface to that sermon, ministers were not to allow their people

> "to rest satisfied with the Shell and Shadow of Religion, without acquainting them with the Nature and Necessity of that *Inward Holiness* and Vital Holiness of Heart..without which no Man living can comfortably see the Lord."[6].

This same idea of inward renewal by the Holy Spirit was emphasised in *The Almost Christian*, where, in a virtual paraphrase of Scougal, Whitefield relates how

> "Some place Religion in being of this or that Communion; more of morality; most in a round of Duties and a Model of Performances: and few, very few acknowledge it to be, what it really is, a thorough, inward Change of Nature, a Divine Life, a Vital Participation of Jesus Christ, an Union of the Soul with God."[7].

Whitefield's early theology is perhaps best summarised in a letter to the inhabitants of Savannah, written in October 1738, particularly significant because it represents a resumé of Whitefield's preaching in Georgia during that summer. He began by reminding his parishioners:

> "of our common salvation, of that one thing needful, of that new birth in Christ Jesus, that ineffable change which must pass upon

> our hearts before we can see God, and of which you have heard me discourse of often."

But the means of attaining this transformation were "self-denial and the way of the cross," public worship, reading the Scriptures, secret prayer, self-examination, and "the receiving the blessed sacrament". Significantly there is no mention of justification by faith.

As yet, Whitefield's doctrine of the new birth, while including the idea of assurance, was still not a fully-fledged evangelical view of conversion but rather one of inward renewal by the Holy Spirit, through constant self-denial and the use of the instituted means of grace.

It took several years for Whitefield to grasp fully the significance of justification by faith alone, after which his theology began to change decisively. This central Reformed doctrine was not fully appreciated by the Oxford Methodists nor indeed by the majority of the Anglican Church at the time, though they could hardly have been unaware of its existence. Whitefield's own awareness of the centrality of *sola fide* was undoubtedly awakened through his daily practice of reading the Scriptures with the aid of the popular Dissenting commentator, Matthew Henry. The best evidence for this is Whitefield's own autobiography, written in 1739, when he had begun to develop theologically in a Reformed direction, and when he clearly exaggerates the extent of his early Calvinism. At one particular place (later omitted when his Journals were revised in 1756,) Whitefield claims that shortly after his conversion he had a revelation of God's:

> "free grace, and the necessity of being justified in His sight by *faith only*. This was more extraordinary, because my friends at Oxford had rather inclined to the mystic divinity.."[9].

Although his Diary for 1736 contains several references to "free grace", there is no attempt to link this to *sola fide*. It would be perhaps more accurate to say that from the evidence of his sermons and letters that he too was still "rather inclined to the mystic divinity". In the same passage from his *Short Account* Whitefield further claimed that Matthew Henry and an Anglican commentator, Burkit, were "of admirable use to lead me into this and all other Gospel truths": most biographers have followed this statement and concluded that Whitefield had at least in embryo an evangelical theology from 1735 - a fact, apart from his view of assurance, contradicted by the overwhelming evidence of his contemporary sermons and letters.

In his *Further Account*, written upon more mature reflection in 1744, Whitefield himself recognised that his grasp of these issues was not so clear in the first years of his ministry. He describes his preaching in Bristol in 1737 when:

> "The doctrine of the New Birth and Justification by Faith in Christ (*though I was not so clear in it as afterwards*) made its way like lightening into the hearers' consciences." (my italics).[10].

This seems to be much closer the truth. The one sermon that Whitefield published on the subject in 1737, *Of Justification by Christ*, reveals the limits of his understanding. While it contains a clear treatment of the need for forgiveness from original and actual sin, urging that this was only possible through the blood of Christ, there is confusion concerning the means by which this forgiveness can be appropriated and as yet no clear statement concerning the role of

faith. Rather, he concludes his sermon with the all-too familiar plea:

> "..do but labour to attain that Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; and though your sins shall be as scarlet, yet shall be as wool, though they be crimson, yet shall they be whiter than snow."[11].

Thus the early years of Whitefield's ministry were characterised by his preaching of an experiential new birth, but without a clear Reformed understanding of grace or faith. The decisive change seems to have come after his return to London, late in 1738, when he made his first clear statements concerning justification by faith alone. The key influence was the arrival, in his absence, of Peter Böhler and the Moravians, who had exercised a crucial influence on the Wesleys and many of those revived by Whitefield's own preaching in 1737. Whitefield appears to be yet another of those whose doctrinal perceptions were changed by the Brethren at this critical stage, although there is much controversy on this issue. An important source here is the evidence of James Hutton,[12]. who later joined the Moravians in 1741, and produced an account of the Revival's beginnings, including an account of Whitefield's preaching both before and after his first visit to Georgia. With regard to Whitefield's preaching in 1736-7 Hutton recalls how there had been "little about the Saviour and Justification through him, but more of the New Birth, Transformation etc."[13]. Likewise on Whitefield's return to London in December 1738, Hutton writes:

> "Whitefield also came from Georgia. Some of us went to meet him, explained to him our teaching, which we did not hear from him when he went to Georgia, but he preached otherwise. He accepted our teaching and preached it.."[14].

This account may be biased by Hutton's desire to give as much credit as possible to his Moravian friends, but it derives at least partial

support from Whitefield's own pen. In his *Third Journal* for December 10th, 1738, he writes:

> "The old doctrine of Justification by Faith only, I found much revived, and many letters have been sent concerning it to me, all which I providentially missed; for I now come unprejudiced, and can the more easily see who is right. And who dare assert that we are not justified in the sight of God merely by an act of faith in Jesus Christ, without regard to works past, present or future."[15].

Undoubtedly Whitefield's reading of Henry and other Reformed writings such as Joseph Alleine's *Alarm* and Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*[16]. had also helped to prepare him for the reception of this and other Reformed doctrines. However, it seems evident that until his return to England in late 1738 he did not have a *clear* grasp of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and that it was the influence of the Moravians in London during his absence that affected his judgement on his return, perhaps by providing empirical evidence for the doctrine through the lives of converts who had experienced it as a reality.

His sermons during 1739 begin to reflect this theological shift. In the early part of the year he still continued to preach a doctrine of the new birth along similar lines to those of his earlier sermons. His sermon on *The Marks of the New Birth* reflects the continued influence of Law and Scougal and concentrates upon the marks or fruits of a renewed life, rather than upon justification or conversion. The four marks that he lists are a spirit of prayer, not committing sin, overcoming the world and love for the brethren, all of which were taken from Law's *Christian Perfection*.[17]. Moreover, by way of emphasising that it was the fruits of the new birth rather than the experience itself which was still paramount in his thinking, he quotes Scougal's dictum:

> "I had rather see these divine Graces, these heavenly Tempers stamped upon my Soul, than to hear an Angel from Heaven saying unto me, Son be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven."[18].

By the time he had arrived at Bristol, in February-March 1739, however, there was a much greater emphasis on imputed righteousness by faith in Christ as the foundation for the work of regeneration, evidenced by his sermon on *The Power of Christ's Resurrection*.[19]. Likewise, in a letter written to one of the former Oxford Methodists Broughton, Whitefield pleaded with him to preach the gospel of Christ and justification by faith alone, and expressed his sorrow that Broughton had only recommended Galatians and Romans to be read "warily and sparily"; it was Whitefield's opinion that they could safely be read by all.[20]. By the early summer, his open air sermons at Moorfields and Kennington Common reflected a further shift in emphasis and an increasing attack upon the suggestion that human effort played any part in salvation. In the sermon on *The Necessity of the Righteousness of Christ* he states that:

> "This is the greatest Piece of Self-denial that we can practice, viz to deny our own Righteousness, and instead of thinking ourselves better than others, to believe we are the chief of Sinners...I bless God that he has made me to see how vile I am in myself, and that he has shewed me the Necessity of the Mediation of Jesus Christ, and of his Blood and Righteousness."[21].

These and other sermons show the importance of justification by faith now visible in Whitefield's theology and reflect the extent to which the new birth was increasingly viewed as a result of justification. During the summer of 1739, he also began to show signs of favouring a predestinarian doctrine that was specifically Calvinistic in its treatment of election. The sources of Whitefield's Calvinism have never been adequately explained and are more complex than his growing understanding of justification by faith.

Undoubtedly, his reading of Matthew Henry from 1735 had begun to prepare him for the reception of Reformed doctrine and may well account for his fairly rapid move towards a Calvinist theology in 1739. Morever, Whitefield's admiration for Henry opened him to the influence of the doctrine of the English Dissenters with whom he had begun to have frequent intercourse in 1737. In his *Further Account*, for example, he recollected his "free conversation with many of the serious Dissenters", who invited him into their homes, and repeatedly told him, "that, if the doctrine of the new birth and justification by faith was preached powerfully in the Church, there would be but few Dissenters in England."[22] The friendship with individual Nonconformists increased greatly on his return from Georgia, when he received a number of letters from Dissenters who were impressed with his Sermons and had been aware of his preaching in 1737. Some were particularly gratified to see Reformation doctrines, apparently almost extinct in the national Establishment, being revived once more in the Church of England. Richard Pearsall of Warminster, for example, wrote to Whitefield on Feb. 26, 1738-9:

> "Your sermon upon regeneration gave me a pleasing surprise. I thought it wonderful...that a young clergyman, just come home from Oxford, should see the necessity of preaching that doctrine, and should have the courage to tell the world that he believed so stale and obsolete a point, which has been for so many years banished from the pulpits of the generality of the Church of England."[23]

Others were more cautious. The Particular Baptist minister Joseph Stennett, who wrote to Whitefield's travelling companion William Seward about Whitefield's doctrine, received a defensive answer which is illuminating. Seward admitted that the Oxford Methodists had once been in "legal" bondage, but affirmed his friend's present orthodoxy:

> "You may be assured there is not the least foundation for the reports you hear concerning our brother's doctrine, which is only

that pure word of life delivered in the Gospel. Our brethren were for many years under the law, which they think a good schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and that those that go through the spirit of bondage make the most established Christians. But they have long been in the full liberty of the Gospel, and Brother Whitefield has had joy in the Holy Ghost without intermission for three years. You may guess at the tenor of his doctrine by which many have been raised at once to lay hold on Christ by faith."[24].

Whitefield's growing friendship with the Dissenters continued to affect the development of his theology. In an entry to his *Fourth Journal* for June 5th, 1739, he refers to his having had "sweet fellowship" with "many dear Christian friends", probably Dissenters, and he concludes with the Calvinistic prayer: "Accomplish, O Lord, the number of thine elect, and hasten they kingdom."[25]. More revealing still is his letter to Wesley with reference to the latter's attack upon predestination, which contains the rhetorical question: "How shall I tell the Dissenters I do not approve of their doctrines, without wronging my own soul?"[26].

A further possible source of Calvinist influence on Whitefield in 1739 was the Welsh evangelist Howel Harris, whose account of their first meeting in March 1739 contains the significant phrase: "a sweet conversation with Bro. Whitefield, wherein I found we agreed about election, which united us the more."[27]. Harris was a moderate Calvinist, who, like Whitefield, had undergone a conversion experience some time before he developed a Reformed theology, and this may well have increased their sense of common identity. [28].

More important still in the long-run, however, was Whitefield's acquaintance with the Scottish field-preachers, the Erskine brothers, Ralph and Ebenezer, who had formally seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1740, and formed the Associate Presbytery. A

correspondence with them, begun in the spring of 1739, included an exchange of sermons which was substantially to affect the development of Whitefield's Calvinism.[29] In his *Journal* for June 9th, Whitefield recommended Erskine's *Sermons* to his readers.[30] Ralph wrote thanking Whitefield for the receipt of his sermons, acknowledging his insights concerning regeneration, but hinting at further development when he expressed his hope that "this light shall increase more and more to a perfect day." To this end he recommended Thomas Boston's [31] *On the Covenant of Grace*, anticipating that "it would tend to further and advance a desirable harmony among us in the very way of dispensing the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."[32] The effects of this exchange on Whitefield's theology were soon visible. In his sermon on *The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent*, first preached on 31st July 1739, he publicly stated his belief in election for the first time, writing:

> "the truth is this: God as a reward of Christ's sufferings, promised to give the elect faith and repentance, in order to bring them to eternal life: And both these and every thing else necessary for their everlasting happiness, are infallibly secured to them in this promise, as Mr. Boston, an excellent Scotch divine, sweetly and clearly shews, in a book intitled, *A View of the covenant of grace*."[33]

Within a week, on August 7th, Whitefield preached on *The Conversion of Zaccheus*, with increasing stress on the total depravity of man, election, effectual calling and final perseverance.[34]

This doctrinal influence of the Erskines continued after Whitefield had left for his second visit to America. On August 21, 1739, Ralph Erskine wrote a long letter which included some criticisms of Whitefield's theology as represented in his Journals and Sermons. While expressing his admiration for the "general strain" of Whitefield's doctrine Erskine picked up some "particular expressions"

in which he detected the "Arminian error against the certainty of the perseverance of the saints" and took exception to Whitefield's conclusion to his sermon on *Of Justification by Christ,* in which he failed clearly to outline the role of faith in justification.[35] By now Whitefield's theology was developing rapidly. In a letter of November 28, 1739, he mentioned having read Ralph's sermons and Boston's *Fourfold State of Man* which, "under God", had been of "much service" to his soul. He continues:

> "I believe I agree with you and him, in the essential truths of Christianity...I bless God, his Spirit has convinced me of our eternal election by the Father through the Son, of our free justification through faith in his blood, of our sanctification as the consequence of that, and of our final perseverance and glorification as the result of all."[36]

In January 16, 1740 Whitefield indicated the extent to which he had by now moved firmly into the Calvinist camp, assuring his friend that he was "fully convinced of the doctrine of election, free justification, and final perseverance".[37]

Like Howel Harris, though zealous in their proclamation of the theology of predestination, the Erskines were evangelical or moderate Calvinists. With Thomas Boston and others they were known as the Marrow Men, because of their admiration for a seventeenth century English work *The Marrow of Modern Divinity,*[38] which endeavoured to reconcile a belief in the doctrines of grace with an aggressive evangelism, a position best summed up in a sermon of Ebenezer Erskine on *Christ in the Believer's Arms*:

> "'Tis true indeed, the eternal destination, the purchase and application is peculiar only to the elect; but the revelation, gift and offer is common to all the hearers of the gospel."[39]

A fourth source of Whitefield's early Calvinism came from within the Church of England itself. As Dissenters had long observed, a distinctively Reformed theology had departed from most Anglican

pulpits; Dr. Walsh has traced only six Calvinist clergymen in England on the eve of Whitefield's preaching though more no doubt existed in obscure corners. The literary remains of the great Calvinistic tradition within the church remained, however, and Whitefield was brought into contact with the work of one of its last Anglican exponents, the polemical Dr. John Edwards of Cambridge, who survived into the reign of Anne. Whitefield read extracts of *The Preacher* [40] on his second voyage to America in October 1739. These had already been culled by Jonathan Warne, a lay contemporary of Whitefield and a zealous defender of the Reformed basis of the Church of England. Whitefield wrote that these extracts were:

> "such noble testimonies...of justification by faith only, the imputed righteousness of Christ, our having no free will, etc, that they deserve to be written in letters of gold."[41].

Edwards had charged the University of Cambridge and the early eighteenth century clergy with falling away from the Articles, which, he claimed, were essentially Calvinistic. This theme, taken up by Warne in his two works *The Church of England-Man turned Dissenter* and *Arminianism the Backdoor to Popery*, was enthusiastically adopted by Whitefield in 1739 and formed the basis of his attack upon the Church of England throughout the rest of his ministry.[42]. These works he read during his second voyage to the American colonies, a critical phase in his spiritual life, in which he came to a deeper understanding of his own sinfulness and of the riches of God's free grace - an experience which probably deepened his acceptance of the ideas of divine sovereignty and human frailty which underpin the Augustinian idea of predestination. He expressed this in a letter of November 10, 1739:

> "The remembrance of my past sins has overwhelmed my soul...But I looked to him whom I have pierced. I was enabled to see the freeness and riches of his grace, the infiniteness and eternity

> of his love, and my soul received comfort. Oh the excellency of the doctrine of election, and of the saints final perseverance to those who have been truly sealed by the spirit of promise."[43].

It was only to be expected that Whitefield's move towards Calvinism would powerfully affect his relationship with his fellow English revivalists, most notably the Wesleys, who remained exponents of an evangelical "Arminianism". It seems likely that as early as the spring of 1739 Whitefield had begun to include Calvinist doctrine in his preaching in Bristol; this is probably why Wesley was warned by Whitefield and the Society at Fetter Lane not to preach against predestination in the city, because of the people's supposed attachment to it.[44]. Nonetheless, by the end of April, while Whitefield was in London, Wesley felt it necessary to launch into a pulpit attack on Calvinist teaching in Bristol. Upon his asking for a sign from God to confirm the truth of the words, several of the congregation fell down, apparently, (Wesley concluded), under the power of the Spirit. He then sought further guidance by lot and received the instruction to "preach and print" the sermon, entitled "Free Grace", which openly controverted particular election and reprobation and by the end of May the sermon was on sale.[45]. Whitefield, apparently unware that the sermon had already been published, wrote in alarm at the possibility of a public dispute:

> "I hear, honoured Sir, you are about to print a sermon on Predestination. It shocks me to think of it; what will be the consequences but controversy? If people ask my opinion, what shall I do?...Silence on both sides is best. "[46].

A week later he wrote to Wesley, distressed at news that a brother Stock had been excluded from a society because of his attempt to express his Calvinist views, an act, which was not consonant with a

"Catholic Spirit".[47] Wesley evidently heeded Whitefield's comments; a temporary truce was arranged and Wesley agreed not to publish a further edition of the sermon.[48]

Once Whitefield had left for America, Wesley temporarily kept his promise, but soon changed his mind, and in June, 1740, published a second edition, the effect of which was all the greater since it emerged precisely at a time when Whitefield's Calvinism was growing stronger. Inevitably his free movement around the Puritan world in the Northern colonies, and his association with staunchly Calvinistic revivalists, such as the Tennents, Benjamin Colman, William Cooper and Josiah Smith, rendered his views clearer and more systematic. In March 1740, for example, he wrote to Wesley that he was "ten thousand times more convinced" of the doctrines of election and perseverance than when they were last together, but concluded nonetheless: "You think otherwise; why then should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing?"[49] By the end of May, further contacts with the American Calvinists had further hardened his opinions. He told John Wesley:

> "I cannot entertain prejudice against your conduct and principles any longer; without informing you. The more I examine the writings of the most experienced men, and the experiences of the most established Christians, the more I differ from your notion about not committing sin, and your denying the doctrines of election and the final perseverance of the saints. I dread coming to England, unless you are resolved to oppose these truths with less warmth, than when I was here last."[50]

The correspondence continued, with both sides trying to avoid open dispute. However, news of Wesley's opposition to Calvinism in England coupled with his own increasingly strong attachment to the American Calvinists, meant that Whitefield became less optimistic about preventing such a clash. On August 25, he wrote: "I cannot

bear the thoughts of opposing you: but how can I avoid it, if you go about (as your brother Charles once said) to drive once John Calvin out of Bristol".[51] Four months later, on December 24, 1740 he wrote his famous answer to Wesley's "Free Grace" sermon, and had it sent for publication in Boston and Charlestown before leaving for England in January 1741.[52] He returned home, clearly expecting that his letter would engender some kind of open conflict with the Wesleys, and wrote to them both, partly justifying his conduct in taking the field:

> "My Dear, Dear Brethren; Why did you throw out the bone of contention? Why did you, in particular, my dear brother Charles, affix your hymns, 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 send his sermon, against election, to Mr. Garden, and others in America?"[53].

Whitefield's letter of December 24th, 1740 was essentially an answer to Wesley's "Free Grace" sermon mounted from a moderate Calvinist position in which the Five Points were set out, yet enunciated in such a way that they did not preclude the necessity of preaching the gospel to all, or hinder the pursuit of holiness. In reply to Wesley's charge that election made all preaching vain he wrote:

> "O dear sir, what kind of reasoning, or rather sophistry is this! Hath not God, who hath appointed salvation for a certain number, appointed also the preaching of the word, as a means to bring them to it? And if so, how is preaching needless to them that are elected; when the gospel is designed by God himself, to be the power of God unto their eternal salvation? And since we do not know who are elect, and who are reprobate, we are to preach promiscuously to all".[54].

This last position reflected Calvin's idea of the "secret will" of God and was to become particularly popular among the late eighteenth century Anglican Evangelicals.

Defending the Calvinist position from Wesley's charge of Antinomianism, Whitefield asserted the necessity of good works as the fruit of faith in Christ, citing Scougal's maxim that love and not fear of punishment was the best motive for holy living.[55] He went on to express the concern which he felt - like so many critics, Calvinist and non-Calvinist - at Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection. This he had already dealt with in a letter of September 25, 1740, citing to support his disbelief in the possibility of "entire sanctification" in this life the Anglican article "that this corruption remains in the regenerate". He proceeds:

> "I am sorry..that you seem to own a sinless perfection in this life attainable. I think I cannot answer you better, than a remarkable old minister in these parts answered a Quaker. "Bring me a man that has really arrived to this, and I will pay his expences, let him come from where he will." I know not what you may think, I do not expect indwelling sin is finished and destroyed in me, till I bow down my head and give up the ghost."[56].

Whitefield's view of the Five Points was standard moderate Calvinism and probably affected by his reading of John Edwards, Elisha Coles [57] and the sermons of William Cooper.[58] He made no real contribution to the debate on predestination; rather than explaining the Five Points in detail he referred Wesley to the works of these three men, indicating thereby his own lack of theological training and reluctance to engage in systematic theology. At this point it is noticeable that his view of reprobation was stronger than perhaps he intended and he was soon to retract some of his views on this issue. In an early statement he appeared to accept the ideas of a positive decree of Reprobation; asserting that:

> "God taketh no pleasure in the death of sinners, so as to delight in their death; but he delights to magnify his justice, by inflicting the punishments which their iniquities deserved."[59].

Although this was near to a doctrine of "double predestination", elsewhere he makes it clear that he nonetheless believed in the concept of preterition whereby:

> "God intends to give saving grace, through Jesus Christ, only to a certain number, and that the rest of mankind after the fall of Adam, being justly left to continue in sin, will at last suffer that eternal death, which is its proper wages."60.

He held firmly to a belief in particular redemption at this stage, and he did not move over to the view (characteristic of many 'moderate' Calvinists) of "hypothetical universalism". Wesley's idea of universal redemption he regarded as near blasphemy, claiming, belligerently:

> "But blessed be God, our Lord knew for whom he died. There was an eternal compact between the Father and the Son. A certain number was given him as the purchase and reward of his obedience and death. For these he prayed, John xvii, and not for the world. For these, and these only, he is now interceding, and with their salvation he will be fully satisfied."61.

The most immediate result of the letter was a formal split between him and the Wesleys, thus dividing the Methodist movement, and leading to the formation of separate Calvinistic Methodist societies.

Whitefield's Calvinism also led to a severing of formal links with the Moravians. He first began to have disagreements with John Hagen, a Moravian missionary in Georgia and in November 1740 with Peter Bohler. In a long but illuminating letter, to James Hutton in England, Whitefield listed his theological disagreements with the Brethren. His first bone of contention was that they denied "Absolute Election and reprobation" which he took to be a "foundation truth" and the basis of "free justification". Secondly, he held their view of imputed righteousness to be incorrect since they denied the "*absolute* impossibility of the Saints *finally* falling away." Thirdly, he feared that they believed in "sinless perfection" and fourthly,

that they denied the eternity of hell torments, (information he had received from Gilbert Tennent who was soon to become a great opponent of the Moravians). Further errors which he discovered were Hagen's view that the Devil could not tempt a man after he is in Christ and that the Moravians did not believe in reproving "natural men".[62]

Yet, despite these open divisions, which resulted in the revival movement splitting into separate Wesleyan, Calvinistic and Moravian groups, Whitefield continued to enjoy warm friendship and even degrees of ministerial co-operation with non-Calvinists. With the Wesleys, the Moravians and even the Quaker believers in an inner light, Whitefield continued to hold fellowship, without compromising his own principles. This was perhaps partly because his own Calvinism had been gained only by experience and only by degrees. As he wrote to his Scottish Calvinist friend, Mr. Willison of Dundee:

> "That some good souls are among the Quakers, I doubt not - for such I have charity, because our Lord hath given to them his spirit - though I am a strenuous defender of the righteousness of Christ, and utterly detest *Arminian* principles, yet I know that God gave me the Holy Ghost, before I was clear in either as to head-knowledge: and therefore, dear Sir, I am more moderate to those who are not clear, supposing I see the divine image stamped upon the hearts.[63]."

Thus, although Whitefield was a committed Calvinist he was of a sufficiently "catholic spirit" to enable him, after 1741 to hold fellowship with and preach for non-Calvinist evangelicals. At the same time, his espousal of Calvinist doctrines was an important, even a momentous step in his religious odyssey. While his clerical status and his use of clerical dress enabled him to attract many members of the established Church, his moderate Calvinism gave him a passport by

means of which he could move freely among congregations in Scotland and New England and which endeared him to the English Dissenters.

b) Churchmanship: "Catholic Spirit".

It was perhaps in his churchmanship that the most important changes were realised. Unlike his fellow evangelists, the Wesleys, Whitefield shed his High Church prejudices at an early stage and began freely communing with Dissenters. While this ended up restricting his audience in England, it opened up to him riper fields in Scotland and the American colonies. Ultimately Whitefield, a surpliced clergyman, enjoyed his greatest successes among non-Anglican communities, whether English Nonconformists, Scots Presbyterians, or New England Puritans. It was this that was the hallmark of his inter-confessional ministry.

But how did he manage to move so freely among Nonconformists? What was it about his churchmanship, in particular, which enabled him to achieve such wide acceptance among those naturally suspicious and hostile of anyone from a half-Reformed Establishment? Perhaps the greatest key to his success was his "catholic spirit" towards those of different communions. The origins and precise nature of this doctrine are difficult to detect: unlike Wesley,[64] Whitefield never published a sermon on the subject. He was probably influenced by Scougal, who had criticised the way Christendom had been "unhappily divided" through a sectarian trusting in "Orthodox Notions and Opinions."[65] Certainly his conversion experience was to be a turning point. Shortly after this, his High Church, anti-Dissenting prejudices were removed as he read Alleine's *Alarm*, Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, and Janeway's *Life*,[66] and discovered that some of the best examples of late seventeenth century Puritan piety, were to be found in men who became Nonconformists. He wrote:

> "I bless God, the partition wall of bigotry and sect-religion was broken down in my heart; for, as soon as the love of God was shed abroad in my soul, I loved all of whatsoever denomination, who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity of heart."[67].

This retrospective evidence is confirmed by his contemporary letters. For example, writing to John Wesley from Gloucester on July 11th, 1735, only months after his conversion, he mentioned having visited a Dissenting tradesman, who was, he thought, "a most spiritual man" and "a solid thorough establish'd Christian". Moreover, one of his Dissenting brethren had apparently bought "both Mr. Law's books" while "others" had seen them. Whitefield concluded "I hope e'er long they will grow pretty intimate."[68]. The influence of the Gloucester Dissenters on the young Whitefield was probably considerable. Now, clearly one step removed from the strict Anglican environment of Oxford, he began to develop an openness towards evangelical Nonconformity which sharply diverged from the continuing High Church prejudices of his mentors, the Wesleys.

Yet the transition from High Churchmanship to a throroughly inter-confessional approach was clearly a gradual one. Later, in 1737-38, when he had begun to develop links with the London Dissenting community, there is evidence that his attitude towards the Nonconformists was still cautious, and that he felt an urge to bring them into the Anglican fold as well as to cultivate their friendship for its own sake. He justified his association with the London Dissenters as "agreeable to the Word of God", but added that the "best way to bring them over" to the Church of England "was not by bigotry and railing, but by moderation and love, and undissembled holiness of life"[69]. - clearly an answer to his High Church critics. A reflection of Whitefield's attitude to the Nonconformists at this early stage, is provided by a letter to the London Dissenter Daniel

Abbot on January 9, 1737/8. Whitefield expressed his appreciation at the "favours" received by Abbot and his Dissenting friends, despite their difference from him "in some outward forms of worship." He continued:

> "I would willingly be of that catholic spirit as to love the image of my Divine master whenever I see it, 'though as I told Madam Cook, I should think it a *sin* in *me* to dissent from the Established Church. Yet I am far from thinking God's grace is confined to any set of men whatsoever. No, I think the partition wall is broken down and that Jesus Christ came to redeem a people out of all nations and languages, and therefore his benefits are not to be confined to this or that particular set of professors."[70].

This extract clearly reveals not only Whitefield's early friendship with several London Nonconformists, but also his attachment to the Established Church, which at this stage which was quite as striking as his "catholic spirit", his desire to love all who had been renewed in the image of God. Significantly, his correspondence with Abbot and other Dissenting friends continued throughout his first voyage to Georgia in 1738.[71].

In Gibraltar, he discovered a Scottish Presbyterian Society, the *Dark Lanthorns*. Still cautious, Whitefield decided not actually to visit them, but presented its members with some religious books and endeavoured to unite it with the Anglican religious society, *The New Lights*. During his stay he was visited by two from the "Nonconforming Society", who Whitefield deemed to be "Israelites indeed", and exhorted to love and unity, urging them "not to let a difference about a few externals occasion any narrow-spiritedness to arise in their hearts". Accepting his advice to come to Church, they heard him expound on the lesson for the day - which, "providentially" was on the fourth chapter of Ephesians - during which he urged on his hearers the

necessity of a "a catholic disinterested love" and "to join without respect of persons in hastening the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ". Evidently he was successful, as his Dissenting friends regularly attended his ministry there and talked of a "perfect harmony" between them. *Divide et impera*, Whitefield concluded, was the Devil's motto.[72] Nonetheless, despite these steps towards fellowship with Nonconformists, it is significant that both in London and Gibraltar Whitefield seemed keen to attract Nonconformists to the Church. As yet he made no attempt to minister in their societies or meeting houses.

As it developed, this "catholic spirit" was to be one of the lynchpins of Whitefield's success, particularly in Scotland and America. In its fullest extent it is perhaps best explained in a postscript to his *Letter* to the Religious Societies in Scotland, the sentiments of which he described as "exactly expressing the Language" of his own Heart:

> "There is a Catholick Spirit, a Communion of Saints in the Love of God and in all Goodness, which no one can learn from that which is called Orthodoxy in particular Churches but is only to be had by a total Dying to all Worldly Views by a pure love of God."

In the present divided State of the Church, a true "Catholick" was one who had more truth and less error, than a Christian who was " hedged in by any divided Part". The writer continued:

> "if each Church could produce but one Man a-piece that had the Piety of an Apostle, and the impartial love of the first Christians, in the first Church at Jerusalem, that a Protestant and a Papist of this stamp would not want half a Sheet of Paper to hold their Articles of Union, nor be half an Hour before they were of one Religion."[73]

This Holy Club emphasis upon "primitivism" suggests that Whitefield's ideas were parallel to those of his former mentor John Wesley.

Unlike Wesley, however, Whitefield failed explicitly to repudiate the charge that this "catholic spirit" was but the thin end of a latitudinarian wedge.

Whitefield's view of baptism developed in line with his doctrine of the "catholic spirit". In 1735 he was still under the High Church influence of the Wesleys. In July, he wrote to John, informing him of his ministry to a young Gloucester Dissenter, recently come over to the Church, and asking Wesley's advice as to "whether the Baptism he received from the Dissenters is valid or not. If not, why or wherefore, Or whether he may presume to approach the Lord's table before he has been baptized into our Church. And if he cannot, how I had best proceed to get him baptized as soon as possible." Whitefield had already contacted the Bishop who was ready to act when necessary.[74]. Not only was Whitefield prepared to defer to Wesley on the question of Dissenting baptism, but there is plentiful evidence that following his conversion he continued the practice of renewing his baptismal vows during times of public worship.[75].

But gradually his pre-conversion ideas of baptismal regeneration began to recede. By 1737, his sermon on the *Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus* included an attack upon the prevailing High Church view. The following extract summarises his position:

> "he is not a *real* Christian, who is only one *outwardly*; nor is that true Baptism, which is only outward in the *Flesh*. But he is a true Christian, who is one *inwardly*, whose Baptism is that of the *Heart*, in the *Spirit*, and not merely in the *Water*."[76].

Moreover, unlike Wesley, the rubrical High Churchman, Whitefield was more flexible as to baptismal forms. This is suggested by an

extract from the Journal of Secretary Stephens of Georgia, who had observed both Wesley's ministry of 1735-37 and Whitefield's of 1738, at first-hand. He noted that at Savannah Wesley had insisted upon dipping infants, whereas Whitefield was content with the simpler method of sprinkling. Shortly after Whitefield's arrival in Savannah, Stephens reported:

> "A Child being brought to Church to be baptised, he performed that Office after the usual Manner, by sprinkling; which gave a great Content to many People, that had taken great Distaste at the Form of Dipping, so strictly required, and so obstinately withstood by some Parents..."[77].

It is rather ironic that Whitefield's indifference to precise forms pacified conventional Anglicans, the very people who were also most offended at his insistence upon the necessity of an inward regeneration.

In future years, Whitefield's stance on baptism proved sufficiently "catholic" for most "Dissenters", with the exception of the more extreme Baptists.

Of Holy Communion Whitefield held a somewhat "higher" view. His pre-conversion conviction of the importance of receiving the Sacrament had been heightened by his contact with the Oxford Methodists, and on his withdrawal to Gloucester in 1735, one of the snares he faced was friends who attempted to dissuade him, without success, from "a constant use of the means of grace, especially from..receiving the blessed Sacrament."[78]. As well as an insistence upon weekly communion, Whitefield also adhered to a theory of the Eucharist as a true channel of grace which sternly rejected the memorialist view of the notorious Bishop Hoadly.[79]. In his *Short Account* of 1739, in relating his temptations Whitefield noted how:

> "on receiving the holy Sacrament, especially before trials, I have found grace in a very affecting manner, and in abundant measure, sometimes imparted to my soul,- an irrefragable proof to me of the miserable delusion of the author of that work called, *The Plain Account of the Sacrament*, which sinks that holy ordinance into a bare memorial, who, if he obstinately refuse the instruction of the Most High, will doubtless, without repentance, bear his punishment."[80].

After his ordination as a deacon in 1736, he was occasionally able to assist in administering the Sacrament, as at St. Dunstan's in London, just before he left for Georgia,[81]. although the main business of his early ministry was undoubtedly preaching. In October 1738, on his return voyage from Georgia, he wrote to the inhabitants of Savannah reminding them of the importance of the new birth and recommending the reception of the Sacrament as one of the means of grace, but, he wrote:

> "this must be deferred till I see you in person, and am qualified to administer unto you the sacred symbols of Christ's blessed body and blood,"[82].

referring to his ordination as priest. Following this, he seized the opportunity for adminstering the Sacrament, despite the fact that his unpopularity among his clerical brethren limited the possibilities of doing so. For example, on the earliest possible occasion, after the second laying on of hands at Oxford on January 14th, 1739, at which he was ordained as priest, he decided to "make proof" of his ministry, by preaching and administering the Sacrament at the Castle.[83]. He also continued to receive personally. At Crook Lane London we find that he took the Sacrament, noting: "I found I received Christ, and fed on Him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving."[84]. On February 25th he preached in the churchyard of the church at Brislington, a village about two miles from Bristol, and after preaching with a sense of utterance given by the Holy Spirit, wrote:

> "what was best of all, by the leave of the minister, who invited me thither, we had a Sacrament; and hope it was a Sacrament of saints indeed."[86].

This was typical of the continued high place that he accorded to the Holy Communion.

The Methodists' attachment to the Sacrament soon became a source of conflict with the Anglican authorities, who came to resent their practice of descending *en masse* on a particular church to receive. For Whitefield and his friends attendance at Communions was a sign of loyalty to the Church. On May 20, for example, he wrote:

> "Went with our brethren at Fetter Lane Society to St. Paul's, and received the Holy Sacrament, as a testimony that we adhered to the Church of England."[87].

It was not until much later that Whitefield began administering the Sacrament in private houses, a decisive step, which Howel Harris saw as the likely prelude to the secession of the Calvinistic Methodists from the Church of England.[87].

In 1739, however, Whitefield and the other Methodist leaders struggled to maintain a balance between the relative formality of attendance upon the Sacraments administered publicly in the Church, and the greater informality and warmth provided by their society Love Feasts, first introduced at Fetter Lane Society in 1738. These Feasts were an adaption of the primitive *Agape* at which a simple meal of cake and water was communally shared, and a cup was passed around in what has been described as a domesticated, democratised folk-Eucharist, during which each man and woman was given freedom to "speak whatever may be to the glory of God."[88]. One advantage of the Love Feasts was that they were shared within a fellowship of like-minded

believers, a setting which some found more congenial and appropriate than the Communion of many lukewarm souls found in many parish churches. In his *Letter to the Religious Societies* written on his voyage to America in the autumn of 1739, Whitefield stressed that society members should meet together and not allow others to join them:

> "till you have the proper Evidence and Assurance that they are indeed prepared of God to be Partakers with you of an holy and eternal Fellowship with Him, through *Jesus Christ*".

It was better, he continued, to have a few "living Stones...knit together and made perfect in one" than a great Multitude who outwardly partook of the elements, but who failed to benefit spiritually, eventually perishing "through want of that spiritual Food and Sustenance which strengthens and restores to perfect Health and Life, as many as are Partakers of it."[88]. Whitefield's view of the importance of the Sacrament thus led him to grow increasingly critical of the idea of mixed Communion between saints and sinners. This hastened his disaffection with the Established Church, and opened the way for communion with "Dissenters" and a sharing of the Sacrament in private houses, which eventually resulted in the departure of many of his own Calvinistic Methodist societies from the Church of England.

His view of the worship and liturgy of the Church also altered perceptibly during these years. Though he had been brought up, both in the parish church and school in a traditional Anglican setting, while at Oxford his reading of Scougal's *The Life of God*, and other works such as the Quietist Castaniza's *Spiritual Combat*, led him to cease relying upon outward "forms" of religion, and for a time even to abandon fellowship with his Methodist brethren. Under John

Wesley's careful instruction, however, he soon resumed such "externals", not relying on them, but certainly regarding them as a means of grace, useful in purifying the Christian inwardly.[90] This attitude is perhaps best illustrated in his sermon on the *New Birth*. In an extract, (undoubtedly influenced by his own personal experience) he described persons who were "very punctual in the regular Returns of publick and private Prayer, as likewise of receiving the Holy Communion, and perhaps, now and then too, in keeping a Fast." These erred, however, in trusting in those means, whereas "all the instituted Means of Grace" were "no further serviceable to us, than as they are found to make us *inwardly better.*" In fact, he added, those who used "God's Ordinances" without letting them "produce their intended Effect", encouraged others to think that they were worthless, and therefore they would receive "greater Damnation" than those who wholly neglected those means.[91] Such preaching suggests the appeal of the young "converted" Whitefield to the devout, conventionally High Church youth of the religious societies, many of whom would have identified with his experience of merely going through the motions of religious activity, without gaining thereby a heartfelt sense of intimacy with the Spirit of God.

One aspect of Whitefield's newfound sense of freedom was that he became increasingly fond of private prayer and intercession, in which he began to stray from praying according to forms, relishing the greater room for expression that this liberty afforded him. By the time of his departure for Georgia in late 1737 - early 1738, his practice of private extempore prayer had spilled over into his times of fellowship with friends, probably initially at Hutton's small society in London. In his *Further Account* he recalled:

> "I had a sweet knot of religious friends, with whom I at first attempted to pray *extempore*. Some time, I think in October [1737], we began to set apart an hour every evening, to intercede with the Great Head of the Church to carry on the work begun..I was their mouth unto God, and He only knows what enlargement I felt in that employ..The sweetness of this exercise made me compose my sermon on *Intercession*."[92]

The sermon, preached at the parish church of Great Saint Helen, contained a number of seasonable encouragements to intercession "or imploring the Divine Grace or Mercy in behalf of Others". Prayer, he emphasised was "the Natural Cry of the New-born Soul". Intercession should be made for oneself and other, on behalf of the universal success of the Gospel, for kings and rulers, for ministers, friends, enemies and any who were sick or afflicted. In praying for friends, in particular, it was necessary to pray for their "particular Sufferings and Afflictions; for otherwise, we may never ask perhaps for the Things our Friends most want." He continued:

> "It must be confessed, that such a Procedure will oblige us sometimes to break from the Forms we use; but if we accustom ourselves to it, and have a deep Sense of what we ask for, the most illiterate *Christians* will not want Words to express themselves."[93]

To sensitive High Churchmen, this could sound like a return to the "private spirit" of the previous century "when women preach and cobblers pray."

For the time being, however, Whitefield kept his extempore praying for private use or for small gatherings of friends and continued to use the liturgy in public worship. His first *Journal of a Voyage from London to Savannah in Georgia*, December 1737 - May 1738, abounds in references to his diligent practice of reading public prayers whether on open deck or at Gibraltar, which he continued upon arrival in Georgia.[94] However, on his return to London in 1738, he

broke fresh ground by praying extempore in the religious societies, the first occasion being a Christmas Day gathering at Redcross Street.[95] One reason for this new boldness was the inspiration of the Fetter Lane Society, which he was now attending. On 5th January, 1739, for example, Whitefield recorded having been "much enlarged for near an hour in prayer, in Fetter Lane Society", adding "the spirit of supplication increases in my heart daily. May it increase more and more."[96] On 7th, after having expounded to three societies, he wrote: "God grant I may pursue the method of expounding and praying extempore. I find God blesses it more and more."[97] When he began preaching in the fields, he merely continued this practice *al fresco*. All this bore witness to a radical change in his churchmanship, which delighted many Dissenters and appalled High Churchmen.

c) Itinerant Field Preacher.

The years 1736-40 also saw important changes in Whitefield's evangelistic techniques, as he developed from an impressive pulpit orator to become an outstanding itinerant field preacher, who spread the gospel message first from within the walls of the Church and religious society, and then out of doors to the unchurched poor, thereby initiating a transcontinental evangelical Revival.

His greatest gift, his dramatic preaching style, was already present in an embryonic stage before his ordination. Thereafter, the fondness for the dramatic, cultivated during his schooldays was used to great effect as Whitefield acted out biblical themes from his new religious stage, the pulpit. This, combined with the experience of exhorting groups of society members, the poor and the prisoners in

Oxford and Gloucester 1735-36, was an essential precondition for his forthcoming career as an incomparable Christian orator. By the time he preached his first sermon at St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, on June 27, 1736, he was able to speak, he wrote, "with as much freedom as though I had been a preacher for some years"[98], a facility partly due to the "unspeakable advantage of being accustomed to public speaking when a boy at school, and of exhorting and teaching the prisoners and poor people at their private houses, while at the university." As he preached, he perceived a fire being kindled "till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd of those, who knew me in my infant childish days, I trust, I was enabled to speak with some gospel authority." According to the Bishop of Gloucester, fifteen members of the congregation were allegedly driven "mad" by this first sermon.[99]

Once launched, his career took off with two visits to London. During his first, in August 1736, his youth was the source of great interest: one so young in "gown and cassock," was soon nicknamed the "boy parson". His preaching debut at Bishopsgate seems to have been even more striking than his first Gloucester sermon. He wrote:

> "The effect was immediate and visible to all; for as I went up the stairs almost all seemed to sneer at me on account of my youth; but they soon grew serious and exceedingly attentive, and, after I came down, showed me great tokens of respect, blessed me as I passed along, and made great enquiry who I was."

With a mixture of repressed pride and humility, he "speedily slipped through the crowd...blessing God for His goodness to me the unworthiest of the sons of men."[100] During the following year his popularity grew. On December 29, 1737, on the eve of his departure for Georgia, he preached his first extempore sermon:

> "It happened providentially that a lecture was to be preached that evening at Deptford, and several importuned me to preach it; at first I was fearful (O me of little faith), having no notes. But, afterwards...I went up, depending on the promise, 'Lo! I am

with you always every unto the end of the world', and was enabled to preach to a large congregation without the least hesitation."[101].

The effectiveness of his preaching style was evident from the outset of his ministry, not least because it was so different from the majority of contemporary preaching. Most mid-eighteenth century Anglican pulpits reflected the conventions of the time: that a thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures in their original languages, plus a wide knowledge of Anglican commentators should result in a learned, well-structured, pre-prepared sermon aimed at informing the intellect. Whitefield, however, with his pietistic emphasis upon the human heart began to develop a much simpler, more experiential and ultimately extempore style of preaching, aimed not so much at instruction as at conversion. One newspaper observer, seeking to explain the public attention he had attracted, wrote in 1737:

> "A zealous youth...who inforces his Words with an affecting Delivery, must gain an esteem in the Hearts of his Auditors, and in some Minds will have a stronger Effect, than a better Sermon from their own Parish Priest or Lecturer, whom they have ofter heard and often will, and who by some Years exceed him in Age."[102].

It was as an "actor preacher" rather than a "scholar preacher" that Whitefield made his mark. Unfortunately many of his published sermons, upon which much criticism of his preaching has been based, were carefully edited for the press, and totally fail to recapture the effect that would have been created in hearing and seeing this most dramatic of pulpit orators. Cornelius Winter, his assistant in later life, observed first-hand the effectiveness of his technique. A master of using real life illustrations to capture the attention of his hearers, Whitefield frequently used a trial scene at a strategic point in his message. Winter recalled how:

> "on observing the formality of the judge putting on his black cap to pronounce sentence, I have known him avail himself of it in

> the close of a sermon; with his eyes full of tears, and his heart almost too big to admit of speech, dropping into a momentary pause - 'I am going now to put on my condemning cap: sinner, I must do it; I must pronounce sentence upon you - ' and then, in a tremendous strain of eloquence, recite our Lord's words, 'Go, ye cursed', not without a very powerful description of the nature of the curse."

From the moment he entered the pulpit, "with a significance of countenance, that indicated he had something of importance which he wanted to indulge", to his descent, there was something "truly impressive" about his whole performance. Not that he was sombre in delivery; he allowed his passions full rein, as he re-enacted biblical stories and played the parts of bible characters. Winter was in fact rather embarrassed by his emotional delivery, writing how:

> "I hardly ever knew him to go through a sermon without weeping, more or less, and I truly believe his tears were the tears of sincerity...I could hardly bear such unreserved use of tears, and scope he gave to his feelings, for sometimes he exceedingly wept, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome, that, for a few seconds, you would suspect he never could recover; and when he did, nature required some little time to compose himself."[103].

Such a dramatic extempore preaching style was particularly well-suited to his role as roving evangelist and field preacher. As Harry Stout has observed, the itinerant with a good memory could rely upon a few well-rehearsed evangelistic sermons, whereas a settled minister preaching to a single congregation had to concentrate on a much wider range of doctrinal and pastoral issues. This meant that Whitefield could improve his sermons with practice, adapting each one to individual situations. In that sense his preaching was only truly extemporaneous in the sense that he did not use notes.[104].

Unlike most of his fellow clergymen Whitefield shunned a fixed parochial ministry, and launched out on an itinerant mission which crossed parish, national and international boundaries. He did have opportunities to settle down to a pastoral ministry. Even prior to

his ordination, his diocesan, Bishop Benson, had offered him two small Gloucester parishes; these he politely refused, having already been offered an annuity of £30 per annum by Sir John Philipps to support him in leading the Oxford Methodists. Additional hopes of a University college never materialised. In the latter half of 1736, his Oxford ministry was twice interrupted by calls from former Holy Club members: in August he was invited to supply Broughton's place at the Tower of London; in November he agreed to help out the Rev. Charles Kinchin at the small country parish of Dummer, and was offered a wealthy London curacy, which he refused.[105].

Whitefield was never to take up charge of an English parish. Instead, in late 1736, he responded to a call from John Wesley and Benjamin Ingham, another ex-Methodist, who sought assistance in their missionary work in Georgia. Whitefield's decision to accept was to affect the whole course of his ministry.[106]. In the short-run, he had to wait for over a year before finally departing for the colony in early 1738, during which time he was able to preach to the religious societies and in the churches of London and Bristol. James Hutton remarked upon the effect that this had in opening up a door for him to preach in England:

> "Whitefield also felt an inward call to go to Georgia, and since this was everywhere made known, and by most was looked after as a course undertaken without selfish interest, everybody ran after him; and as there were many schools in London maintained by voluntary institutions, the gentlemen who cared for these schools called in Whitefield to preach for them in many Churches, at the time when a collection is taken up after the sermon for the schools."[107].

Whitefield's persuasive oratory made him an excellent fund-raiser, an ability which he later turned to great effect in making collections for his Orphan House. On December 3rd, 1737, an observer tried to

account for the growing popularity of the "boy preacher," and concluded that his disinterested zeal in going to preach the gospel to an unestablished foreign colony was one of the main reasons which "rais'd the Attention of the People, and drew them, either out of Curiosity or Religious Zeal, to hear him in the Pulpit."[108].

In the longer term, Whitefield's call to Georgia secured him a parish in Savannah between 1738-41, before he finally gave up his cure and devoted himself to a full-time itinerant ministry. His first voyage to the colonies in 1738 was punctuated by a short stay in Gibraltar, where he won several converts and many friends.[109]. He arrived in Savannah in May and left again in August, preaching there and at the nearby town of Frederica to large, growing audiences. As with the Wesleys, the opportunities of preaching on open deck during the voyages and expounding "under a large tree" at Frederica[110]. opened to him the possibilities of open air preaching which he exploited to the full shortly after his return to England in November 1738. The reasons for his speedy return seems to have been motivated by a desire to secure a charter and money for an orphan house, as well as to be ordained as priest.[111]. This gave him a vital ten months in England and Wales before returning to America in August 1739, during which he continued to itinerate widely and headed the now rapidly spreading Methodist revival.

Whitefield's choice of an itinerant ministry was a deliberate one, based on a firm conviction that the Great Commission of preaching the gospel to every creature needed urgent fulfilment in mid-eighteenth century Britain. While to many Anglicans the nation appeared well-furnished with a learned episcopate and parish clergy, to Whitefield and his fellow-evangelists, England teemed with

"baptised heathens". Like Wesley, Whitefield's parish was the world;[112] if the fulfillment of the divine commission meant the crossing of parish boundaries, then so be it.

His missionary call to Georgia not only opened up early opportunities for ministry in Bristol and London in 1737, but gave him a further, if somewhat casuistical justification for his intinerancy in 1739. For example, on one occasion, when challenged by a churchwarden of Islington to produce a special license before preaching in the parish church, Whitefield decided to back down, and preached instead in the churchyard, but also commented:

> "I believe I might have insisted upon my right to preach, being in priest's orders, and having the presentation of the living of Savannah, which is in the Bishop of London's diocese, - a stronger license than that implicit one by which hundreds of inferior clergy are by his lordship permitted to preach."[113]

Likewise, in the summer 1739, he received a letter from the Bishop of Gloucester accusing him of acting contrary to the commission that he was given at his ordination. Whitefield's reply again attempted to point out the anomalies of the Church's stance on itinerant preaching:

> "...if the commission we then receive, obliges us to preach nowhere but in that parish which is committed to our care, then all persons act contrary to their commission when they preach occasionally in any strange place; and consequently, your lordship offends when you preach out of your own diocese."[114]

But if his itinerating was frowned on, his decision to engage in field preaching was widely condemned by the authorities. Whitefield was not the first English field preacher. Itinerant field preaching had been a regular feature during the days of the Interregnum, and had continued intermittently among the Dissenters. In the 1730s, the first evangelical Anglican to take this radical step had been the young Welsh lay evangelist, Howel Harris, who had begun

preaching in the fields in Wales only months after his conversion in 1735. Harris's influence upon Whitefield is evident. The two men had established contact in late 1738; in January 1739, Whitefield wrote: "Howel Harris and I are correspondents, blessed be God! May I follow him as he does Jesus Christ! How he outstrips me!"[115]. Following his own bold step of preaching to the Kingswood Colliers in late February, he went to Wales where he met Harris in person and reported how the Welshman discoursed "generally in a field, but at other times in a house, from a wall, a table, or any thing else."[116]. Whitefield returned to Bristol emboldened to extend his open air ministry throughout the city.

If the Welshman Harris was the first "Methodist" field preacher, then Whitefield was preceded in England by William Morgan, a clergyman, who preached to the Kingswood colliers in 1738. "Pitying the rude and ignorant condition of the Kingswood colliers [he] sometimes preached to them in the fields, and thus opened the door to field preaching in that part among the Methodists." According to John Cennick, Whitefield's first sermon in "the Wood", was preached near the same spot, Rose Green, at which William Morgan had preached the year before.[117].

Whitefield's own decision was influenced by the fact that in January-February 1739, first in London and then Bristol and elsewhere, most of the Anglican pulpits were closed to him. Having spent his entire ministry in England either exhorting in religious societies, or preaching in churches, on February 17th, 1739 he took the momentous step of preaching in the fields to the Kingswood colliers. To his surprise, when he returned from Kingswood he found that some of the Bristol churches were open to him, but after a few days all were

closed. In this crisis he took a bold step. He not only continued his field preaching at Kingswood, but he selected in Bristol several places in which he held crowded open-air services.[118] Then on March 31st he persuaded John Wesley to follow his example. Wesley's reluctance to engage in field preaching was both ecclesiastical and legal; as a Churchman he viewed it almost as a sin for souls to be saved outside the church walls; as one with a knowledge of the laws of Church and State, he baulked at flaunting the 1670 Conventicle Act, which specifically forbid "exercises of religion" in the fields.[119] Whitefield himself was not blind to the serious implications of such a step and was clearly aware of the impropriety of his actions as an Anglican clergyman. He wrote to Wesley on April 3rd, 1739 informing him ironically: "Yesterday I began to play the madman in Gloucestershire by preaching on a table in Thornbury Street."[120] In London, he preached in Islington churchyard on April 27th and afterwards wrote: "To-day, my Master, by His providence and Spirit, compelled me to preach in the churchyard at Islington. Tomorrow I am to repeat this mad trick, and, on Sunday go out into Moorfields".[121] Writing on May 13, 1739, he imagined "the scorn of the self-righteous bigots to see a clergyman in his gown and cassock venting his enthusiastic ravings on a common," adding, "but if this is to be vile, Lord grant that I may be more vile. I know this foolishness of preaching is made instrumental to the conversion and edification of numbers."[122] Thereafter, Whitefield, Wesley and their fellow itinerants, adopted itinerant field preaching as the most effective method for evangelising the nation.

Whitefield's open air performances were particularly masterly. Relying upon an inner core of followers to form an initial circle,

Whitefield waited until a crowd of curious onlookers had gathered - many alerted through advance word of mouth or advertising. Then, often by the use of a hymn, he would arouse his outdoor congregation, before launching into an extemporaneous prayer, followed by the sermon. He would then position himself so that the wind would carry his voice to the outside of the crowd, frequently said to number over 30,000.[123] By such techniques, the evangelist was able to reach far greater numbers, often the unchurched, than if he had relied upon conventional homilies read from an indoor pulpit. William Seward, wrote to James Hutton in London giving first hand accounts of some of these remarkable field gatherings. One letter from Bristol on February 24th, 1739 will suffice:

> "We had yesterday the finest sight at Kingswood...our Dear Br...preached to such a Multitude as no man could Number, perhaps 4 or 5000 and all so quiet that all might hear. There was persons on Horseback and several Coaches - The Hedges lined the Trees servd for Scaffold as the Sycamore did to Zacheus - surely since the Apostles Days has not been the like."[124]

Throughout the summer of 1739 Whitefield continued his remarkable ministry among the plebeian crowds of London in the open air at Moorfields and Kennington Common, "storming Satan's strongholds". By the late summer he was attracting crowds estimated at 80,000, an enormous number, even if one allows for considerable exaggeration. Harry Stout has estimated that outdoor summer audiences numbered between 800,000 to one million, "a figure without precedent in the annals of English preaching."[125]

2) The Methodist Revival, 1737-40.

In the first few years of his ministry, the foundations were laid for Whitefield's future success and growing international reputation as an outstanding evangelist. Ordained in 1736, he began his fruitful labours among the religious societies of Bristol and London, broadened his horizons as missionary to the nascent colony of Georgia in 1738, and then back in England, in 1739, started to reach the unchurched poor through his bold field preaching. The result was that he precipitated a nationwide gathering in of thousands of new converts into the societies, meeting houses and churches.

a) Origins of the Revival.

What was the main cause of this Methodist or Evangelical Revival? It is possible to view it, as the evangelicals then did, as a sovereign outpouring of the Holy Spirit which affected not only large parts of Britain, but the American colonies as well. Appreciation of this transatlantic dimension has prompted recent historians to look more closely at Whitefield, as the most obvious catalyst in all three major sectors of the revival in England, Scotland and the American colonies.[126] In England itself, Wesley was to become the the most influential leader, but at the inception of the Revival, 1737-39, Whitefield was the catalyst of a movement which was far wider than "Wesleyan" Methodism. Whitefield's Calvinistic

Methodists, together with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and the Evangelicals within the Church of England, as well as the largely separate Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, comprised a Calvinist dimension of the movement largely separate from the Arminian Wesleys, to whom it owed only a limited debt.

Why did revival break out in England in 1739-40? Were the English people in the late 1730s unusually receptive to the evangelical message, and if so, why? Many suggestions have been offered. Some historians have sought to detect an unusually intense fear of death [127]. or a heightened sense of guilt amongst young people, struggling to control sexual temptation at a time when churches, civil authorities and parents were losing some of their moral and social influence over adolescents.[128]. Some, notably Philip Greven, see the key in the structure of the family and in tensions related to child-rearing. Upbringing within a devout family and the influence of pious educational institutions were crucial, they suggest, noting how many future English evangelicals came from stern High Church backgrounds which made demands on the young that a regimen of ritual church observance did not always satisfy.[129]. Others have looked for socio-economic and geographic explanations, noting that a disproportionate number of Methodists came from lowly economic groups linked to commerce and industry, who tended to stand outside the control of a landed, paternalistic society, and were congregated where the authority of the established religious order was at its weakest.[130]. In England, the Methodists attracted hearers because they provided what the *Whole Duty of Man* piety of the Church of England did not - "a vital, experiential religion, for the assurance of sins personally forgiven, and of salvation presently granted;"[131].

- a creed more satisfying to some sin-sick souls than stiff, rubrical High Churchmanship or a Tillotsonian doctrine of the reasonableness of Christianity and the practical, prudential benefits of a moral life.

The actual form of the eighteenth-century English Revival was determined directly by new revivalistic techniques adopted by its leaders. After the passage of the Toleration Act, in an age when the Church no longer held an official monopoly of religious teaching, Anglican clergymen were increasingly driven to seek other avenues to maintain the Church's authority. One way forward lay in the use of voluntary societies, particularly the religious societies, the other lay in the use of bold new evangelistic expedients. In both of these initiatives Whitefield was at the forefront.[132]

What was the catalyst for revival in 1739-40? Some scholars have argued that the undermining of the bases of belief in traditional Christian doctrines, by rationalists (whether Deist or Latitudinarian) forced some pious intellectuals to turn to the intuitive faith and assurance offered to them by the evangelicals.[133] This has much plausibility, though it tends to ignore the success of evangelical teaching on the lower orders by whom such intellectual crises were hardly felt. W. R. Ward has recently tried to establish a link between a grand "Protestant" crisis within the Holy Roman Empire and the outbreak of an international Evangelical Revival.[134] As far as England is concerned, however, the only firm connection between Germany and the Revival was through pietistic influences. The Wesleys, Whitefield and many of the other early evangelical leaders were undeniably affected both indirectly through the writings of Lutheran Pietists, such as Francke (Whitefield's Georgia Orphan House was modelled on Francke's at Halle), and through direct contact

with the Moravian Brethren.[135] Whatever general theory we adopt, however, we need always to return to the factor of human personality: to qualities of personal leadership and the extraordinary ideological confidence inspired by a personal call to mission. A principal catalyst of the English Revival was of course Whitefield himself, whose bold preaching of the new birth, whose dramatic oratory and pioneering endeavours in field preaching, introduced many Englishmen to the evangelical message for the first time, and who, over three decades, was responsible for the conversion of countless hundreds.

b) "Experience" or "Enthusiasm".

The characteristic feature of evangelicals on both sides of the Altantic, whether Anglican or non-Anglican, Wesleyan or Calvinistic, was the common emphasis upon religious experience. It was the conviction of the reality of their own personal experience of conversion, and the desire to communicate it, which turned Whitefield and his colleagues, into such passionate evangelists. Evangelicals, viewed the "doctrines of grace" not as mere dogma, but a matter of personal experience. Each stage of the drastic process of regeneration would be accompanied by powerful inward feeling. Awakening, the conviction of sin, repentance, justification, assurance, sanctification - no man could pass through these stages of the spiritual life without deep impressions on his heart. "Knowing" Christ, Whitefield urged, was not a "bare historical knowledge", but "an experimental knowledge of his Crucifixion, so as to *feel* the Power of it." To say, as the modern "letter-learned Preachers" did, that

men "may have God's Spirit without feeling it", was "in Reality to deny the thing itself."[136].

Whitefield's autobiographical account of his experience was set down for the benefit of others in his *Short Account of God's Dealings with the Rev. George Whitefield.* Modelled on Quaker and Puritan autobiographies of the previous century, and published in 1739, it raised a storm of opposition, particularly from High Churchmen, troubled by the "enthusiastic" tone of the work. It was his published writings, particularly his autobiography and his Journals, that opponents on both sides of the Atlantic, Anglicans and Dissenters, seized upon most eagerly. The intimacy of relationship that Whitefield displayed with the Almighty and the evident belief of the perceptible influences of the Holy Spirit, radiated out from his writings.

It was this issue of perceptible assurance that divided Whitefield and his fellow evangelicals not only from their rationalistic opponents but also from many seventeenth century Puritans. For whereas the Puritans had held that assurance was rare, late and the fruit of struggle, evangelicals believed it to be general, normally given at conversion and the result of a simple acceptance of the gift of God.[137]. Whitefield's account of his conversion suggests that this was his own experience, and in the early years of his ministry he seems to have taught, like his Welsh counterpart, Harris, that assurance was the essence of saving faith. By 1741, however, his frequent contact with Dissenters and the descendants of the early Puritans in New England led him to moderate his stance, so that he began to teach that it was still possible to have saving faith without a constant assurance.[138]. But the

experiential emphasis in his preaching, so prominent in 1736-40, still undergirded his ministry in later life.

Yet, although committed to a belief in the immediacy of the Spirit's working, Whitefield's outlook was still partly shaped by the prevailing dispensationalist theology of his day; that the Spirit's miraculous gifts of tongues, healing, prophecy etc had all passed away after the establishment of the Church in the first two centuries. In his sermon on *The Indwelling of the Spirit*, for example he stated his position:

> "I would not be understood of so receiving the Holy Ghost, as to enable us to work Miracles, or outward Signs and Wonders."

These "gifts" were limited to times "when some new Revelation was to be established, as at the first setting up of the Mosaick and Gospel Dispensation."[139] He was thus more conservative than his friend Wesley, who remained (more or less covertly) sympathetic to evidences of these "extraordinary" gifts of the Spirit at work amongst some of his more extreme followers. Both men came into conflict in 1739 in Bristol over the "convulsions" which had affected some Methodist hearers, particularly under Wesley's preaching. Whitefield opposed Wesley's encouragement of such manifestations:

> "I think it is tempting God to require such signs. That there is something of God in it I doubt not, but the devil, I believe, does interpose. I think it will...take people from the written word, and make them depend on visions, convulsions, etc, more than on the promises and precepts of the Gospel."[140]

A few days after writing this letter, Whitefield paid a brief visit to Bristol. While he preached to one of the societies, in Wesley's presence, similarly violent manifestations occurred. Wesley commented drily in his *Journal*: "From this time, I trust, we shall suffer God to carry on His work in the way that pleaseth Him."[141]

If Whitefield remained conservative in his view of charismatic gifts, his own experience was interpreted by many High Churchmen as a false assumption of extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit; proof that he was an "enthusiast". As early as his Oxford days he had clearly been open to the possibilities of supernatural guidance. After his conversion, this openness increased. His "difficulties" in preparing his first sermon, for example, he attributed to divine restraint, applying the Lord's word to Ezekiel to his own calling - "thou shalt be dumb; but when I speak unto thee, then thou shalt speak".[142] In 1738 his *Journal of a Voyage from London to Savannah*, was published without his consent and raised a storm of controversy, partly on account of its relation of many personal experiences and reflections which would have been better left for his own edification and that of his closest friends.[143] From his Journal critics quarried many examples of his habit of self-identification with Christ and the apostles, his application of Scriptural texts to himself and his claim to be led by impressions and impulses. To opponents on both sides of the Atlantic, the Revival was not the work of the Holy Spirit, but evidence of "enthusiasm", with Whitefield, usually seen as the "Arch enthusiast", as the source of the recent outbreak of this most persistent religious malady.

c) Religious Societies.

The stirrings of the English Revival can best be detected among Whitefield's remarkable ministry among the religious societies of London and Bristol, 1736-39, which in turn launched him into his international ministry.

It is significant that the Revival in England took off not only within the walls of the Established Church but initially among the High Church youth of the Religious Societies who provided Methodism's earliest converts.[144] Like the larger Society for the Reformation of Manners, the S.P.C.K., and the S.P.G., the Religious Societies were voluntary associations and seen as the medium for the quiet regeneration of the Church of England. While the larger societies sought to extend the Church's influence by propaganda and moral reform, the small devotional cells, known as the "Religious Societies" aimed at the internal revitalisation of the Church. Set up in 1678, the Societies experienced their heyday after the Revolution, particularly through the publicity provided by Josiah Woodward's tract, which laid down a set of specimen rules by which a society could attain its major aim, the pursuit of "real holiness of heart and life".[145] Weekly meetings were to be held, usually in church vestries. Membership was restricted to Anglicans. Worship was supposed to be based firmly on the Liturgy and the groups were normally presided over by a local clergyman.[146] Members were mostly young, mostly tradesmen "of the middle sort" and of "sober education". Their aim was to strengthen the national church by providing a close-knit "Fellowship of Christian Brotherhood"; which might lessen the dangers of the defection of souls to the warm piety of Dissent. But they nevertheless aroused clerical suspicions that they were sectarian and separatist and all too reminiscent of the gathered churches of the Commonwealth.

By the 1730s the majority of the societies were languishing, and had also fallen under Whiggish suspicions that they were potential cells of Jacobitism. Although a few new societies were still being

formed, many had died, and others were moribund.[147] They were thus susceptible to a new charge of spiritual energy. The impetus was provided by Whitefield and Methodism.

Like his colleague, John Wesley, George Whitefield spent much of his early religious development and ministry in connection with the society movement. He first became acquainted with experiential Christianity as a member of one of the small Oxford societies under the overall Holy Club umbrella, and he owed much of his future ministerial success to the intellectual, devotional and pastoral education imparted to him in the intense associational life which he encountered in this impressionable phase. Following his conversion in the spring of 1735, he spent a nine month period of convalescence, between June 1735 and March 1736 at his home city of Gloucester, where he formed a small society of awakened youth, somewhat along the lines of the Oxford societies, as well as visiting "two other little societies."[148] Whitefield's commitment to the piety of religious associations is illustrated by his ordination sermon, significantly entitled, *The Nature and Necessity of...Religious Society*. From his text, Ecclesiastices 4:9-12 "Two are better than one," he urged his hearers to revive the spirit of primitive Christianity by forming religious societies.[149] Returning to Oxford, he practiced what he preached, spending the summer of 1736 conducting the affairs of the Oxford Methodists. At about this time he was chosen to be a corresponding member of the S.P.C.K.,[150] later following in Wesley's footsteps as a missionary to Georgia in 1738, under the auspices of the S.P.G.

In 1737 Whitefield began to transform - and disrupt - the devotional life of some of the Religious Societies. His doctrine of

the new birth was not yet fully evangelical, and he was accepted by many as simply an unusually zealous and attractively youthful High Church missionary. Yet he was able dramatically to ginger up some of the existing societies and to create new ones. His first opening into London came in the August 1736, when he was called temporarily to minister in the place of a prominent ex-Oxford Methodist, the Rev. Thomas Broughton, at the Tower of London. His impact on the religious societies was considerable. William Holland recalled how:

> "he came to our meetings and expounded the Scripture in a sweet manner, and we could plainly see that the Lord had bestowed grace and gifts upon him."[151].

It was during his two visits to Bristol in the early part of 1737, however, that he was launched onto the national stage, achieving celebrity status by preaching an electrifying quarterly sermon to a combined gathering of all the societies in the area. According to a correspondent in *The Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal*, his popularity in Bristol prepared the way for his reception in London later in the year:

> "The Recommendation he had from that Place, and his Intent of going over to Georgia, as well as his Assuidity in Preaching, and his youthful Age, soon made him taken Notice of in London."[152].

In the late summer of 1737 he returned to the capital, where he spent four months preaching in the societies and in several of the churches to increasingly large and receptive audiences, as well as accepting invitations to preach two quarterly sermons in and about the capital. He established a close group of friends, one of them James Hutton, a bookseller whose father was a well-known Nonjuror, and who had grown up with the experience of a society meeting in their home. Samuel Wesley had lived next door and James had come into contact with the Wesley brothers, setting up his own society in 1736, based on the

ideals of the Oxford Methodists. Many of those who attended also belonged to their own Religious Societies. Whitefield, apparently lodged with the Huttons, and thus gained access to an important devotional network in the metropolis. Now he began preaching in the capital's pulpits and societies throughout the autumn and winter of 1737. An "astonishing mass of people" followed the young evangelist, wrote James Hutton, and through his "moving preaching, many...were awakened and touched", the converts being directed towards Hutton's new society. Moreover, Whitefield's quarterly sermons to the older societies strengthened the links between them and Hutton's society, and among both groups "*a new life came in through Whitefield's preaching*" (my italics).[153].

Whitefield's message of the new birth was undoubtedly the means of revitalising many of the older societies as well as establishing fresh ones. In September he preached the first of two quarterly sermons in which he praised the societies for keeping up celebrations of the Holy Communion in poor parishes, for maintaining monthly lectures and charity schools, and encouraging singing classes.[154]. Whitefield himself joined one of the singing classes with the aim of spiritualising its activities and gaining closer contact with the religious youth of London.[155]. Several societies were obviously revitalized by Whitefield. One of them now started an early Communion at 6 a.m., paid a celebrant for it, and founded another charity school in a sudden burst of energy.[156].

If Whitefield had awakened many in 1737, during his absence in 1738, several of his London followers came under the influence of the Moravian, Peter Bohler, and, like the Wesleys, underwent an evangelical conversion. It was Bohler and his fellow Moravian

Brethren who introduced both the Wesleys and James Hutton's group to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and on May 1st, 1738, they set up the Fetter Lane Society. The Society at Fetter Lane had certain similarities with the older societies - both met weekly, aimed to promote religious conversation and placed certain conditions on membership - but there the similarity ended. The Fetter Lane Society demanded no subscription, was not specifically Anglican, did not insist on a monthly fast and substituted a love-feast for the Holy Communion service. Both required the approval of the majority for the admission of new members, but, while the qualifications of membership of the older bodies were the evidences of right living, the new society insisted upon the need for willingness to engage in mutual confession, based on James' injunction to "Confess your sins to one another." In order to facilitate greater freedom for expression and intimacy, the Fetter Lane Society subdivided its members into groups of five, or not more than ten persons; each band under its own leader and holding separate conferences on Wednesday evenings.[157]

It was from this base that Whitefield began to operate on his return to London, and it was among this group that the Methodist Revival can be truly said to have taken off. Although it is difficult to fix an exact starting point, the year 1739 was undoubtedly crucial, and in that year the New Year gathering at Fetter Lane an exceptional moment. John Wesley recorded the event, in terms which suggest an almost Pentecostal "visitation" of the Holy Spirit, which can be taken - if any particular date is chosen - as the "start" of the Revival:

> "1739. Jan 1...About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, inosmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from that awe and

> amazement at the presence of His majesty we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to the Lord."[158]

The galvanic power of this experience was evidenced by the fruit of the next few months, as thousands of converts, including many unchurched poor, were brought into the Methodist societies.

This influx, in turn, brought about radical changes among the religious societies themselves. A few survived in their earlier form, but the majority, both in London, Bristol and elsewhere, were first altered and then taken over by Methodism. Thus, ironically, the societies which were once the rising hope of High Churchmen, became largely discredited in their eyes, were "cannibalised" by Methodism and became the vanguard of the evangelical movement.[159]

Whitefield's role in this transformation was crucial. With a reputation already established from his previous ministry in 1737, he returned in 1738-39 as the most prominent leader of the rapidly growing movement. During that winter his ministry centred around Fetter Lane and some of the other religious societies in the capital, where he expounded and prayed to large and receptive gatherings. In February 1739 he returned to Bristol, where he was quickly excluded from the pulpits of the city's parish churches; he then began his momentous ministry in the fields, and continued to minister to religious societies, old and new. On one occasion he exhorted a "young Society" established since his visit in 1737; on another he preached to societies at Baldwin Street, Nicholas Street and "to a new Society greatly thronged."[160] Through his labours and the great influx of new converts many of the older societies seem to have been taken over by the Methodists. By the time that Wesley arrived in Bristol in April 1739 to lead the work, the process of setting up

"bands", along the Fetter Lane model, was already under way.[161] There was a similar takeover of religious societies by "Methodism" elsewhere, as in Cardiff, Badsey, St. Ives (Cornwall), Colne, Nottingham, Bunbury, Alpraham and Leominster.[162] In 1739 most of the old religious societies in London and Bristol seem to have been captured by Methodism, sometimes taken over directly, sometimes despatching their members into newer societies which fell increasingly under the powerful control of John Wesley. Yet we must not forget it was Whitefield who had first revitalized these societies, among which the Methodist Revival really originated, and which provided a firm institutional base for the later missionary movement among the unchurched poor.

The establishment of new religious societies raised the issue of their status within the Anglican Church, particularly when Methodists engaged in practices - such as extempore prayer and itinerant field preaching - which had hitherto been accepted as being distinctive marks of sectarian Nonconformity. Whitefield viewed the new religious societies as comparable to the gatherings of the early Christians in their homes, (recognised by the Apostles as "Churches"), though supplemented by the public worship in the Church of England, which paralleled worship in the Temple.[163] Legally, he argued, he was only required to use the liturgy in the public services of the Church, not in these "private" gatherings.[164]

Little did he and the Wesleys envisage that instead of galvanising the Church from within, their societies would eventually become separate meeting houses, greatly swelling the ranks of English Nonconformity.

CHAPTER TWO - THE MAKING OF THE EVANGELIST: FOOTNOTES.

1. In his *Short Account*, Whitefield implies that he was converted after a Lenten Fast in 1735. However, the absence of clear reference to this change in the contemporary evidence of his letters is puzzling. Moreover, in his Diary, he wrote on April 28th, 1736, "I feel my change of nature for 2 Years agone", which would have been in the spring of 1734, probably when he began to read Scougal.

2. *GWL*, p. 10.

3. There are several other references in his Diary to his sense of assurance: April 12th, April 27th, and April 28th, 1736.

4. See *GWL*, pp. 483-489.

5. Ibid., pp. 483-484.

6. G. Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus", pp. v-vi, in G. Whitefield, *The Christian's Companion: Or, Sermons on Several Subjects* (London, 1738).

7. G. Whitefield, "The Almost Christian", p. 10, in *The Christian's Companion*.

8. *GWL*, p. 490.

9. *GWJ*, p. 62.

10. Ibid., p. 81.

11. G. Whitefield, "Of Justification", p. 19, in *The Christian's Companion*.

12. James Hutton, *Account of the Beginning of the Lord's Work in England to 1741*, p. 3, in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 15, pp. 183 ff. (hereafter *WHS Proc.*).

13. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

14. Ibid., p. 13.

15. *GWJ*, pp. 193-194.

16. Cf. *GWJ*, p. 62. Richard Baxter and Joseph Alleine are two of the best examples of late seventeenth century Nonconformist piety.

17. G. Whitefield, "*The Marks of the New Birth*," *pp. 7-14, in G. Whitefield, Discourses on the following Subjects*, (London, 1739) (hereafter *Discourses*).

18. Scougal, *Life of God*, p. 23; G. Whitefield, "The Marks of the New Birth", p. 14, in *Discourses*.

19. G. Whitefield, "The Power of Christ's Resurrection," p. 5, in *Discourses*.

20. Copy of MS. letter, G. Whitefield to Mr. Broughton, Mar. 3, 1739, A2/pp. 105-6, Moravian Church House, London.

21. G. Whitefield, "*The Necessity of the Righteousness of Christ*," p. 17, in *Discourses*.

22. G. Whitefield, "A Further Account of God's Dealings with the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, From The Time of His Ordination to His Embarking for Georgia (June 1736-December 1737)", in GWJ, p. 90.

23. Copy of MS. letter, Richard Pearsall to G. Whitefield, Warminster 28 February, 1739, in the care of G. Thomas, Aberystwyth (hereafter c/o G. Thomas). Pearsall was pastor of a group who had broken away from the main Presbyterian congregation in Warminster on account of its doctrinal heterodoxy.

24. Copy of MS. letter, William Seward to Joseph Stennett, Gloucester, 17th April, 1739, c/o G. Thomas. Stennett, a third generation Baptist minister, wrote to Seward on 12th April.

25. *GWJ*, p. 285.

26. *GWL*, p. 499, July 2, 1739.

27. Cardiff March 9th, 1739, transcribed from Harris's Diary, *Calvinistic Methodist History Society*, 24, 1 (hereafter *CMHS*).

28. For Harris's transition from Arminianism to Calvinism, see G. Tudur, "Howel Harris", pp. 52-54.

29. For a fuller account of the early correspondence between Whitefield, Seward, and Ralph Erskine, see Donald Fraser, *The Life and Diary of the Reverend Ralph Erskine*, (Edinburgh, 1834), pp. 286-290, 297-317.

30. *GWJ*, p. 287.

31. For Thomas Boston see L. Stephen and S. Lee, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography* (1908-09) (hereafter *DNB*).

32. Copy of MS. letter, R. Erskine to G. Whitefield, Dunfermline, July 6, 1739.

33. G. Whitefield, *Sermons on Important Subjects*, ed. S. Drew (London, 1838), Sermon 1, pp. 33-45.

34. Ibid., Sermon 35, pp. 401-412.

35. Fraser, *Ralph Erskine*, pp. 300-311.

36. *GWL*, pp. 128-129.

37. Ibid., p. 140 (probably written to Ralph Erskine).

38. E. [dward] F. [isher], The *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, 1645, 1649, ed., C. G. M'Crie (Glasgow, 1902).

39. Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, *A Collection of Sermons*, 1, (London 1738).

40. John Edwards, *The Preacher*, 2nd. edn. (1705). For Edwards see ch. 3, pp. 95-96.

41. *GWJ*, p. 335.

42. J. Warne, *The Church of England Turned Dissenter at last, 3rd. edn. (London n.d.), and The Downfall of Arminianism* (London, 1742). See also [J. Warne], *The Spirit of the Martyrs Revived in the Doctrines of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, and the... Methodists* (London, 1740).

43. *GWL*, p. 101.

44. John Wesley, *Letters*, 8 vols., ed., John Telford (London, 1931), 1, p. 302.

45. *GM*, pp. 307-315. For a different interpretation of the controversy, partly drawn on here, see Frank Baker, "Whitefield's

Break with the Wesleys," *The Church Quarterly Review*, 3 (1970), pp. 103-113. The first edition of Wesleys sermon was published in 1739: *Free Grace. A Sermon preach'd at Bristol. By John Wesley.* (Bristol, 1739).

46. *GWL*, p. 497.

47. Ibid., p. 499.

48. See G. Whitefield, "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley In Answer To His Sermon entitled 'Free Grace'", Bethesda in Georgia, Dec. 24, 1740, in *GWJ*, p. 572.

49. *GWL*, p. 156.

50. Ibid., pp. 181-182.

51. Ibid., p. 205.

52. G. Whitefield, "Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley," in *GWJ*, pp. 569-588.

53. *GWL*, p. 509.

54. *GWJ*, p. 575.

55. Ibid., p. 576.

56. *GWL*, p. 211; see also *GWJ*, pp. 582, 588.

57. Elisha Coles, A practical discourse on *God's Sovereignty (London, 1673).*

58. William Cooper was co-pastor of Brattle Street Congregational Church, Boston.

59. *GWJ*, p. 586.

60. Ibid., p. 575.

61. Ibid., p. 587.

62. MS. letter, G. Whitefield to James Hutton, Nov. 29, 1740, in "George Whitefield Letters", A3/105-6, folder 14, Moravian Church House.

63. *GWL*, p. 406.

64. For an analysis of Wesley's "Catholic Spirit" sermon see Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, pp. 120-136;

65. Scougal, *Life of God*, pp. 2-3.

66. J. Alleine, *An alarme to unconverted sinners* (London, 1672); R. Baxter, *A Call to the unconverted to turn and live* (London, 1669); James Janeway, *Invisibles, realities, demonstrated in the holy life ad triumphant death of Mr. John Janeway* (London, 1673).

67. *GWJ*, p. 62.

68. George Whitefield to John Wesley, Glouc[este]r, July 11, 1735 reprint. in *WHS Proc.*, 48 (Feb. 1992). p. 122.

69. *GWJ*, p. 90.

70. Copy of MS. letter, G. Whitefield to Abbot, c/o G. Thomas.

71. See G. Thomas collection, 1737-1739.

72. *GWJ*, pp. 131-133.

73. G. Whitefield, *A Letter from Rev. Mr. George Whitefield to the Religious Societies of England (1739)...now particularly recommended to those who have lately formed themselves into Religious Societies in Scotland. To which is added, An Extract from a late Author, shewing that a CATHOLICK SPIRIT is the only thing that can unite and make Christians happy...in this divided state of things,* (Edinburgh, 1742), pp. 22-24.

74. George Whitefield to John Wesley, in *WHS Proc.*, 48 (1992), p. 121.

75 "Diary," April 18, 1736, and April 25, 1736.

76. G. Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth," p. 10.

77. William Stephens, "A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, Beginning October 20, 1737," in *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia,* 4, p. 157.

78. *GWJ*, p. 59.

79. For Bishop Hoadley see the *DNB.*

80. *GWJ*, p. 56.

81. Ibid., p. 97.

82. *GWL*, pp. 489-491.

83. *GWJ*, p. 191.

84. Ibid., p. 203.

85. Ibid., p. 223.

86. Ibid., p. 272.

87. *HHVL*, Dec. 26, 1771, p. 9.

88. J. Wesley, *Journal*, ed. N. Curnock, 8 vols. (London, 1909-1916), p. 471. John Walsh, "Religious Societies: Methodist and Evangelical 1738-1800," in *Studies in Church History,* 23, *Voluntary Religion*, eds., W. J. Shiels and D. Wood, (London, 1986), p. 288.

89. G. Whitefield, "A Letter to the Religious Societies of England," in *GWW*, 4, pp. 23-36.

90. *GWJ*, p. 56.

91. G. Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of the New Birth," pp. 20-21.

92. *GWJ*, p. 91.

93. G. Whitefield, "Intercession every Christian's Duty," pp. 1-9, in *The Christian's Companion.*

94. E.g. *GWJ*, pp. 102, 109.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

96. Ibid., p. 192.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid., p. 69.

99. *GWL*, pp. 18-19.

100. *GWJ*, p. 78.

101. Ibid., p. 98.

102. *The Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal*, 478, London, Dec. 3, 1737.

103. For the above and an excellent firsthand account of Whitefield's preaching, see William Jay, *Memoirs of the late Reverend Cornelius Winter*, 2nd. edn. (London, 1812), pp. 21-38.

104. Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, p. 79.

105. *GWJ*, pp. 67, 69, 76, 78-79.

106. Ibid., pp. 77-79.

107. James Hutton, *Account of the Beginning of the Lord's Work in England to 1741*, p. 8, in *WHS Proc., 15, pp. 183 ff.*

108. The Universal Spectator, 478.

109. *GWJ*, pp. 128-138.

110. Ibid., pp. 160-161.

111. *GW*, 1, p. 207; *GWL*, p. 41.

112. *The Universal Spectator*, 478.

113. *GWJ*, p. 259.

114. Ibid., p. 300.

115. *LGW*, 1, p. 163; *GW*, 1, p. 233.

116. *GWJ*, pp. 228-231.

117. For William Morgan and Whitefield's preaching at Rose Green see J. Cennick, "An Account of the Most Remarkable Occurrences in the Awakenings at Bristol and Kingswood (1750)," *WHS Proc.*, 6 (1907), pp. 102-103.

118. *GWJ*, pp. 216-227.

119. For a wider discussion of Wesley, Whitefield and field preaching see John S. Simon, "Whitefield and Bristol", *WHS Proc.*, 10 (1916), pp. 1-10, and "John Wesley and Field Preaching", *WHS Proc.*, 11 (1918), pp. 54-63.

120. *GWL*, p. 495.

121. Ibid., p. 49.

122. *GWJ*, p. 265.

123. Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, p. 79.

124. MS. letter, William Seward to James Hutton, A3/101, folder 4, Moravian Church House.

125. Stout, Divine Dramatist, p. 85.

126. See Crawford, *Seasons of Grace, and* "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival" pp. 361-397.

127. For the role of fear of sudden death in the revivals, see Michael Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 412-417; and J. M. Bumsted and John E. Van de Wetering, *What Must I Do to be Saved?* (Hinsdale, Ill., 1976), p. 9.

128. See Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," pp. 365-366.

129. Philip J. Greven, Jr., *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York, 1977), pp. 21-148.

130. Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," pp. 366-370. For one of the best examples of this type of socio-economic analysis see Alan D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England, 1740-1914* (London, 1976).

131. J. D. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival," in *Essays in Modern Church History, in Memory of Norman Sykes,* ed. G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh (New York, 1966), pp. 141-144.

132. See Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," pp. 379-386.

133. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival," pp. 148-153.

134 W. R. Ward, "The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival," pp. 281-305, "Power and Piety", pp. 231-252, and "Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival," pp. 272-296.

135. See Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain," in *Pietism and Reveil*, ed. J. Van Berg and J. P. van Dooren (Leiden, 1978), pp. 207-236; and Karl Zehrer, "The Relationship between Pietism in Halle and Early Methodism," *Methodist History*, 17 (1979), pp. 211-224.

136. G. Whitefield, "The Knowledge of Jesus Christ, the best Knowledge," p. 8, and "The Indwelling of the Spirit, the common Privilege of all Believers," p. 8, in *Discourses* (London, 1739).

137. See D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain* (London, 1989), pp. 42-50 for the puritan and evangelical views of assurance.

138. *GWL*, p. 260.

139. G. Whitefield, "The Indwelling of the Spirit", p. 5, in *Discourses*.

140. *GWL*, p. 497.

141. John Wesley, *Journal*, 2, p. 240.

142. *GWJ*, p. 68.

143. G. Whitefield, *A Journal of a Voyage from London to Savannah in Georgia* (London, 1738). For the controversy surrounding its publication see George L. Lam and Warren H. Smith, "Two Rival Editions of George Whitefield's *Journal*, London, 1738," *Studies in Philology*, 41 (1944).

144. See J. D. Walsh, "Religious Societies: Methodist and Evangelical", pp. 279-302; and G. V. Portus, *Caritas Anglicana* (London, 1912), pp. 197-220.

145. J. Woodward, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in the City of London*, 5th edn. (1724).

146. J. D. Walsh, "Religious Societies", p. 280.

147. See ibid., pp. 281-283.

148. *GWJ*, pp. 60-61.

149. G. Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of Religious Society", in *Christian's Companion*.

150. *GWJ*, p. 78.

151. William Holland, "Account of the Beginning of the Brethren's Work in England," Eng. MS. 1076 (6), pp. 7-8, in John Rylands Library, Manchester; also *GWJ*, p. 77.

152. *The Universal Spectator*, 478.

153. J. Hutton, *Account*, pp. 6-9, in *WHS Proc.*, 15, pp. 183 ff.

154. G. Whitefield, "The Benefits of an Early Piety", p. 16, in *Christian's Companion*.

155. *GWJ*, p. 87.

156. Portus, *Caritas Anglicana*, p. 201.

157. Ibid., pp. 207-208.

158. J. Wesley, *Journal*, 2, pp. 121-122.

159. J. D. Walsh, "Religious Societies", pp. 284-285.

160. *GWJ*, pp. 214-217.

161. *GWL*, p. 494.

162. J. D. Walsh, "Religious Societies", p. 285.

163. *GWJ*, p. 202.

164. G. Whitefield, A Letter...to the Religious Societies, lately set on foot in several parts of England and Wales (London, 1740), p. 7.

CHAPTER THREE: WHITEFIELD AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

One of the ironies of Whitefield's career is that while he moved with the greatest freedom and success in non-Anglican circles and spent most of his ministry ostracised by his fellow clergymen, yet he chose to remain within the Church of England. He professed loyalty to her Reformed teaching, regarded her liturgy as the best of its kind and died an ordained clergyman. As he wrote to the Bishop of Bristol, later in life:

> "For near these twenty years last past, I have conscientiously defended her homilies and articles, and upon all occasions spoken well of her liturgy. Either of these, together with her discipline, I am so far from renouncing, much less from throwing aside all regard to, that I earnestly pray for the restoration of the one, and daily lament the wanton departure of too, too many from the other."[1]

Yet Whitefield's vision of the Church of England was clearly different from that of most of his fellow clergymen. Whereas he yearned for a restoration of the doctrinal Calvinism of the late Elizabethan and Jacobean church, and had much sympathy for the spirituality of seventeenth century Puritanism, his contemporaries tended to draw inspiration from the Church after the Restoration, when first High Churchmen and then Latitudinarians had succeeded in pushing the puritan or evangelical elements out of the Church and into the Dissenting meeting houses. To many contemporary Churchmen, he was a "Dissenter Priest", reviving the fanaticism of the Commonwealth, and threatening the stability of the Hanoverian Church and State. He was seen as a rank "enthusiast", teaching discredited Calvinist doctrines, neglecting the liturgy in favour of extemporary prayer, preaching in the fields, itinerating uninvited in other men's

parishes, countenancing lay preachers, ministering the sacrament in private houses and dissenting meetings, forming inter-denominational societies, moving freely among the Dissenters and boldly attacking bishops and clergymen as "blind guides" and "slothful shepherds."

If the gulf was so great between Whitefield and his fellow clergy why did he not leave the Church of England and join his Calvinistic Dissenting friends? This was partly due to long standing family ties with the Church. Much of his early education and his ambitions were shaped by his and his mother's desire to restore the prestige of the Whitefield family, by entering the Anglican ministry. Moreover, having been brought up and educated within the Church of England, he was naturally reluctant to leave it. Once at Oxford he had quickly come under the clerical supervision of the High Church Wesleys at an impressionable age. Converted in 1735, he entered the Anglican ministry in 1736, later to be ordained as priest in 1739.

Yet by 1739, doctrinally and ecclesiologically, Whitefield had already swerved away from the Anglicanism of most of his contemporaries. Many of his closest friends were Dissenters. That he chose to remain within the Church of England was probably due to two further factors. One was his longstanding desire to become a bishop, a hope which (as we have seen) began in 1735 or earlier and which was perhaps not finally dashed until the death of the Prince of Wales in 1751 from whom his elevation to the bench may have been expected.[2] The second was a question of evangelistic expediency. To have joined the Dissenters would have greatly hindered his effectiveness as a free-roving evangelist. Although the Anglican monopoly had theoretically been broken in 1689, the Dissenters still suffered severe legal disabilities. As a surpliced clergyman

Whitefield had greater social respectability, and was able to itinerate and preach in the fields with greater freedom than Dissenting ministers, who were a more obvious target of the Conventicle Act. Moreover, by the mid-eighteenth century the Dissenters probably numbered no more than about six per cent of the population. By remaining an Anglican, Whitefield not only retained a far greater potential English audience (often prejudiced against a Nonconformist), but also attracted many Dissenting hearers, intrigued by the spectacle of a surpliced clergyman denouncing the Church for its shortcomings and the heresy of its clergy.

If it suited him to remain an Anglican in England and Wales, elsewhere, in Scotland where the Established Church was Presbyterian, and in New England where it was Congregational, he deliberately dropped some distinctively Anglican tenets while ministering among those with a puritan heritage. In both these areas his ministry among the small Anglican communities was minimal.[3] Even in England, however, his attempt to remain a reasonably loyal son of the Church, was only partially successful. From early 1739 most of the major pulpits in London and Bristol were closed to him, and the long-term fruits of his ministry were probably greater among Old Nonconformity, particularly after his "conversion" to Calvinism further limited his impact with potential Anglican hearers. Moreover, the Establishment reacted quickly, almost hysterically against his successful field ministry, and beginning in 1737, but reaching a crescendo in 1739-1740, clerical criticism of the young evangelist poured from the press. In innumerable sermons and in many pamphlets leading clerics voiced their disapproval. The opposition included several bishops - Gibson of London, Smalbroke of Lichfield and Coventry and later

Lavington of Exeter - as well as other influential divines such as Joseph Trapp, Tristram Land and Thomas Church. [4]

In the early years of the revival Whitefield was undoubtedly the main target. Between 1739 and 1744, no fewer than fifty tracts were directed against him, some of which picked him out as the leader of the Methodist movement, for a time viewing Wesley as merely his "understrapper". In the 1750s and 1760s however, while sporadic attacks on Whitefield continued, (including a vicious satirical onslaught from the theatrical world in 1759-61), serious critics began to recognise Wesley as the more formidable theological opponent and saw in his rapidly growing and tightly knit Connexion a greater threat to the Established Church than that posed by the loose association of the Calvinistic Methodists.

1. Whitefield the "Enthusiast".

Perhaps the greatest bone of contention between Whitefield and his Anglican opponents was his belief in the immediacy of the Spirit's working, and the necessity of religious experience. This was seen by many observers as "enthusiasm". The term - in the Greek, "possession by a God" - had different meanings, but in the religious context it was still very much a pejorative epithet, implying in the words of Joseph Trapp, "a strong, but false persuasion" of divine inspiration[5]; it was a blanket category, broad enough to include such diverse groups as Roman saints, fanatical Protestant "French Prophets" and Quaker believers in an Inner Light.

In the late 1730s and 1740s when the Deist crisis was at its height, theologians were particularly concerned lest

enthusiasm bring discredit upon the idea of Christianity as an essentially rational religion, a cause on which much apologetic had been recently lavished. In an age when the very foundations of the Christian Revelation had been challenged, it was feared that Methodistical illuminism would undermine the rational evidences of the faith.

Eighteenth century churchmen were immediately disturbed by the enthusiastic implications of Whitefield's message. His published Journals and other writings abounded with references to his belief in direct inspiration, which appeared to ignore the accepted distinction between the "extraordinary" and "ordinary" operations of the Holy Spirit. Most theologians agreed that the miraculous gifts operating in the early Church - such as the inspired utterance given to the Evangelists who wrote the Gospels, the power of healing the sick, casting out devils, speaking with tongues and prophesying - had a specific and limited purpose in the economy of redemption: the early Christians had been given these miraculous powers so that they could witness, once and for all, to the authenticity of the New Testament. Once this had been done, these "extraordinary operations" of the Spirit came to an end.[6].

This did not mean, however, an end to all spiritual influences; eighteenth century Christians still expected the "ordinary operations" of the Holy Ghost. For many Churchmen, however, the Spirit's influence was only to be expected by way of man's rational faculties. The Holy Ghost would help us pursue divine truth more intelligently and energetically, but never gave *knowledge* that could not be gained through the full exercise of our natural reason. The influences of the Spirit were therefore generally indistinguishable

from the working of our mind, both in their method of operation and in their effects.

The great mistake of Whitefield and the Methodists was seen to be their claim to "extraordinary" influences of the Spirit which had been withdrawn centuries ago, and their assumption that they themselves were inspired and enlightened like the early Christians. Drawing on the arguments of John Locke, Anglican critics demanded that Whitefield prove his claims to divine inspiration by performing miracles. As one correspondent wrote in the *Weekly Miscellany* for May 12th, 1739, "God never commissioned any Persons in an extraordinary Manner to reveal, or execute his Will without granting some external Evidence of their being divinely appointed or illuminated." Though Whitefield had not yet claimed a power to work miracles, it was likely that he would soon arrive "to that Perfection of Enthusiasm".[7]

It was held to be impossible to deal with such Enthusiasts on the basis of normal rational debate. "How vain it is", lamented William Dodd, "to reason with those who are endowed with another Sense."[8]. Theirs was a kind of madness or religious delusion, all the more dangerous because it was highly contagious. One of those "infected" was the young Joseph Periam, a follower of Whitefield who was sent to Bedlam in 1739 for being "methodically mad".[9].

Whitefield's enthusiasm was seen as being both irrational and founded upon a blatant anti-intellectualism. His decision, while at Oxford to turn away from his secular studies and concentrate on the Bible, attracted much adverse criticism. Samuel Weller came to the conclusion that Whitefield's quarrel was "with learning in

general".[10] This was seen as a reason for his success with lower class audiences. One writer noted his demagogic "success..with the illiterate vulgar", comparing him to the quack doctors of Moorfields. He was more culpable than they, for he had had "the Advantage of a liberal Education," and had "receiv'd a regular Ordination in an Episcopal Church", while they were usually persons of "mean Extraction, narrow Education, and a low way of thinking."[11].

In Whitefield's ideas of providence and his doctrine of persecution, critics discovered further evidence of enthusiasm. The tendency in his Journals to see the hand of God at work in natural events was regarded as irrational and even blasphemous. For Whitefield to thank God for diverting a water spout on his voyage to America was the height of absurdity,[12] showing that he saw himself as heaven's favourite. Compounding this absurd fancy, Whitefield had a martyr complex, in which he presumed to interpret his unpopularity as a "persecution" on a par with that of the Apostles. He not only saw persecution as evidence of the success of the gospel, but rejoiced in his afflictions as a proof of sanctity. On one occasion, for example, having preached in Islington churchyard he wrote:

> "I can say with St. Paul, that neither against the temple, nor against Caesar have I done anything, and yet I am put out of the synagogues, and reviled as an evildoer; *but the Scriptures must be fulfilled*, 'If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.'"[13].

Such a deliberate identification of himself with the persecution of Christ and the Apostles made him the object of much scorn and abuse.[14].

Critics were particularly offended by the publishing of his *Journals*. Writing in 1740, Samuel Weller pointed out that although not finished, George Whitefield's *Acts* were "already three or four

times more voluminous than the History of the Acts of all the Apostles of Jesus Christ."[15]. His constant use of Scriptural language in reference to himself and his ministry was regarded as the height of presumption and arrogance.[16]. His comparison of himself to Christ, in the circumstance of being born in an inn, escaped the attention and derision of few critics: it appeared symptomatic of the self-delusion and pride which characterised the man and his ministry.

Few Anglican critics saw Methodist enthusiasm in isolation. Trapp reminded his hearers of the long line of enthusiasts, from the Gnostics, Donatists, Montanists to the sixteenth century Anabaptists. He observed that the Donatists, like the Methodists, attacked the established clergy of the day and took communion in private houses.[17]. Several others saw similarities between Whitefield and the Quakers, none more vehemently than Zachary Grey, whose pamphlet *Quaker and Methodist Compared*, uncovered striking resemblances between the Journals of George Fox and George Whitefield:

> "Both [are] fond of the same Phrase and Diction; and their Pretences to Inspiration, to a very intimate familiarity with the Deity, and the Power of Working Miracles, are of the same Stamp and Authority."[18].

A broadsheet of 1748, *The Parallel Reformers: or the Renowned Wickliff and the Reverend Mr. Whitefield Compared*, found the Methodists on the side of the Friends on all matters: like them he allegedly attacked tithes, the liturgy, and baptism; he too was a schismatic establishing a new and flourishing sect.[19].

Perhaps the most common connection was with the Roman Catholics. Methodists were labelled "papists", their teachings "popish" and their leaders "Jesuits" in disguise. The weightiest attempt to link the revival with popery was Bishop Lavington's three part *The Enthusiasm*

of Methodists and Papists Compar'd. According to Lavington "the Spirit of Enthusiasm is always the same, operating in much the same Manner, in all Sects and Professions of Religion." Ransacking Catholic history for examples of enthusiasm, he sought to demonstrate that they were duplicated in Methodism:

> "Our modern Itinerant Enthusiasts are treading in their [Roman Catholic] steps, and copying their example; their whole conduct being but a Counter part of the most wild Fanaticisms of the most abominable Communion, in its most corrupt Ages."[20].

Opponents delighted in drawing analogies between the revival's leaders and the great Catholic saints. Lavington listed the excesses of the Roman saints: Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Dominic and Anthony of Padua, citing what he believed were parallels from the writings of George Whitefield and John Wesley.

2. Calvinism revived.

Whitefield was similarly out of step with contemporary Anglicanism in his deliberate revival of the Calvinist teachings which had once held sway in the Church hierarchy, but since 1660 had been discredited through association with the Great Rebellion, and had rapidly disappeared from the mainstream of the Church, to be found largely among the Dissenters.

In the reign of Anne, Dr. John Edwards of Cambridge, one of the few surviving Calvinist divines in the Established Church, wrote attacking Archbishop Tillotson and the majority of the clergy for their "Arminianism", and their falling away from the Calvinism of the 39 Articles. To those who replied that Calvinism was not the doctrine of Churchmen, but of Dissenters, Edwards retorted:

> "But these men should consider that our Church was founded by such as were Friends to Mr. Calvin's Doctrines, for of that sort were the First Reformers. And afterwards all our Archbishops and Bishops, the Professors of Divinity in our Universities, and all our Preachers and Divines were generally Calvinists as to doctrine."[21].

The present-day clergy, he argued, were guilty of denying doctrines which had been the bulwark against Popery - eternal election, original sin, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, justification by faith alone and the necessity of converting grace - and of substituting in their place a belief in man's ability to save himself. Although Edwards' warnings went unheeded, and the following thirty years were some of the darkest for the Calvinist cause in the Church of England, extracts from his writings were published by the layman Jonathan Warne in the late 1730s and read by a young Anglican clergyman, George Whitefield, through whom the old doctrines were once more popularised in Anglican circles.[22]. Though Whitefield could claim, with some justice, that his doctrines had a highly respectable Anglicanism pedigree he was out of tune with prevailing orthodoxy. A generation schooled by Locke and Tillotson was unlikely to be sympathetic to doctrines which smacked of puritanism.

Though his early sermons were not yet Calvinistic, they nonetheless centred around the necessity of an experiential "new birth", which challenged the prevailing High Church belief in baptismal regeneration. The clerical response was swift. Between 1738-41 nine pamphlets were published referring specifically to the new birth or regeneration by title, while many others dealt with the issue in part. One of the earliest was by Tristram Land, Curate of Garlickhithe, who sought to defend the "sober Doctrine" of baptismal regeneration in which water was the outward and visible sign of the

Holy Spirit's inward renewal of the infant; a doctrine validated by the Church's Office of Baptism, the Catechism, the Order of Confirmation and the Thirty-nine Articles. Those who had fallen from grace and so lost "their Rights to the Baptismal Covenant," should rest their hope not on any subsequent experience of regeneration, since the Church of England supposed them to have already been born again through baptism; instead they should be urged to avail themselves of the other means of grace, by which they would be "renewed again by Repentance."[23].

Several of Whitefield's critics were willing to admit that some men, particularly the poor and vicious who had fallen deeply into sin, required a radical change in their lives, or a conversion. But this was neither the same as regeneration, nor was it necessary for all. Moreover, Whitefield's emphasis upon conversion as instantaneous was wrong: this was not God's normal method, neither was it a sharp and unmistakeable experience. Henry Stebbing, in his *Caution Against Religious Delusion*, admitted that the Methodists, in supposing conversion to be a work of God's Spirit, were right. "But", he continued, "they will have it to be a sensible Operation; an Operation which may be felt and distinguished as the Hand of God upon them; overpowering as it were, the Soul."[24]. This issue of "perceptible inspiration" was the crux of the matter and one of the major issues of division between the evangelicals and their critics.

Whitefield's preaching of justification by faith ignited a similar controversy. In his *Pastoral Letter* of 1739, directed against Whitefield and the Methodists, Bishop Gibson had insisted that good works were a "necessary condition" of justification, and a guard against Antinomianism.[25]. Here he was drawing on a rich deposit of

Anglican teaching, founded upon the attempts of theologians such as Bishop Bull to reconcile St. James and St. Paul. One pamphleteer in 1739 sought to summarise the sentiments of Bishops Bull, Moor and Blackall on the issue, in opposition to Methodist solifidianism.[26] The Anglican concept of twofold justification - initial justification, through the merits of Christ, conditional upon faith and repentance, and leading to good works which produced a second justification - had been forcefully stated by no less a figure than the Methodists former mentor, William Law.[27] Post-Restoration Anglican theology was based upon a combination of morality with spirituality, and works with faith; a position summarised in Richard Allestree's immensely popular *The Whole Duty of Man*, which, (in reaction to the *sola fide* preaching of the Puritan sects), argued that it was impossible to abstract saving faith from repentance and obedience. Whitefield's criticism of the author of the *Whole Duty* and of Archbishop Tillotson in 1740 raised a storm of protest,[28] but the essential battle lines concerning justification had already been drawn in the previous year.

Anglican critics took particular exception to the Methodist doctrine of assurance. To Whitefield, assurance meant a personal awareness that God had forgiven his sin, an experience biblically expressed as having received the "spirit of adoption" and as the witness of the Spirit mentioned in Romans 8: 16. This was by now generally seen as a recrudescence of the enthusiastic notions of the Commonwealth sects. Whitefield was reviving:

> "an old, exploded, Fanatical Notion, of very evil Tendency, that none can be sure they are in a salvable State, but such as KNOW that Jesus Christ is in them, that he is FORMED in them, so as to be CERTAINLY FELT in them."[29]

From 1739 until the mid-1740s Whitefield boldly taught that assurance was necessary to justification. He appeared to insist on an "assurance of certainty", whereas, opponents noted, the Church Homilies spoke only of an "assurance of hope". Critics alleged that the Methodists appeared to base forgiveness on an emotional experience of having received it. This had unwelcome consequences, producing extremes of overconfidence and gloom. Joseph Trapp warned:

> "We have Despair on the one Hand, Presumption on the other. The former Part of this Doctrine tends to plunge into Despair those who, whether with, or without Reason, have not this strong Persuasion of their being in a State of Salvation; and the latter to confirm in the Height of Presumption those who, without Reason have it."[30].

Those who boasted of assurance revealed a spiritual pride unbecoming a truly Christian humility; the man who had not this experience would be led "to cast off all hope in God, and to give himself up to Despair."[31].

Early critics were undiscriminating and contradictory in their criticism of the specifically Calvinist tenets in Whitefield's theology. One writer in the *Weekly Miscellany*, for May 1739, saw his teaching as more appropriate to Nonconformity than Anglicanism and urged both Whitefield and Wesley to join the Dissenters, and "preach up their Election and Reprobation Doctrines among those *Calvinists* who maintain them."[32]. Others uneasily recognized that the doctrines now derided as Calvinist had been widely accepted in the pre-Civil War Church of England. In 1744 Thomas Church, blamed Whitefield for having "revived the old *Calvinist* disputes concerning predestination, etc. which had happily slept for so many years."[33].

One of the earliest and most perceptive opponents of Whitefield's Calvinism was the Rev. Josiah Tucker, Vicar of All Saints' Bristol,

later to achieve fame as a political economist. In his *Brief History of the Principles of Methodism* (1742), Tucker traced Whitefield's Calvinist roots back to William Law. In 1736-37, he suggested, armed with Law's early view of man's total depravity after the Fall, Whitefield began preaching an undigested form of Law's doctrine of regeneration. Although at this time still ignorant of Calvinism, he had been seen by many as reviving its doctrines, and several leading Dissenters had defended his doctrine from a Calvinistic viewpoint. Grateful of this support, Whitefield had been naturally drawn towards them and had begun to read works of Calvinist theology. Yet he clearly did not become a thorough-going Calvinist overnight. As Tucker shrewdly demonstrated with reference to Whitefield's sermon on *Justification*, his early theology was still a confused mixture of imputed righteousness with repentance and holiness as the basis of justification. At Bristol in early 1739, Tucker recalled how Whitefield "still preached universal Redemption, universal Grace, and the possibility of the Regenerate's falling finally away, tho' at that very time he held Regeneration Calvinistically." He only became clear in his Calvinism, Tucker maintained, through reading Elisha Coles on *God's Sovereignty, and Dr. Edwards' Veritas Redux*, and "some other System-writers of that party", during his second visit to America; thus breaking entirely with William Law and the Quakers. Even then he continued to use certain phrases of Law's, such as the "inward Christ", which got him into trouble with the *Querists*, the Calvinist critics of the Middle Colonies. By 1741, when Tucker was writing, he saw Whitefield as a "thorough Calvinist" save in the one particular of "the inherent, or inward Christ," a remnant of the influence of William Law.[84]

Whitefield also came under fire for his use of Scripture. Opponents could hardly complain at the way in which, like the Reformers, he claimed *sola Scriptura* as the basis for his doctrine and practice, but they took strong exception to his penchant for proof texts, and wrenching texts out of their setting. While he was occasionally accused of taking Scripture too literally, a more common charge was that often levelled at Puritan exegetes - of allegorising, and adopting a typological interpretation of the Old Testament. This was something that Whitefield had picked up from reading Matthew Henry, which only increased his critics' suspicion that this was *puritanismus redivivus*. Whitefield's emphasis upon the need for the direct illumination of the Spirit when reading the Scriptures was seen as a dangerous exaggeration of the Protestant doctrine of private judgment. In the view of Bishop Gibson, the difficulty in understanding obscure passages should be overcome not by an enthusiastic appeal to immediate inspiration but by the sober method of "comparing Scripture with Scripture, and by just and regular Reasonings upon it, and where Need is, by having Recourse to the Expositions of Writers of known learning and Judgment."[35].

3. Liturgical Innovations.

Whitefield was also seen to be threatening the liturgical foundation of post-Restoration Anglicanism. John Spurr [36]. has recently shown how the worship of the Church of the 1660s and 1670s centred around the fixed form of the liturgy as an essential bulwark against the disorder and extemporary practices of the sects. It came as something of shock to Hanoverian Churchmen to discover one of their

number undermining the liturgy and publicly engaging in extempore prayer.

It was the High Churchmen who were particularly alarmed at Whitefield's early introduction of extempore prayer into the religious societies. He himself had argued that since the societies were private gatherings they were not confined to the liturgy in their worship, but to High Churchmen such irregularities implied a return towards the enthusiastic practices of the gathered churches of the Commonwealth. In a pungent *Letter to the Societies*, William Berriman deplored the way in which such "sudden and unpremeditated excursions" had replaced a stated pre-composed form, appointed by authority and known beforehand.[37] For Berriman, it has recently been noted, forms and liturgies were more than mere modes of worship; "they were deeply symbolic of the Tory social ideal of a static, hierarchical, orderly community governed by prescription." The introduction of this "private spirit" into communal worship was fiercely resisted.[38]

Whitefield's seeming disregard for the liturgy brought into question his conduct as a minister of the Church of England. "She has injoined the constant use of her liturgy," complained Thomas Church:

> "Have you, Sir, constantly obeyed this injunction? Have you scrupled to curtail and mangle this rational, this excellent service, at your pleasure? Have you not both abroad and home set it wholly aside, to make room for your extempore effusions?"[39]

Whitefield and Wesley were reminded that the prayer-book service was, by law, the liturgy of the Church. As clergy of the established Church they were bound by their subscription to the prayer-book at the time of their ordination to use it and no other.

Extempore prayer was thus seen as a clear manifestation of enthusiasm. When praying extempore, the Methodists presumed themselves to be open to the immediate dictates of the Holy Spirit. They eschewed premeditation or preparation for praying in public services, believing misguidedly that the mind was emptied of all thought and reason, so that "the impulses of the Spirit may be the more energetic."[40]. In fact, anti-Methodists averred, extempore prayer was not the result of the Holy Spirit's dictation but an acquired ability: a learned art like any other.[41]. Theophilus Evans described it as:

> "an accomplishment of the Mind...gained by Study and Imitation, the Effect of Nature and Art, a good Memory, a voluble Tongue, improved by a right Method of digesting their Thoughts, a Stock of Scripture Phrases, a natural Warmth of Temper, and a convenient Boldness and Presence of Mind."[42].

When Whitefield pointed out that the early Christians had prayed extemporarily, contemporary critics replied that this was no justification for its present use: by the close of the apostolic age the Christian church had composed its liturgies and the need for extempore prayer had passed.[43]. Extempore prayer destroyed the beauty and dignity of the liturgical services, which had been employed since Apostolic times. The length, repetitiousness, and arrogance of the extempore prayers uttered by the Methodists, often *al fresco*, before large crowds, reminded some critics more of the self-publicizing public devotions of the New Testament Pharisees than those of the Apostles; they would meet with the same divine displeasure.[44]. The mundane character of their petitions and the crude impropriety of the language of extempore prayer was likewise ridiculed.

Whitefield's homiletics also came under fire. This was partly due to a wider reaction within the intellectual elite against religious enthusiasm. Literary historians have noted how in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century there was a general move away from inspiration and ornate diction towards a homiletic style that was sober and clear, influenced by the language of science and Lockean epistemology. Whitefield's rhetorical method was too reminiscent of the discredited style of Puritan preaching. Its engagement of the affections by the use of sentimental language on sacred subjects appeared shocking: the use of intimate terms "Jesus", "precious Lord", and "lamb of God" to address the Almighty seemed deeply irreverent.

His "off-hand harangues"[45] were also seen as lacking internal organisation. They had a beginning and an end, but in between, wandered from one subject to another: exhortations, denunciations, personal reminiscences, and unrelated facts could be jumbled together. This was not surprising, since, it was alleged, he spent no time in preparation for sermons, as other ministers did, but preached what was dictated him by the Holy Spirit: inspiration "flowed upon him as fast as he could utter it."[46]

The manner of his pulpit address was also attacked: the loud voice and extempore gestures were derided as a device to hide the lack of content. John Harman described Whitefield in action:

> "His body erect,--his hands extended,-- his face thrown upwards,-- with his eyes gazing towards the stars. *Forvo vultu, tendes adsidera palmas.* Alternately changing from his theatrical astonishments into violent enthusiastical agitations and distortions, actions accompanied with weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth: *strange vicissitudes!* which he strictly keeps up throughout the whole of his preaching".[47]

It was even suggested that Whitefield hired "Hummers, Sighers, and Weepers" at two Shillings and Sixpence a week to respond loudly to his sermons.[48].

4. Itinerant Field Preacher.

Not in homiletics only, but also in the evangelistic expedients of field preaching, itinerancy and authorising lay preachers, Whitefield was seen to be reviving the fanatical practices of the Commonwealth sects.

Field preaching was regarded with particular abhorrence by eighteenth century Churchmen. In the first place it was illegal. In 1744, Bishop Gibson charged the Methodists with violating the terms of the Conventicle Act of 1670 - still on the statute books - which proscribed the assembling of crowds in the open air for worship.[49]. Similarly, field preaching violated the provisions of the Toleration Act, which permitted Dissenters to worship only in places duly certified by the bishop, or archdeacon, or JPs and made no provision for open-air meetings.

Whitefield denied that the Conventicle Act applied to his open-air assemblies. Citing the title "An Act to Prevent and Suppress Seditious Conventicles", he contended that the only field preaching prohibited was that with insurrectionary intentions. His own meetings were not of that character; indeed he deliberately prayed for the King and professed his loyalty to the government.[50].

Opposition to field preaching was based on a cluster of fears. Perhaps it would provide opposition for sedition; would poison parishioners against their regular clergy, would lead men to neglect

their family responsibilities, and would expose the gospel to ridicule? Fears that field preaching would encourage riot and rebellion increased in the 1740s and reached a peak in 1744 - when Gibson's two tracts were published [51]. - a year when the country was gripped with fear of an invasion by the Pretender. Gibson was alarmed at reports in Whitefield's Journals that he preached to crowds of 4,000 to 80,000.[52]. Such vast assemblies were potentially dangerous to the state.

Added to fears of insurrection was the concern that field preaching would increase a subversive anticlericalism among the common people. Field preaching tended to draw people parishioners away from their appointed pastors and induced a contempt for them. Bishop Warburton questioned: "What for instance, does FIELD PREACHING imply but a famine of the Word, occasioned by a total neglect in the spiritual Pastors appointed by law?"[53]. Naturally enough, Whitefield supported this practice by Apostolic precedents, but his opponents countered by claiming that although field preaching had been the only method of spreading the gospel open to the early Christians, by the close of the third century, when the church became established, it was unnecessary, since buildings were by now set aside for public worship. In England in the early eighteenth century critics could find no justification for field preaching.[54]. Puritan precedents had only led to disorder. "We have heard of field conventicles in Scotland", wrote a disgusted Joseph Trapp, "We have...had something of this nature in England, as practised by Brownists, Anabaptists, Quakers, Ranters or such like. But for a clergyman of the Church of England to pray and preach in the fields, in the country, or in the streets in the city, is perfectly new."[55]. Others emphasised the

disruption which the Scottish Field Covenanters had caused in the seventeenth century. And of course Lavington found ample precedents among the Roman Catholic enthusiasts - Peter of Verona, Anthony of Padua and Ignatius Loyola.[56]

Closely linked to criticisms of field preaching was Anglican dislike at the Methodist practice of itineration. Whitefield and his fellow evangelists rejected parish boundaries, claiming to obey God rather than men. If this meant invading other men's parishes to preach the gospel, they would do it. Whitefield, like John Wesley, claimed that the world was his parish,[57] ignored territorial boundaries, and used itinerancy as an instrument for evangelism. The Church was quick to oppose them. In his *Observations*, Gibson, a learned canon lawyer, pointed out that in the ordination rubric service a priest's duties were said to be exercised in "the Congregation whereunto he shall be lawfully appointed."[58] Admittedly, the Church of England authorised bishops and universities to grant special licenses to certain clergymen to preach at large, but the 50th canon regulated this practice, requiring preachers to show their license to the minister or churchwarden of the parish concerned. Since the Methodists did not possess the necessary licenses, their itineration directly contravened Anglican church law.

The arrival of Methodists, uninvited, into the parishes of lawfully appointed incumbents to preach against their wishes, was deeply disturbing to local communities. Such intrusion seemed unwarranted invasion. A clergyman's pulpit in the eighteenth century was his freehold; his parish was his living. By intrusion within a

clergyman's parish, the Methodists were interfering with his livelihood, and possibly endangering it.

Critics could see no need for itinerancy. England was not a heathen but a Christian country, and priests were duly appointed to parishes which covered the length and breadth of the land. It was absurd for the Methodists to act as if theirs was a pagan nation, travelling about preaching the gospel where it was "already sufficiently taught and established."[59] Why then did they itinerate? John Brownsword suggested that the answer lay in personal instability; that Whitefield had been cursed with a "roving Temper" and could not stay long in any one place.[60] Many suggested that the same psychological weakness affected those who flocked to hear the Methodists: these were "fickle", "giddy", and "weak"; restless souls who required a diet of variety and novelty.

5. Schismatic.

Most Anglicans were agreed that the Hanoverian Church, purged of its popish corruptions, was the most pure and reformed of all Reformed Churches, and a worthy successor of the Apostles. Such self-confident complacency was challenged by Whitefield and the Methodists. Like the Puritans before them, with their cries for "further reformation," the Methodists were once again threatening the Church of England.

Through his frequent and public attacks upon her divines, combined with his great popularity, Whitefield was soon identified as the principal source of this threat. His sermon on *The Spirit, Doctrines and Lives of our modern Clergy, not conformable to the Spirit of Christ*, provides a typical example of his wide-ranging attack upon his clerical brethren.[61] Not surprisingly, he provoked strong reactions. It was one thing publicly to preach against the clergy; it was worse to criticise them in his printed Journals, which commanded a wide reading public. Thomas Church alleged that "a great Part of...his Journals is taken up with abusive Reflections on his Brethren the Clergy of the Church of England".[62] Such criticisms helped polarise divisions within the Church. Many clergymen would have agreed with Church: "we cannot but look upon you as our most inveterate and bitter enemy, who have taken all opportunities, and used all methods of vilifying us."[63]

A celebrated incident at St. Margaret's, Westminster, was particularly important in creating animosity between Whitefield and the London clergy. *The Weekly Miscellany*, a good indicator of High Church opinion, refrained from making explicit references to the

Methodists until early February, 1739, contenting itself with general warnings against enthusiasm. However, following Whitefield's supposedly forced entry into the pulpit at St. Margaret's at the expense of the duly appointed preacher, the paper launched a full-scale editorial against Methodism.[64] Whitefield himself seems to have been innocent, but there was certainly over-zealousness on the part of his some of his followers and it provided his opponents with the ammunition that they were looking for. The *Miscellany* concluded:

> "There are many Instances...of these unauthoris'd teachers using fraudulent and unfair Means of getting into Pulpits against the Inclination and Consent of the proper Ministers, or appointed Preachers."[65]

Thereafter the *Miscellany* kept up a consistently hostile report on Whitefield's activities until his departure for America in the autumn,[66] and High Church pamphlets attacking Methodism began to appear in considerable numbers.

Whitefield's attitude towards his clerical superiors was also heavily criticised. In July 1739, for example, he received a letter from Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, cautioning him to preach only in a parish under his care. Whitefield's reply, though generally respectful, clearly stated his intention to ignore such advice and contained the following challenge to Benson and his colleagues on the episcopal bench:

> "If you and the rest of the Bishops cast us out, our great and common Master will take us up...However you may suffer us as evil-doers and disturbers of the peace, yet, if we suffer for our present way of acting, your lordship, at the great day, will find that we suffer only for *righteousness's sake*".[67]

His replies to Bishop Gibson's *Pastoral Letter* and *Observations* shocked his clerical colleagues. An incensed James Bate fumed:

> "You...fly in the face of DIOCESAN, with such unparallel'd Pride and Impudence! Were he wrong, does not the Character he is

> invested with entitle him to a more decent Treatment? Is this the Respect due from such a Priest to such a Bishop?"68.

Not only did the Methodists fail to respect their superiors, they actually disobeyed them. They were reminded that they had promised in their ordination vows to submit themselves to their lawful governors. Nonetheless, they had disregarded the admonitions of their superiors to cease from engaging in certain practices and preaching dangerous heresies.

But there was more unanimity in criticism of the Methodists than agreement on the best method of curbing them. While some preferred a Gamaliel-like policy of non-interference, others advocated action by the secular authorities. In 1738-40 the most effective action was seen to be closing the pulpits to Methodists preachers, and soon Whitefield enjoyed the support of only a handful of London sympathisers, such as Rev. George Stonehouse, curate of St. Mary's, Islington, and found all the Bristol pulpits closed to his ministrations. Yet prohibition of Methodist preaching in Anglican pulpits was not sufficient to prevent the spread of its ideas. Whitefield's huge outdoor meetings obviously required more drastic measures. Pulpit and pamphlet were used to warn people away from countenancing his administrations, and legal sanctions were openly discussed.

It seemed obvious to some critics that since the Methodists had engaged in *de facto* separation they should be forced to formalise the break, quit the Church and accept the legal recognition of being Dissenters. In this context, early pamphleteers delighted in mentioning Whitefield's co-operation with Dissenting ministers: Methodist practices, they suggested, had more in common with

Nonconformity than with Anglicanism. There was more danger, Joseph Trapp warned, from these "half-Dissenters" within the Church than those who were total Dissenters from it.[69]

In the absence of Convocation, the lack of any effective ecclesiastical machinery to suppress Methodism was lamented by several pamphleteers.[70] Given the lack of synodical action, it was suggested that it was a matter for the secular authorities. The J.Ps were encouraged to take steps to suppress its illegal activities, while there were some hopes that an Act might be passed through Parliament to curtail itinerancy.[71] More irenical Churchmen like Archbishop Thomas Secker, however, merely entreated the Methodists to return to the fold. Not only should the Church not drive the Methodists into Dissent, but it should win back those who had been alienated from the establishment.[72]

6. Social and Political Subversive,

Whitefield was also seen as threatening the stability of eighteenth century society. Several modern historians have seen Methodism as a counter-revolutionary force, but this was not the view of contemporaries. Instead, Whitefield and his fellow evangelists were seen as disrupting the settled society of Hanoverian England and ultimately of creating the climate for a fresh outburst of sectarian levelling.

Churchmen stressed that "the Design of God in creating Man, was not only for him to worship and adore his Maker, but to be also a useful social Creature." [73] By their fanaticism, asceticism and supererogation, the Methodists seemed to weaken the sanctions for

social order and responsibility. As one author put it, if God required the faithful performance of regular social duties:

> "how then can be reconciled therewith, such daily Fasting, Praying, Frequent Preaching, and strict Austerities of Life, as..the sanctified Mr. Whitefield and his Proselytes, do it seems practice themselves, and recommend to others?"[74].

The Church of England had wisely set aside one day a week for divine worship; the other six were for work. Since an estimated two to three hours was wasted by huge numbers of labouring people on travelling to and attending upon Whitefield's field preaching, this would have harmful social consequences: "stopping Trade, dragging poor servants from their Work...hurting their Masters, and impoverishing their Families."[75]. Furthermore the Methodist practice of early Sunday morning preaching would encourage idleness and disorderly behaviour, "because a strong Temptation offers for the greater Part to spend the rest of the Day in rioting and Drunkeness, rather than return to their Home, or go to Church."[76]. More serious still perhaps, Whitefield was accused of increasing vagrancy, since a number apparently left their jobs, thereby increasing the weight borne by the poor rate in local parishes.[77].

As well as encouraging the neglect of vocational responsibilities, the Methodists were accused of disupting family life. Although occasional criticisms focused on the conversion of men, most critics focused upon female converts who allegedly became neglectful mothers and disobedient wives. The example of Thedosia, the central figure of *The Story of the Methodist-lady; or the Injur'd Husband's Revenge*, captures something of the resentment felt against the Methodist preachers. Here was a middle class lady, who had been happily married for ten years before going out of curiosity to hear

Whitefield preach, where she was converted. She then began to neglect her domestic responsibilities and rejected her husband in preference for a young rake, who had feigned conversion to the Methodists and had become her spiritual adviser in order to seduce her. The story ends with Theodosia pregnant by her "Methodist" confidant, and her husband emasculating her lover in revenge.[78].

Women in particular were accused of giving away the family's money to Methodist preachers, thereby robbing their husbands and leaving their children starving. In *The Mock Preacher*, a cobbler's wife was seen as giving away all the family's earnings to Whitefield and being beaten by her husband as a consequence.[79]. In the *Story of the Methodist Lady*, no sooner had Theodosia been converted than "she gave away profusely more than her Husband could afford, but not to the Poor directly, but to this Saint [Whitefield] to be disposed of as he should think meet."[80]. Women were likewise the chief target of those who ridiculed the Methodist bands. In the appendix to *A Compleat Account of the Conduct of that eminent Enthusiast Mr. Whitefield*, the author printed "A Method of Confession drawn up for the Use of Women Methodists - Taken from the Original." In this women were said to be encouraged, as in the Roman confessional, to discuss their love affairs.[81]. At the heart of such criticisms was the firm belief that women's first place was in the home, not at the society meeting.

Anglican fears ran deeper than concern at the neglect of vocational responsibilities and the disruption of family life. In the eyes of some alarmist critics, the very peace and order of mid-eighteenth century society seemed to be threatened. Wherever the Methodists had been, wrote Trapp, they had "thrown whole

Neighbourhoods and Parishes into Confusion".[82] Indeed, claimed Samuel Weller, wildly, the very safety and peace of the nation was at stake.[83]

In many localities the presence of the Methodists resulted in violence. Houses of society members were wrecked, while preaching houses were damaged or pulled down. Mob violence was "an almost traditional means of group expression" in eighteenth century.[84] Methodist provocation was blamed for the riots that took place. The riot at Minchin Hampton, Gloucester (1743), home of one of Whitefield's societies, was said to have resulted from the Methodists' attempt to disrupt trade and impoverish families by encouraging men and women to neglect their work in order to hear evangelical preachers.[85] The disruption of family life was allegedly the major cause of the riots at Exeter (1745), which was directed against another group of Whitefield's followers. Methodist doctrine and practice was adjudged to be "injurious to SOCIETY".[86]

Methodism and social anarchy were synonymous in the minds of some gentry and churchmen. Memories of the Civil War and the Commonwealth lived on. Perhaps, like the Puritans, the Methodists would attempt to bring about a social revolution? Pamphleteers highlighted the similarities between the Methodists and the Puritans, reminding their readers of the disorder and confusion that English society had experienced in the previous century.[87] Others, such as the author of *A Compleat Account of the Conduct of that eminent Enthusiast Mr. Whitefield* made bolder criticisms:

> "I venture to affirm that the present Enthusiasts have made a much quicker Progress since their first publick appearance [than] their Predecessors [the Puritans] did in the same Compass of Time, and that the Nation is now more disposed to receive any ill Impressions,...to despise Authority, and to run into Disorders of

any kind, than it was at the beginnings of those Times of Confusion."[88].

Charges like these continued into the middle of the century, though with decreasing frequency.

In this context, the Methodists were also seen as a new generation of levellers, preaching proletarian revolution. Evidence of this was drawn from Whitefield's early sermons which vehemently attacked the "Rich and Wise of this World" and the"polite gentry".[89]. Was Whitefield a Leveller in clerical disguise? The Methodists were seen as espousing a radical abnegation of personal property and espousing a virtual community of goods.[90]. Their denunciations of the rich and exaltation of the poor was noted with alarm. Whitefield was fond of emphasising that "the Poor have the Gospel preached to them..while the Rich oftentimes think themselves too wise to be instructed."[91]. Did Methodist leaders have ulterior motives in assembling crowds of the poor and hungry, instilling in them a belief in their own inspiration, and marshalling them in disciplined cadres led by mysterious travelling agents whom no J.P. could properly control?[92].

The Oxford Methodist practice of jail visitation, continued by Whitefield, who often became an unofficial chaplain to condemned criminals, was seen as both ridiculous and potentially dangerous. Offering salvation to condemned criminals destroyed the work of Christian moralists who offered Heaven as a reward for a virtuous life. Horace Walpole, an inveterate opponent of the Methodists, accused Whitefield of encouraging people to "forge, murder, etc, in order to have the benefit of being converted at the gallows." Walpole cited a particular instance of this practice:

> "That arch-rogue preached lately a funeral sermon on one Gibson hanged for forgery, and told his audience that he could assure them Gibson was now in heaven, and that another fellow, executed at the same time, had the happiness of touching Gibson's coat, as he was turned off."[93].

Particular resentment was felt by gentry and churchmen at Whitefield's harsh denunciations of contemporary leisure activities. In preaching against horse-racing, cock-fighting, card playing and wrestling as sinful activities he was seen as reintroducing a new Puritanical regulation of society and Sabbatarianism. Joseph Trapp scolded the Methodists for the "Folly, Sin and Danger, Of being Righteous over-much": for condemning innocent activities while simultaneously making things indifferent, matters of duty.[94].

Whitefield was also viewed as a a political subversive, intent on undermining the foundations of the state. In the view of John Wilder, he was "resolved to make his Voice the Trumpet of War; and Reduce, if possible, this Church and State, to Anarchy and Confusion."[95]. Pamphleteers drew parallels with the situation in 1739 and the early 1740s. One tract was entitled: *Enthusiasm no Novelty: or the Spirit of the Methodists in the Year 1641 and 1642.* Despite Whitefield's protestations of love and loyalty to the Crown and his practice of publicly praying for the King, opponents still feared that novelties in religion would bring political change.[96].

Paradoxically, Methodism was similarly linked to Roman Catholicism, and its supposed contemporary political arm, Jacobitism. The Methodists were dubbed papists in disguise, secretly working with the Jacobites to secure the return of the Stuarts. The anonymous author of *Mr. Whitefield's Doctrines Considered and Confuted*, insisted that:

> "A secret enemy is more dangerous than a professed one; if therefore we are not upon our Guard, Mr. Whitefield may effect..the utter Subversion of our Government."[97]

Others saw the Methodists as the puppets of France and Spain. Fears increased in 1744 with the threat of the Pretender,[98] though after the defeat of the Jacobites in 1745, accusations of Methodist political disloyalty began to fade.

This Anglican critique of Whitefield, particularly in 1739-40, was the severest that he faced and was to provide the basis for the attacks of other opponents, whether American Anglicans, Scottish Presbyterian "Moderates" or New England Congregationalists. Perhaps the major common thread uniting these very diverse groups was their belief in the essential "reasonableness" of Christianity, a rationality challenged by Whitefield, the "arch-Enthusiast" through his direct "impressions", his revival of Puritan doctrine, his extempore praying and itinerant field preaching. He was responsible for passing on this "enthusiastic" disease to countless others.

CHAPTER THREE; CHURCH OF ENGLAND - FOOTNOTES.

1. *GWW*, 3, p. 159. Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, pp. 202-203 mistakenly attributes it to the Bishop of Bristol.

2. See ch. 1, pp. 2-5, 8, 13-15.

3. See chs. 6 and 9.

4. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London 1728-1748; Richard Smalbroke, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry; George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter; Joseph Trapp, Rector of Harlington, Sussex, and Lecturer at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, formerly the first Professor Poetry at Oxford (1708-18), and manager for Dr. Sacheverell at his trial in 1709; Tristram Land, Curate of St. James's Garlickhithe, and Lecturer of the united parishes of St. Anthony and St. John the Baptist; Thomas Church, Vicar of Battersea, Prebend of St. Paul's, and Lecturer at St. Anne's, Soho.

5. Trapp, *Nature, Folly, Sin and Danger of being Righteous Over-Much* (2nd ed. London, 1739) p. 39.

6. [W. Warburton], *The Doctrine of Grace* (London, 1763), pp. 102, 112-113; Gibson, *Pastoral Letter* (3rd ed. London, 1739), p. 12.

7. *Weekly Miscellany*, May 12th, 1739 (hereafter *WM*).

8. W. Dodd, *Cautions against Methodism* (London, 1769), p. 34.

9. Trapp, *Nature, Folly*, p. 37. For Periam and his relationship with Whitefield, see *GWJ*, pp. 266-271 and *LGW*, 1, pp. 277-230.

10. [S. Weller], *The Trial of Mr. Whitefield's Spirit* (London, 1740), p. 42.

11. *WM*, May 12th, 1739.

12. [T. Gib], *Remarks on the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal* (London [1738]), p. 26.

13. *GWJ*, p. 260.

14. J.B.[Brownsword], *Remarks on the Continuation of Mr. Whitefield's Journal* (1739), p. 8; *Methodism and Popery Dissected and Compared* (London, 1779), pp. 41-42.

15. Weller, *Trial*, p. 11.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

17. Trapp, *Nature, Folly*, p. 55.

18. [Z. Grey], *Quaker and Methodist Compared* (London, 1740), p. iii.

19. *Parallel Reformers* [n.p., 1748].

20. [G. Lavington], *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd*, Part I, (London, 1749) p. iii.

21. John Edwards, *The Preacher*, p. xvii.

22. For influence of Edwards and Jonathan Warne on Whitefield, see ch. 2, p. 38.

23. Tristram Land, *A Letter of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield* (London, 1739), pp. 23-29.

24. Henry Stebbing, *A Caution against Religious Delusion* (3rd ed. London, 1739), pp. 7-8.

25. Gibson, *Pastoral Letter*, p. 46.

26. A Friend to true Religion, *The Sentiments of Archbishop Tillotson and Sharp on Regeneration and of Bishop Moor, Blackal, Bull etc on Justification by Faith only (London, [1741]).*

27. William Law, *Of Justification by Faith and Works* (London, 1760), p. 16.

28. See *The Sentiments of Archbishop Tillotson*; and Presbyter of the Church of England, *Defence of the Author of 'The Whole Duty of Man'* (London 1740).

29. James Bate, *Methodism Displayed* (London, n.d.), pp. 4-5.

30. Trapp, *Nature, Folly*, pp. 45-46.

31. Stebbing, *Caution*, pp. 16-17.

32. *WM*, 12th May, 1739.

33. Thomas Church, *A Serious and Expostulatory Letter to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (London, 1744), p. 39.

34. Josiah Tucker, *A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism* (Oxford, 1742), pp. 7-14.

35. Gibson, *Pastoral Letter*, p. 28.

36. J. Spurr, "Anglican Apologetic and the Restoration Church" (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1985), pp. 210 ff.

37. W. Berriman, *A Sermon preached to the Religious Societies in London* (London, 1739).

38. John Walsh, "Religious Societies," op. cit., p. 285.

39. T. Church, *A Serious and Expostulatory Letter*, p. 17.

40. W. C., *Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Whitefield's Letter* to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford (Oxford, 1968), p. 29.

41. Gibson, *Pastoral Letter*, p. 15.

42. Theophilus Evans, *History of Modern Enthusiasm* (London, 1757), p. xv.

43. Bate, *Methodism Displayed*, p. 22.

44. *A Plain Address to the Followers and Favourers of the Methodists* (London, [1739]), pp. 10-12; John Harman, *Remarks upon the Life, Character and Behaviour of the Rev. George Whitefield* (London, 1764), pp. 44-45.

45. W. C., *Remarks*, p. 32.

46. True Lover of the Church and Country, *Some Observations upon the Conduct of the Famous Mr. W-----field* (Edinburgh, 1742), p. 4.

47. Harman, *Crooked Disciples Remarks upon the Blind Guide's Method of Preaching* (London, 1761), p. 1.

48. Ibid., p 44.

49. [E. Gibson], *Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect, usually distinguished by the Name of Methodists* (n.p., 1744), p. 4.

50. G. Whitefield, "An Answer to the First Part of an Anonymous Pamphlet, entitled 'Observations'," in *GWW*, 4, pp. 123-140.

51. [E. Gibson], *Observations*; [E. Gibson], *Case of the Methodists Briefly Stated: More particularly in the Point of Field-Preaching* (London, 1744). For a discussion of how the Conventicle Act applied to the early Methodists see John S. Simon, "The Conventicle Act applied to the Early Methodists," *WHS Proc.*, 11 (Dec. 1917), pp. 82-93.

52. [Gibson], *Case of the Methodists*, p. 2.

53. [Warburton], Doctrine of Grace, p. 169.

54. Ibid.

55. Trapp, *Nature, Folly*, pp. 57-58.

56. [Lavington], *Methodists and Papists Compared*, p. 11.

57. *GWL*, p. 105.

58. [Gibson], *Observations*, p. 11.

59. Thomas Green, *A Dissertation on Enthusiasm* (London, 1755), p. 93.

60. J. B. [Brownsword], *Remarks*, p. 12.

61. George Whitefield, "The Spirit, Doctrines and Lives of our Modern Clergy", in *Discourses*.

62. Thomas Church, *Explanation and Defence of the Doctrine of the Church of England Concerning Regeneration* (London, 1739), p. 41.

63. Church, *Serious and Expostulatory Letter*, p. 23.

64. *WM*, Feb. 10, 1739, followed up by a further article on Feb. 24, 1739. For a fuller discussion of the incident see *LGW*, 1, pp. 171-174.

65. *WM*, Feb. 10, 1739.

66. Ibid., April 14, May 5, May 12, May 26, July 7, Aug. 18, Aug. 25, Sep. 15, 1739.

67. *GWJ*, pp. 299-302.

68. Bate, *Methodism Displayed*, p. 36.

69. Trapp, *Nature, Folly*, p. 38.

70. See *Mock Preacher*, pp. 21-22; T. Land, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield* (London, 1741), p. 32.

71. J. B., *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield* (London, [1744]), pp. 16-17.

72. Thomas Secker, "A Charge, 1762," in *Works of Thomas Secker*, new ed. 4 vols. (Edin, 1792), 4, p. 187.

73. *Sentiments of Archbishop Tillotson*, p. 3.

74. Ibid.

75. J.B., *Letter to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield*, p. 22.

76. *Sentiments of Archbishop Tillotson*, p. 4.

77. Muggletonian, *Amorous, Humorous and Audacious Adventures of one Wh-----d*, (London, [1739]), p. 23; Country Curate, *Observations on the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Answer to the Bishop of London's Last Pastoral Letter* (London, [1739]), pp. 26-27; Ralph Skerret, *The Nature and Proper Evidence of Regeneration* (London, 1739), pp. vii-viii.

78. *Story of the Methodist Lady* : or the Injur'd Husband's Revenge (London, [1752]).

79. *Mock Preacher*, p. 17.

80. *Story of the Methodist-Lady*, p. 11.

81. *A Compleat Account of that eminent Enthusiast Mr. Whitefield* (London, [1739]), appendix.

82. Trapp, *Nature, Folly*, p. 83.

83. [Weller], *Trial*, p. 4.

84. J. Walsh, "Methodism and the Mob in the Eighteenth Century," in *Studies in Church History*, 8, *Popular Belief and Practice*, eds., C. J. Cuming and D. Baker, p. 215.

85. J.B., *Letter to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield*, p. 22.

86. Layman of the Church of England, *Remarks on a late Pamphlet intitled, 'A Brief Account of the Late Persecution and barbarous Usage of the Methodists at Exeter* (Exon, 1745), pp. 6, 13-24.

87. Gibson, *Pastoral Letter*, p. 29.

88. *A Compleat Account*, p. 11.

89. G. Whitefield, "Spirit, Doctrines and Lives," pp. 7-8, in *Discourses*.

90. William Bowman, *The Imposture of Methodism Display'd* (London, 1740), p. 61.

91. Whitefield, "*An Exhortation to come and see Jesus," p. 5, in Discourses*.

92. Bowman, op. cit., p. 79.

93. *Horace Walpole Correspondence*, ed., W.S. Lewis (Yale ed., 1937), p. 134.

94. Trapp, *Nature, Folly, p.* 7.

95. John Wilder, *Trial of the Spirits (Oxford, 1739), p. 21.*

96. Enthusiasm no Novelty (London, 1739), p. iii; [Weller], *Trial*, p. 40.

97. *Mr. Whitefield's Doctrines Considered and Confuted* (Ipswich, 1741), p. 4.

98. [Gibson], *Case of the Methodists*, p. 2.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FORMATION OF A NEW DENOMINATION? GEORGE WHITEFIELD AND CALVINISTIC METHODISM, 1741-1770.

The traditional picture of Whitefield has been of a man who was a 'wayfaring witness', a great evangelist and orator, but not a leader of men - a role in which he was totally overshadowed by the organising genius of John Wesley. This view has recently been somewhat modified, for research has revealed the existence in the early phase of the Revival of a well-organised and widespread Calvinistic Methodist organisation, strong in London, Bristol and the South-West and has shown that some of its organisational techniques and structures predated those of its Wesleyan counterpart.[1] Whitefield held the position of "Grand Moderator" of this organisation between 1741-48 and clearly influenced the movement's development. Nonetheless, his wide itinerancy in England Wales and Scotland in 1741-44, followed by a four year absence in the American Colonies, meant that effective leadership passed to others. On his return in 1748, he decided that he needed the freedom to continue itinerating and therefore stepped down from official leadership. After he had failed to find a suitable successor, the Connexion gradually ceased to function as an entity and the individual societies - usually left largely to the care of Whitefield's fellow preachers - began to be licensed as Dissenting Meeting Houses, the majority eventually ending up as Congregationalist churches. Thus, unlike Wesley, Whitefield did not give his name to a large new denomination. Rather, the fruits of his English labours were reaped by others: traditional

Nonconformity, Evangelical Anglicanism, and even Wesleyan Methodism, among whose societies he freely itinerated after 1748.

"Calvinistic Methodism" has been variously defined. Its most inclusive definition has been a doctrinal one. The Calvinistic societies of Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon and those established by others, such as Whitefield's ex-preacher, William Cudworth, as well as the Welsh societies under Howel Harris, Daniel Rowlands and Howel Davies, have all been given the appellation "Calvinistic Methodist ". The term has even been applied to include some sympathetic clerical Evangelicals who cooperated with these causes, particularly as chaplains or occasional preachers for the Countess.

This wide perspective helps to highlight the strength of Calvinism within the Revival, and is a further corrective to the traditional picture of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism as virtually monopolizing the Spirit's influence in the mid to late eighteenth century. However, though this inclusive definition recognizes the strength of evangelical Calvinism as a whole, the assimilation into a single category of all those who shared a predestinarian theology tends to blur very clear differences of doctrinal emphasis, ecclesiological approach and geographical strength within the Calvinistic wing of the revival. If "Calvinistic Methodism" is interpreted in organizational terms it should properly refer to the English Calvinistic Methodists or "Whitefieldites" as they were sometimes known; a group of societies and tabernacles who recognised George Whitefield as their leader, and who, while in sympathy with

other Calvinistic evangelicals, saw themselves as a quite distinct group.

The formation of a distinctly Calvinistic group within the English revival was probably fostered by the proximity of the revival in Wales. Bristol, the heart of West Country Methodism, was geographically close to the Welsh-speaking revival, now burgeoning on the other side of Offa's Dyke. The patriarch of the Welsh revival was Griffith Jones of Llandowor, who preached an evangelical Calvinism and who in 1714 precipitated a small awakening in Camarthenshire and Pembrokeshire which foreshadowed the greater movement of the 1730s. This began in 1735, with the conversion of the layman Howel Harris and two clergyman, Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho, and Howel Davies, later known as "the apostle of Pembrokeshire. From their itinerant preaching came a large scale revival movement, Calvinist in doctrine, which preceded the English Revival, both in time and in pastoral technique.[2].

Links between the English and Welsh Revivals were forged in 1738-1739 through the friendship of Harris and Whitefield, and were further cemented in 1740-41, when Whitefield split with the Arminian Wesleys. During Whitefield's absence in America, Harris began to be sought out by other English Calvinists as a natural leader to support their cause against the rival teaching of the Arminian Wesleys and the Moravians.[3]. Harris attempted to maintain an open stance towards the Wesleys, but soon felt compelled to protest at the expulsion of John Acourt, a Calvinist, from the London Society.[4]. Disturbed by the increasingly overt anti-Calvinism of the Wesleys' publications, Harris wrote to Charles Wesley concerning the second volume of his Hymns, expressing himself "shock'd and surpriz'd to see

such down right Arminianism and popery set forth."[5] By the time of Whitefield's return to England in 1741, Harris was a natural ally of the new English Calvinistic Methodist movement.

Thus began an important link between the English and Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. Both movements shared a common Calvinism, and remained for a time in the Church of England, resisting pressure to join the Dissenters. Whitefield and Harris personally maintained the ties. From 1741, Harris was periodically called to serve the English societies, acting as Whitefield's deputy between 1746-48, during his absence in America, and was the natural choice to be asked to carry on the collective leadership of both groups in 1749, a decision thwarted only by his abrupt departure from the movement in 1750. Conversely, Whitefield helped in the organisation and structuring of the Welsh movement, acting as Moderator of a joint Welsh-English Calvinistic Methodist Association in 1743. But although there was always a close affinity between the two movements - with Whitefield maintaining ministerial links with the Welsh leader Howell Davies right through the 1760s - they were distinctive both in origin and later development. Whereas English Calvinistic Methodism suffered from Whitefield's frequent absences in the 1740s, and largely ceased to function as a Connexion after 1749 - when societies began to trickle first into independence and ultimately Congregationalism - its Welsh counterpart continued to grow in numerical strength and identity, and by the end of the century had virtually broken with the Church of England to form a powerful new denomination.

In addition to Harris and the Welsh Methodists, another focal point for the nascent English Calvinist movement in 1740 was William Seward. Wealthy and somewhat eccentric, Seward became acquainted with

Charles Wesley through the Fetter Lane Society and was converted in late 1738. He became acquainted with Whitefield in early 1739 and decided to pledge himself and much of his resources to the evangelist's ministry, thereafter inscribing himself "William Seward, Gentleman, Companion in Travel to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield." Devoted to Whitefield's person, he wrote full and glowing reports of his outstanding field ministry in Bristol and Kingswood, shared the preacher's move towards Calvinism and acted as his intermediary with several of the leading English Dissenters.[6] He accompanied Whitefield on his voyage to America in the autumn, where his Calvinism was sharpened by contact with Whitefield's Presbyterian allies in the Middle Colonies.[7] On his return to England in mid-1740, ahead of Whitefield, he helped widen the growing rift between the Wesleys and the Calvinists, influenced it seems by Bristol Baptists.[8] He joined forces with Howel Harris in Wales, until he became the first Methodist martyr, first blinded and killed by the stones of the mob. Shortly before his death, Seward made perhaps his major contribution to the future of Calvinistic Methodism, by giving his financial backing and support for the first Methodist newspaper *The Christian's Amusement*, soon to become the official mouthpiece of the English Calvinistic Methodists.

With Whitefield's return in early 1741 imminent, the Calvinistic cause was strengthened by the defection of two of Wesley's preachers. One was Joseph Humphreys, son of an Oxfordshire Dissenting minister.[9] A zealous young man, Joseph went to a Dissenting Academy (later removed to Deptford) and began composing sermons thundering against unrepentant sinners. Still unconverted, he joined Dr. Guyse's Independent Church in London in 1737, but was awakened hearing

Whitefield preach on Kennington Common in May 1739. He recalled his experience of hearing the great evangelist:

> "I liked him, because he so affectionately invited poor guilty sinners to come to Jesus Christ by faith. I afterward heard him several times. I felt the power of the Lord to be with him; and was much affected to see the seriousness and tears of many in the congregations... I wept exceedingly, thinking what a hearty, pious minister he was (though educated at such a wicked place as Oxford) in comparison of what any of us at our academy were like to be."[10]

Thus inspired, though not yet ordained, Humphreys began to preach. Soon he was ministering to large congregations and formed a religious society, but was promptly thrown out of the academy for such "irregular" proceedings. He moved to an academy at Moorfields and ministered to Whitefield's converts at Deptford and Greenwich with considerable success and power. When Whitefield was in America, Humphreys began working with Wesley, and by September 1740 had begun to preach in the large congregation at the Foundery. Although intimate with Wesley for several months, and apparently imbibing his perfectionist teachings, in the spring of 1741 he decided to join Whitefield. He now wrote openly opposing Wesley's notion of Christian Perfection and expressing his support for the Calvinist doctrines of election and final perseverance. Humphreys was to become one of the leading preachers in the early years of Calvinistic Methodism and in 1741-42 seems to have become the focal point for calls to have the London Tabernacle licensed as a Dissenting chapel. Thwarted in this attempt, he eventually left the Connexion, and became ordained as pastor of a small congregation in Chinnor, close to his father's old cure. Eventually he became an Anglican minister, "scoffed at inward religion", and dropped out of the revival. [11]

More significant than Humphreys was John Cennick.[12] Born in Reading in 1718, brought up a strict Anglican, dramatically converted in 1737, he became one of the most powerful and influential preachers in the early years of the Revival. Like Whitefield he developed a childhood love for reading and seeing plays, and like the "divine dramatist" he exercised a dramatic influence over his hearers. Having read Whitefield's journals, he sought him out, and was soon appointed to be master of the new Kingswood School under Wesley's supervision, in the early summer of 1739. Upon his arrival, he found Wesley temporarily out of town, the appointed preacher absent and himself left with the task of preaching to the assembled congregation. Having prayed twice for divine guidance and assistance and finding great freedom he "rose up and went to the congregation, the Lord bearing witness with my word, insomuch that many believed in that hour." Soon thousands both in Kingswood and Bristol began to attend his ministry. So great was his popularity that on a couple of occasions in Kingswood John Wesley reported that the people went to hear Cennick in preference to his own ministry. By late 1740, however, doctrinal divisions between the Wesleys and the Calvinists were sharpening up, and Cennick, a disciple of Whitefield, began to clash with the Wesleys. Shocked at the influence of perfectionist teaching in the Bristol and Kingswood societies, with persons such as Mr. Nowers claiming that he was "the sinlessly perfect man", Cennick began to dispute fiercely with Wesley. Although at this time Cennick recalled that he "knew no Calvinist...nor believed in Reprobation", his views on imputed righteousness and election were sufficiently pronounced, and his influence such, that Wesley eventually felt it necessary to eject him from the Kingswood Society.[13] Twenty-four

others left with him and together they set up a rival society, which quickly grew to 130 souls.

But Cennick's influence extended beyond Kingswood. In the same year (1740), he was instrumental in stirring up a revival in Wiltshire. On Whitefield's return from America in March 1741, he joined Whitefield, bringing with him not only the society at Kingswood but the fruits of his ministry in Wiltshire. Influential in 1741-44, he was the natural choice to deputise for Whitefield on his third visit to America. However, a mixture of doctrinal and disciplinary disagreements resulted in his departure for the Moravians in 1745, taking with him several hundred members of the London Tabernacle and a number of the Wiltshire societies, leaving the Calvinistic Methodists movement in considerable disarray.

Thus during the split between Wesley and Whitefield, others such as Cennick and Humphreys emerged, who, with help from the Methodist leadership in Wales, were on-hand to create a separate Calvinistic Methodist organisation in England, under Whitefield's overall supervision.

2. Doctrine.

One of the strengths of English Calvinistic Methodism was its relative doctrinal unity. All the major figures in the movement were - despite variations - united in the basic tenets of Reformed theology.

From the outset, however, there were two distinct strands of Calvinist influence within the movement. One was the largely experimental Calvinism of men such as Whitefield and Harris, reared in an Arminian Church of England, who had discovered their Calvinism some time after their conversion. Unlike many "birthright" Calvinists who had grown up within the dogmatic system of Puritan Calvinism, the new converts tended to emphasise the "experience" of new birth, rather than the divine decrees, and were comparatively moderate in their attitude to non-Calvinist evangelicals such as the Wesleys. Such a viewpoint was nicely summarised by Whitefield in his rebuff to the Scots Presbyterian, John Willison. He wrote:

> "Though I am a strenuous defender of the righteousness of Christ, and utterly detest *Arminian* principles, yet I know that God gave me the Holy Ghost, before I was clear in either as to head-knowledge: and therefore, dear Sir, I am the more moderate to people who are not clear, supposing I see the divine image stamped upon their hearts. Mr. W[esley] and Mr. L[aw], etc I take to he holy men of God, though they think far widely from men, and from each other in some particular branches of doctrine."[14]

Whitefield and his fellow Anglican Calvinists tended to look back to both the Scriptures and to a moderate Calvinist tradition within the Church of England, which could be traced back to the Reformers and the early seventeenth century divines, but which had been greatly attenuated since the Restoration. This Calvinist tradition they saw most clearly preserved in the brief, moderate and unscholastic

doctrinal Articles and Homilies of the Church. In its third issue, the *Christian's Amusement* contained an editorial recommending the Homilies of the Church of England as a check to the "Arminian heresy" to which the majority of her present ministers had fallen captive.[15] Elsewhere the paper quoted extracts from the writings of two seventeenth century Calvinist divines, Bishop Beveridge and Archbishop Ussher, to represent a Calvinist position as respectably Anglican. The combination of this appeal to the Reformed foundations of the Church and to "experience", was reflected in the journal's opposition to the Wesleys' doctrine of Perfection, for which the editor, Lewis, commented, he could find no support either in the Church of England or in his own soul.[16]

Yet, even between men such as Whitefield and Harris, both moderate Calvinists from within a common tradition, there were clearly differences of emphasis. The Englishman tended to be firmer and more dogmatic in his approach to the "Five Points". In 1741, admittedly just after the split with the Wesleys, and probably still under the influence of the firmer Calvinism of the American Dissenters, Whitefield, "went too far towards Reprobation", for Harris's liking.[17] In the summer of 1741, Harris noted how he had met with a favourable response from some of Wesley's followers who had apparently been convinced by his "preaching Election experimentally after they had been prejudiced by Mr. Whitefield's preaching it as a point."[18] Whitefield soon moderated his tone, and on his return from America in 1748 told Harris that he was a "Sublapsarian and only held a conditional Reprobation" - in other words, he was by now a moderate Calvinist.[19]

There were further divergences of attitude between the two leaders. During Whitefield's absence in America, Harris had developed a warm-hearted sympathy towards the Moravians and their sentimental cult of Christ's blood and wounds. This in turn led to clashes with Daniel Rowlands and several other leaders of the Welsh movement, who objected to Harris' increasing emphasis upon "the Blood", accusing him of adopting a Patripassian view of the Atonement, in which God Himself had died on the Cross. [20] On his return in 1748, Whitefield was informed of these developments, and although he seems to have remained initially loyal to Harris personally, he was far less accomodating of his shift towards the Moravians. For his part, Harris regarded Whitefield as having moved too far towards the Dissenters in his style of preaching, and rebuked him accordingly:

> "I thought he went too much toward the Dissenters way in preaching more than he did formerly. How Mr. Davidson a Dissenting minister was the only one I heard preaching like him, insisting on the continuing believing and not living on past experiences as all the others do."[21]

As an exuberant believer in direct inspiration, Harris was also alarmed at the Englishman's public retraction of "enthusiastic" statements in his early ministry: this he saw as an undermining of experiential religion. [22] Whitefield's surprising change of tack was largely due to witnessing how the Great Awakening in America had been brought into great disrepute by the enthusiasm and censoriousness of Davenport and his followers. This had important repercussions for his relationship with the Welsh Methodists, bringing him closer to the moderate Anglican Calvinism of Rowland and the Welsh Methodist clergy, and distancing him from the enthusiasm of Harris.

If Whitefield, largely because of his influence among the American and Scots Calvinists, had become clearer in his Calvinism

during the 1740s and more cautious about the nature of spiritual "experience", nevertheless, his experiential Calvinism, like Harris's, remained very different from the birth-right Calvinism of the Dissenters, who provided another element in the composition of Calvinistic Methodism. London Dissenters formed a large and vocal minority within the Tabernacle, and were instrumental in its construction. Many, like Joseph Humphreys, who owed their conversion or "re-awakening" to Whitefield, were influential in drawing him towards Calvinism in 1739, and sought to provide a future base for his ministry in 1741 after he returned from America to find many of his spiritual children now supporting the Arminian Wesleys. Howel Harris noticed on his first visit to the Tabernacle in the summer of 1741 the presence of Calvinistic Dissenters, whose high Calvinism repelled him, while his moderate Calvinism annoyed them. On one occasion he recorded that many "Antinomians" were offended at his offer of grace to all; on another how many hated him because he said that "sin must be subdued". One Brother Abbot, a London Dissenter, and friend and correspondent of Whitefield since 1737, chose to shun Harris altogether, calling him a "Perfectionist". For his part Harris concluded that "the law to thunder againt sin is now turned out from most pulpits of Dissenters till all are fallen asleep almost."[23].

Nonetheless, such early differences of doctrinal emphasis failed to disturb the essential unity of the movement until after Whitefield's departure for the American Colonies in late 1744. Trouble seems to have begun with a young preacher, William Cudworth, at one time in charge of the Tabernacle School, but who left in 1745, to form his own Connexion, with meeting houses at Spitalfields, Petticoat Lane, Angel Alley, the French Chapel in Wapping, as well as

at Norwich and Forncett.[24] A far more sensational split occurred, later in the same year, when John Cennick, then Whitefield's deputy in charge of the Tabernacle, left to join the Moravians, taking 400 members of the London Tabernacle and several of the Wiltshire societies with him. The seeds of this separation had been evident while Whitefield was still in England. At an Association of the English Calvinistic Methodists in August-September 1743, Harris noted "a long talk about preaching the law as a rule for believers. Bro. Cennick and others against it much. I said I could not agree with that, it was Antinomianism, I thought."[25] In Whitefield's absence Cennick increasingly veered towards a form of speculative or theoretical antinomianism in his endeavour to emphasise the liberty of the Christian from the law. In December 1744, Harris reported hearing Cennick preach "that no faith is without assurance" and that he was "against holiness in us", but that righteousness was imputed solely by faith in the blood of Christ.[26] At the Association of December 1744, two opposing groups were visibly emerging. One, led by Harris, supported by his fellow-Welshmen James Beaumont and Herbert Jenkins (who decided to join the Independents in May 18th, 1748), and others, including a Baptist minister, Brother Sheep and Thomas Adams of Rodborough, advocated the necessity of sanctification and good works for the believer. Cennick, Francis Pugh, Edward Godwin, William Cudworth, George Cross and others considered that righteousness was solely by imputation, and that since Christ was the believer's whole righteousness, holiness and redemption, the moral law was not necessary for Christians.[27] Further evidence of a considerable rift appeared in the *Christian History*, of 1744-45, where the "Blood and Wounds" teaching of the Moravians increasingly punctuated the

letters of Cennick and his allies. In August 1745, Cross wrote to Cennick in London that he had encountered much opposition in Gloucestershire and that one opponent had declared to two of the societies there, that he, Cross, preached "damnable doctrine, and that you [Cennick], Bro. Godwin, Thorne, and I, and Bro. Pugh...worshipped the Body of Jesus; which. he said, was Idolatry." In heavily Moravian terminology, Cross concluded: "I am Joyful in the Lamb, who is my Great Salvation; and your happy Brother in His bloody Wounds."[28].

Whitefield's response to the news of this secession is illuminating. In reply to a series of letters from England, he firmly declared his support for Harris, Adams and Jenkins and against the "Antinomianism" of Cennick and his followers. On March 12, 1745/6 he wrote to John Syms, (perhaps with his own experience of the excesses of the New England Awakening in mind) expressing his fears at the consequences of teaching a doctrinal antinomianism:

> "The divisions at ye Tabernacle and els-where by no means surprise me - The fire lay under the embers and near ready to break out before I left England as far as I can judge Dear Br Cennick, Hammond, Pugh, Godwin and Cudworth are verging very much towards wt may properly be called at least *Speculative Antinomianism* It will be no wonder if many of ye *Young ones* slip into what is worse I mean *practical Antinomianism* and turn in short time *Ranters*. This was what happened about a hundred years agoe and Satan seems to be permitted to sift ye Church in like manner now."[29].

Letters to Cennick, Jenkins, Adams and Howel Harris reflect a similar view.[30].

After the departure first of Cennick in 1745 and then Harris in 1750, the remaining societies stayed faithful to their Calvinist roots. The Rodborough Tabernacle (Gloucestershire) of Thomas Adams was typical in its continuing adherence to "the Calvinistic principles

pursued and upheld by the late Rev. George Whitefield, according to the doctrines contained in the articles of the Church of England."[31].

3. Structure and Organisation.

If the Calvinistic Methodists were relatively united in doctrine, they also possessed an organisational structure, which, when supplied with effective leadership, worked reasonably successfully. The recent publication of the surviving "London Tabernacle Minutes" and the "English Calvinistic Methodist Association Minutes 1745-49" have disclosed the structure and scope of Calvinistic Methodist influence in the 1740s, sufficiently to qualify the commonly accepted myth that "George Whitefield inspired the Methodists and John Wesley organised them".[32]. In the first couple of decades after their establishment the Calvinistic Methodists seem to have been better known and more numerous than the Wesleyans. Later in the century, although no longer in Connexion, they continued to hold their own in the areas in which they had been planted. In the returns of Dissenters made to the Bishop of London in 1766-1790 "Methodist meeting houses" (i.e. Calvinistic Methodist) were carefully distinguished from "Wesleyan meeting houses" and in numbers they were at least equal.[33].

Moreover, in the early years Whitefield's Connexion was in many ways further organizationally developed than Wesley's, with considerable evidence that between 1741-49 it was run with a firm structure of local societies and Tabernacles which were united together not merely by allegiance to Whitefield's charismatic

ministry, but by a series of regular Associations and by a clearly defined system of circuits for the intinerant preachers. In addition it was served by regularly published and distributed newspapers and a regular series of Letter Days, all of which helped to maintain a sense of unity within the movement.

The Calvinistic Methodist newspapers are a testimony to the fraternal cohesion of the Connexion, particularly in the early 1740s.[34] The original idea of setting up an evangelical newspaper was conceived before the doctrinal divisions emerged. On February 22nd, 1739, for example, we hear of a proposal for such a venture in one of William Seward's letters to James Hutton,[35] Whitefield's publisher, but nothing came of the scheme until after Seward's return from America in the summer of 1740, by which time James Hutton had begun to side with the Moravians against Whitefield's growing attachment to Calvinism. At this point Seward - whether acting on Whitefield's instructions is not clear - seems to have encouraged a London printer and Methodist, John Lewis [36] to start up *The Christian's Amusement*. The paper soon began to reflect the Calvinistic influence of Seward, expressing its strong adherence to the "doctrines of grace". By the time of the penultimate issue, just prior to Whitefield's return, Lewis indicated that his "Arminian Readers" had all left him, owing to the consistently Calvinistic stance of the letters and editorials.[37] The paper continued, despite Seward's death in late 1740, but on Whitefield's return to England it abruptly ceased. Significantly, only two weeks later a new paper, *The Weekly History*, was published, with Lewis still the printer but proudly announcing that it emerged "By the Encouragement of the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD". Whatever private role Whitefield had exercised in

the forming of its predecessor, he now offered his full support to *The Weekly History* which was enumerated Vol 1, as if to emphasise that *it* was the first official Calvinistic Methodist newspaper.[38] Whitefield was highly conscious of the importance of the press and his decision to support *The Weekly History* was a definite step towards strengthening the Calvinistic branch of the Revival. The paper became the official mouthpiece of Calvinistic Methodism and in its early issues helped increase the sense of a separate identity apart from the Wesleys, which Whitefield and his followers now felt. The *Weekly History* helped familiarise readers with the growth of the work in England, Wales and Scotland as well as giving a sense of transatlantic perspective by offering detailed accounts of the Awakening in America. The paper was widely distributed. It reached Wales, achieved a wide circulation among the English societies, was popular in London, and was used by evangelical clergymen to stir up their flocks. Copies reached the Colonies and Scotland, where it inspired the setting up a Scottish equivalent, the *Glasgow Weekly History*, which cannibalized some of its material.[39]

In November 1742, *The Weekly History* changed its name again to become *An Account of the Most Remarkable Particulars Relating to the Present Progress of the Gospel.*[40] By this time the inital energy of the Calvinist Methodist revival had diminished, and both the revivals in Scotland and the American colonies had passed their peak. Noticeably, the bulk of material in the new magazine was now concentrated upon the work in England and Wales. The impression conveyed is one of the increasing systematisation of the movement, parallelling that of Wesley's Connexion. There were clearly defined preaching circuits for the itinerants, and Associations (meetings of

the preachers and exhorters), both in Wales and England - set up on a quarterly basis at London, Bristol, Wiltshire and Gloucester.[41] The penultimate form of Lewis' paper, *The Christian History*, was a continuation of *The Account*, and continued from late 1743 until the end of 1745. Its files reflect both the increasing organisation of the movement under Harris's direction, as well as the beginnings of doctrinal disagreements, as Cennick and several others adopted quasi-Moravian doctrines concerning the blood and wounds of Christ. By now the enterprise was running into difficulties, partly as a result of John Lewis' financial burdens, and partly because the departure of Cennick and about 400 others to the Moravians depleted its readership. The *Christian History* was discontinued during 1746, but took a final form in 1747, re-adopting the old title of The Christian History.[42] In its pages one can see the movement's yearning for Whitefield's return, but upon his arrival in London on July 3rd, 1748, its publication was abruptly teminated.

Another expedient used to maximise the sense of common Calvinistic Methodist purpose was the system of Letter Days, in which letters from leading correspondents, either in Scotland, America, England or Wales, were read out to the societies, dramatically describing the spread of the Gospel. This institution was taken over by Whitefield from the Moravians. In a letter to the Welsh Methodists in December 1741:

> "I am now about to settle a monthly meeting in Bristol and London where correspondents' letters are to be read and prayer made accordingly."[43]

There is clear evidence to suggest that these were kept regularly, at least until Whitefield's return from America in 1748. *The Account..of the Progress of the Gospel* contained the following extract:

> "Monday Feb 14th [1743] was the Monthly Letter Day at the Tabernacle where letters were read out from many correspondents concerning the Success of the Gospel in various parts and a verse or two sung at the end of each Letter. The Rev. Mr. Whitefield read the letters and began and ended with an exhortation suitable to the occasion."[44]

Here we see Whitefield, the transatlantic evangelist, stirring up his own congregation at the Tabernacle to pray for the continuance of the general spread of the gospel. Four years later, it is evident that the practice continued, for an entry in the *Tabernacle Minutes* clearly states that:

> "Letter Days, lovefeasts, collection to the poor and candles, etc. are regularly observed and all the orders punctually kept till this time, December 20 1747."[45]

This practice was continued at the London Tabernacle under Whitefield's overall supervision until his final years in England, long after the Connexion as a whole had officially ceased to function. As late as August 1767, Whitefield wrote, to the young Rowland Hill - later to achieve national fame at Surrey Chapel - "thousands of prayers were put up for you last Monday, at tabernacle letter-day";[46] emphasising that strong fraternal ties still existed within Calvinistic Methodism as a whole.

The focal point of the movement's organisation in the 1740s, was the London Tabernacle and Society at Moorfields. The construction of the large wooden Tabernacle in the spring-summer of 1741 owed its inspiration less to Whitefield than to Calvinistic Dissenters, who supported his ministry. The situation of the Tabernacle, provocatively close to the Wesley's Foundery, was not Whitefield's choice, but that of his supporters, who wanted to provide a deliberate Calvinistic alternative to the Arminian teaching close by.[47] The name "Tabernacle", imitated by other societies in the province, was chosen by Whitefield to emphasize the essential mobility and

pragmatism of the movement. The main Tabernacle building was completed by the summer of 1741 and, with its accompanying Society, was to provide the centre of Calvinistic Methodist operations until replaced by the new brick Tabernacle in 1753.

Unlike the Tabernacle, the Society itself was not open to the public. Society members were received only after strict examination of their spiritual state and were given tickets of admission, which needed to be renewed every three months. In common with the Societies established by Whitefield and Wesley in 1739, the Tabernacle society contained many of the innovations introduced by the Moravian brethren such as the Lovefeast and the dividing of the members up into small bands. In the summer of 1741 Howel Harris described the system which had evolved:

> "The Single Men meet together in Bands, and the married too apart, and once a week they all meet together, and I among them once a week. Also the Visiter or Leader of every Band meet the Minister so that he thereby knows the state of every one. The same order is also observed among the Women, and once a week again the Men and Women Bands meet all together."[48].

This basic order seems to have been imitated in the other Calvinistic Methodist societies. For example, on a tour of Gloucestershire in the spring of 1743, Whitefield preached at Painswick, after which he "met the different Classes of the Societies" there.[49].

The continuity of this basic system is evident from the minutes of the English Calvinistic Methodist Association. In 1749, after all the upheavals of the Moravian secession in 1745-46 and with Whitefield back home from America, it was agreed that the Connexion would "..go on with the Tabernacle plan as before settled by Mr. Whitefield at the beginning, vizt", with letter days, love feasts, and tickets needed for entry to the private society, all still in use.[50].

If the organizational structure of Calvinistic Methodism was similar to its Wesleyan equivalent, its geographical influence was dissimilar. Whereas the Wesleyans were at this point strongest in the north-east of England, Cornwall and parts of the Midlands, the Calvinists were strongest in Gloucestershire, parts of Essex, around Birmingham and in the dockyard towns of Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth. Both groups were very active in London and the Bristol area.

In Bristol, where Whitefield's ministry had borne such fruit in 1737 and 1739, many of his spiritual children preferred to stay with the Wesleys. Nevertheless, when Whitefield revisited Bristol in the late spring of 1741, he gathered many former converts and new supporters and a substantial group of Calvinistic Methodists began to meet in new premises in Smith's Hall. Both at Kingswood and in Wiltshire, John Cennick brought his societies under the umbrella of Calvinistic Methodism. Many of these had a close personal link to Cennick, their spiritual father, and followed him in joining the Moravians in 1746. Yet during the period of Cennick's association with the Calvinistic Methodists, Whitefield and several other preachers frequently ministered in Wiltshire and when the split came it was with Whitefield that several of the societies chose to stay: in 1747 there were five societies and four to five preaching places still in the Connexion in the county.[51] In nearby Gloucestershire, where Whitefield himself had begun a society as early as 1736, several Calvinistic Methodist societies were formed in 1741-2. In the city of Gloucester and the surrounding areas, a combination of Whitefield converts from 1737-9, new converts and Calvinistic Dissenters comprised the majority of the membership.[52] An important new

society was established at Minchinhampton, home of Thomas Adams, who was converted by hearing Whitefield preach in 1739, and was himself to become one of the leading preachers in the Connexion. By 1747 there were four societies and seven preaching places in Whitefield's home county.[53]

Whitefield was to make new inroads in the South-West, first at Exeter in 1743,[54] and particularly at Plymouth in 1744, where he was waiting to embark for his third trip to the American colonies. When his ship delayed, the evangelist, ever one to use an opportunity to preach the gospel, preached to large crowds both in Plymouth itself and at the Dock. A number of converts were gathered, and societies established in both places.[55] Whitefield's success in the South-West was followed up by Cennick, who reported preaching to "many thousands of serious souls" on Plymouth Dock. From Cennick's account of his ministry there, many of the hearers and eventual converts were clearly Dissenters: he makes frequent reference to different sorts of Nonconformists, including Baptists and Quakers.[56] After Cennick's departure for the Moravians Thomas Adams continued the work amidst heavy opposition and persecution from the mob and by 1747 societies had been established at Exeter, Kingsbridge, Mary Church and Bovey.[57] In 1748, following his return from the colonies, Whitefield returned to Plymouth, remarking upon how the harvest had grown in his absence, with 2000 attending his evening meetings and 5000 gathering to hear him in the fields.[58] He continued to itinerate in the South-West after his decision to relieve himself of official leadership responsibilities for the movement, but, with increasing commitments elsewhere, and with his own health declining, it seems unlikely that he was able to satisfy the demand from the societies.

The early base of Calvinistic Methodism was thus an area stretching from London (with societies at the Tabernacle and Deptford) and thence West into Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Bristol, and the South-West, strengthened through geographical, doctrinal and personal links with the societies in South Wales from which energetic Welsh preachers - Howel Harris, Herbert Jenkins and James Beaumont- made regular preaching tours among the English Societies. Most of the itinerants who wrote letters in the Lewis papers were located in this area between London, South Wales and South West. The movement was relatively weak in the North and the South-East. There were societies in Staffordshire and the West Midlands, and a few preaching places in Kent and Essex, but not one of the thirty-one societies and preaching places listed in 1747 were in the North.[59] This distribution of strength largely reflects the preaching circuits of Whitefield and his main itinerants. Between 1741-44 Whitefield concentrated his efforts on London, the area around Bristol and Gloucestershire (the centre of his ministry in 1737-39), as well as expanding into Wiltshire and the South-West. Cennick's influence in Wiltshire is obvious, and Harris preached in the same area between Bristol the South-West and London. Other individuals similarly influenced their locality. Thomas Adams was the founding father of the Rodborough Society and Tabernacle, whereas the society at Chinner probably reflected the presence of Joseph Humphreys, whose father's meeting house was at Burford.

The care of this extensive network devolved upon Whitefield and the associated preachers and exhorters. A.A. Dallimore has listed more than fifty men who served in this capacity at one time or other between 1741-48.[60] In November 1747 a list was drawn up at the Gloucester Association and recorded in the *Tabernacle Minutes*, which

divided the workers into three groups: seventeen stewards who were assigned to the care of fourteen particular local societies, and including Andrew Kinsman at Plymouth and Whitefield's old friend Gabriel Harris at Gloucester and Apperly; eleven "publick preachers" who were to "go about continually", including Howel Harris and James Beaumont in both England and Wales, and nine others, including Thomas Adams, James Relly and Edward Godwin, who were largely confined to England and a third group of eleven "private exhorters", whose duties were to "go about occasionally and assist as far as is consistent with their calling and places."[61] This was a flexible structure which allowed for the emergence of gifted young preachers, a fact which, combined with the defection of Cennick and others, meant that the leadership team varied considerably from 1741-49. But this system of full and part-time itinerant preachers and local stewards had all the potential vitality of the New Testament structure of travelling apostles, with local elders and deacons, and was the potential basis for a fully autonomous group of churches, had Whitefield decided to break with the Established Church, and devote his attention to organisation and church planting, as well as evangelism.

Further to unite the societies, quarterly associations were held alternately at London, Bristol, Wiltshire and Gloucester, each Association having a Superintendent, responsible for oversight of the various Exhorters and Stewards. At these associations, decisions were made on a wide range of issues, including doctrine and who was to preach in which societies over the following months. In 1743, Whitefield was asked to help sort in the adjudication of problems in the Welsh movement, and at two associations at Waterford closer ties were established between both the English and Welsh movements by the

formation of "The Calvinistic Methodist Association". Whitefield was appointed Moderator, Harris was to act in his absence and arrangements were made to hold Association meetings at regular intervals. Here as elsewhere the Calvinists preceded the Wesleyans: as Luke Tyerman, Wesleys Victorian biographer admitted "It is a notable fact that the first Calvinistic Methodist Association was held eighteen months before Wesley held his first Methodist Conference."[62.]

With the departure of Howel Harris in 1750 into the seclusion of Trevecka, however, the movement lost one of its greatest organisers, and the offical records, both of the Association and the Tabernacle, ceased. But the central problem of Calvinistic Methodism lay not in the creation of a viable organisation - that was accomplished rapidly and painlessly - but in providing the leadership - to give it the firm direction which John Wesley provided so effectively for his parallel movement. In 1749, when Whitefield decided to relieve himself of overall responsibility for the movement, and when Harris' departure deprived him of a most able successor, the Connexion formally ceased to exist. The individual societies continued to maintain a sense of common identity, and in the case of the Rodborough Connexion, to operate under a joint organisational framework. But, without the necessary direction from above, the movement quickly lost its cohesiveness. Instead of forming a powerful new denomination like Wesleyan Methodism of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales, the English Calvinistic Societies, began to drift towards Nonconformity.

4. Leadership.

The key to the ultimate "failure" of Calvinistic Methodism as a united organisation was largely due to Whitefield's own evaluation of his priorities. In 1748-49, he clearly considered his wider role as inter-confessional evangelist to be incompatible with his leadership of a separate movement. This was a momentous decision with many consequential results, not all of them calculable. As Tyerman stressed: "it is impossible to conceive what would have been the result if Whitefield and Harris had continued active chiefs of Calvinistic Methodism."[63]

It seems that Whitefield's leadership of Calvinistic Methodism between 1741-48 was partly forced upon him by the undesired split with the Wesleys. Without this division, it seems very likely that he would have been content to have delegated the work of supervising and organising the societies to John Wesley, as indeed he had done in 1739, first in Bristol and then in London. In 1739 Whitefield had left a relatively united English revival, having entrusted his societies in London and Bristol to the care of the Wesleys: he returned in 1741, to find, to his dismay, that many of his former converts and supporters now shunned him. As he himself wrote sadly in March 1741,

> "many, very many of my spiritual children, who, at my last departure from England, would have plucked out their own eyes to have given to me, are so prejudiced by the dear Messrs W[esley]'s dressing up the doctrine of election in such horrible colours, that they will neither hear, see nor give me the least assistance...I am now constrained, on account of our differing principles, publicly to separate from my dear, dear old friends Messrs John and Charles Wesley...But...a few days ago, in reading Beza's *Life of Calvin*, these words were much pressed upon me, 'Calvin is turned out of Geneva, but behold, a new church arises!'...My friends are erecting a place for me, which I have called a *Tabernacle*, for morning's exposition."[64]

Thus the need for a separate branch of Calvinistic Methodism was created partly by a desire to regain a ministerial base in England (many of his former converts and colleagues having joined the Wesleys) and partly because of pressure from many Methodists of a Calvinist persuasion who felt alienated from the direction of the societies now led by the Arminian Wesleys.

Having been cast into this role as head of the new organisation, Whitefield accepted the responsibility to a degree, but his absences in Scotland in 1741 and 1742, together with his long stay in America between 1744-48 and his own clearly stated preference for itinerant evangelism rather than for administration or pastoral care meant that the burden of running the organisation usually fell on others. Howel Harris was frequently called upon to minister at the Tabernacle in Whitefield's absences, as was John Cennick, until his departure in 1745.

Though Whitefield was reluctant to offer direction to the movement, others sought his leadership as a revered and generous-hearted founding father of the Revival. While Whitefield called upon assistants to help oversee the work in England, during his frequent absences in Scotland and America and his wider itinerating in England and Wales he himself was called in to give his counsel to the Calvinistic Methodist movement in Wales. His contribution to Welsh Methodism, although brief, further highlights his potential as leader of a joint English-Welsh movement. In December 1741 he wrote an important letter to the Welsh Brethren in which he laid down a number of principles - such as the difference between public preachers and private exhorters, the need for letter days, monthly meetings and attitudes towards the Church of England and the Dissenters - which

were subsequently adopted by the Welsh Methodists.[65] On his Welsh tours of 1742 Harris discovered an all but universal desire to break away from the Anglican communion amongst the societies. He called upon Whitefield, a figure with international standing in the revival and an ordained clergyman, to add his authority behind the cause of keeping the societies from secession. "We hope our dear Lord will send you among us", Harris wrote emotionally to his ally, "We are all like little children, not knowing what to do."[66]

Harris's reasons for inviting Whitefield to Wales have been the subject of some debate. It has been suggested that he was called in to act as a buffer between Harris and Daniel Rowland.[67] During the course of 1742 the two Welsh leaders had been in dispute, notably over the issue of assurance, Harris regarding assurance as essential to salvation, Rowland arguing that it was possible to be a Christian without being fully assured of the fact.[68] But as Harris's recent biographer has argued, such disagreements had not yet led to a permanent weakening of their friendship nor to a formal split. Harris's invitation to Whitefield was more likely to have been motivated "not by a desire to hinder Rowland, but by a belief that Whitefield would bring prestige to the movement."[69] At a time when many of the societies were threatening to secede, his presence was needed to hold the movement together. As a layman Harris was limited in his authority, while Rowlands, an ordained clergyman, had both advantages and drawbacks. As a priest in the established Church he could not command the allegiance of Dissenters as well as Anglicans, and as a parish minister he could not devote himself fully to the task, not least because he was currently in difficulties with his Bishop who was threatening to turn him out of his living.

Whitefield, as a Calvinist, and as an Anglican who was nonetheless persona grata with many Dissenters, seemed the obvious choice to give the movement extra authority, not least because - as an Englishman - he stood outside some of the tensions of the local Welsh scene.

Whitefield finally arrived in Wales after his second visit to Scotland and was present as Moderator of an Association held at Waterford, South Wales on January 5th-6th, 1743 [70]. and a further meeting held there three months later. His presence seems to have assisted the smooth running of the Association, perhaps partly because his English would not have been understood by many of the "humbler brethren", which may have lessened the likelihood of disputes.[71]. But although Whitefield played a magisterial role in these early proceedings, the overall running of the organisation was left to Harris. Whitefield's main influence seems to have been as an impressive and eirenical figurehead. His greatest impact in the short-term remained that exercised through his preaching rather than his organisational abilities. Both Harris and Whitefield make mention of his visits to Wales in the first half of 1743 and both emphasise the effects of his preaching at the Associations and in South Wales in general, rather than any specific organisational role.[72]. But in the long run the significance of Whitefield's visit was perhaps far greater. In he opinion of one historian of Welsh Methodism, D. E. Jenkins, Whitefield made an important stamp on the movement at a plastic stage of its development. He had just returned from Scotland, where he had described "Presbytery as the best ordered national Church", and in Jenkins' opinion:

> "The whole future of Welsh Methodism was fashioned in its outward affairs on the model it has since assumed, by reason of Whitefield's regard for the form of Church Government obtaining in Scotland, slightly modified by the influences which were at

work in Wales through the early intercourse between the Baptists and Independents and the leaders of the Welsh Methodist revival."[73].

Whitefield's decision to return to America in 1744 left the Calvinistic Methodists in England without their founder and natural leader. John Cennick was given care of the Tabernacle and the Connexion. It was apparently the burden of responsibility as much as doctrinal division which eventually drove Cennick to join the Moravians in December 1745. While at the Gloucester Association meeting in September, he had related to Harris the acute sense of inadequacy he felt in trying to fill Whitefield's place at the Tabernacle. He had also been upset by the misbehaviour of some members and upon seeking the advice of the Moravians, they suggested that he share his responsibilities with Harris; but by the time of the Welshman's return in November, it became apparent that Cennick had decided to join the Moravians.[74]. Several other preachers and an estimated 400 members eventually followed him, a severe blow to a Society which had numbered just in excess of 1100 in 1742.[75]. The Baptist minister, Sheep, also left, and began to preach against the Methodists. Not surprisingly, Harris expressed his fear that a "party spirit" had come in "some for going to the Dissenters, some to the Moravians, and the Tabernacle torn to pieces."[76]. A few months later the situation had somewhat improved. In August 1746 Harris wrote to Whitefield informing him that the Tabernacle was "crowded on Sabbath Days...and on other Days ye Congregations are large". In Wiltshire, where Cennick had been so influential, several of the societies had decided to remain in the Connexion, "ye Generality of ye People not approving of the Moravians;" in Gloucestershire there was "no Division, only a Deadness", but Bristol and Kingswood were

"unsettled" by Cennick's defection. Harris's purpose in writing was partly to persuade Whitefield to return speedily from America, and he felt it necessary to inform him of "ye Loud Calls ye Earnest cries of ye People in general for yr coming, how you wd be more recd than ever sure you cd not stay away longer wn you are pray'd for ye Place rings wth Amens."[77].

Such a situation left Harris with the unenviable task of holding together a movement which eagerly awaited its leader's return. The fact that Whitefield preferred to continue as an itinerant in America for two years after the traumatic secession of Cennick and his supporters, reflects the problems inherent in Whitefield's joint role as both itinerant evangelist and Moderator of his own Connexion. Despite the defection of Cennick and his group, Calvinistic Methodism was still a force to be reckoned with, with 31 societies and 27 preaching places. Whitefield's first task on his return to America was to deal with what he considered to be the indiscipline of some of the younger exhorters. The Minutes for the first Association on his return held at London on 20 July 1748 reported that:

> "as he [Whitefield] had seen so much confusion by young mens going rashly out beyond their line, he was determined not to labour with any that would not shew a teachable mind and willingness to submitt...though he hated to affect to be head. ...And each of the brethren answered and declared their willingness to submitt to use all means for improvement, etc. - having been before convinced of the absolute necessity of it, and look on themselves as helps and on him as a father."[78].

This willingness to impose discipline reflects the lessons which Whitefield had learned on his third trip to the colonies, during which he had observed the antics of James Davenport and others who had brought the Awakening into great disrepute through their enthusiasm and censoriousness. Whitefield evidently desired to avoid similar

excesses in his own network in England and, no doubt with the memory of the Moravian split firmly in his mind, to avoid the propagation of erroneous teaching.

Nonetheless, Whitefield decided to step down from his leadership of Calvinistic Methodism. Various explanations have been put forward to explain this decision. Was he moved by his long-standing hope of becoming a bishop? It has been suggested by C. E. Watson that until the untimely death of the Prince of Wales in 1751 he had high hopes of a promotion to the episcopal bench, and that by becoming the Countess of Huntingdon's chaplain in 1748, and officially resigning his position as Moderator of Calvinistic Methodism, he was endeavouring to present himself as a viable candidate.[79]. There is certainly evidence, particularly in Harris's Journals, that both Whitefield and the Countess thought that they might induce the Prince, a Methodist sympathiser, to influence the King on their behalf. In March 1744, for example, Harris reported how the Prince had promised the Countess that there would not be persecution in either his father's reign or his own and encouraged "the Methodists making an address to the King". In the same month, the Prince told the Countess that he thought the Methodists were "honest men", and considered it "a pity [they]..were turned out of the Churches". Harris added hopefully that "the Prince seems to be under a concern."[80]. But there is little direct evidence to suggest that this vague hope was decisive in Whitefield's decision to abandon the direction of Calvinistic Methodism in 1748-49. Watson can offer no better evidence than Whitefield's comment on the Prince's death: "it hath given me a shock".[81].

Luke Tyerman surmised that both Whitefield and the Countess, (at the latter's suggestion) had decided to devote their energies to reviving the Church of England from within, Whitefield's role being that of attracting and converting clergymen, while the Countess was to procure them ordination and use her wealth and influence to build them chapels. Unfortunately however, as Tyerman himself admits, direct evidence for the existence of such a scheme is "wanting".[62] Instead of such hypothesizing, we can find more obvious reasons for Whitefield's decision in his letter to Wesley of September 1, 1748. The foremost of these was that his "attachment to America", meant that he would be frequently absent from England; and that if he continued to form societies, he did not have the "proper assistants to take care to them" - a clear reference to his disillusionment with his co-workers, and particularly with the young exhorters. But of greatest significance was his decision "to go about preaching the gospel to every creature";[63] the recognition that his primary calling was as an itinerant evangelist rather than an organisational head of a separate movement.

Whitefield seems to have tried a number of alternatives in order to keep the Connexion together. At the London Association of April 27th, 1749, it was agreed "That Mr. Harris will take oversight of the Tabernacle and other English societies and preachers."[64] Harris seems to have been agreeable to this suggestion and at a further association at London in September, the minutes included the following resolution:

> "Mr. Whitefield having declared his conviction to go about preaching the gospel all over the nation at home and abroad as he is called and not to take the immediate care of any place, but having committed the care of his labours in England to Brother Harris, and the other brethren to assist each other according to his ability, he owns himself in connexion with the brethren in

> this branch and to do all he can to help carrying on the work here suitable with his general plan and his care of the Orphan House, etc."[65].

Here we see Whitefield continuing to associate himself with Calvinistic Methodism but effectively relinquishing overall leadership responsiblity to Harris.

Unfortunately, this coincided with the beginnings of a serious split between Harris and the Welsh Methodist leaders. Although Harris' doctrinal stance had already begun to isolate him, it was his relationship Mrs Sydney Griffith, wife of a drunken Welsh squire, which finally made his leadership of the movement untenable. The two first met in 1748, but Harris' attachment to her and his growing belief in her "prophetic" gifts, quickly began to attract public attention and threatened to bring the whole movement into disrepute. It soon affected Whitefield's assessment of his suitability as his successor. By the time Harris turned up in London in December 1749, accompanied by both Mrs Griffith and his wife (who, according to Mrs. Griffith was soon to die, along with *her* husband, thus clearing the way for her to marry Harris), Mrs. Whitefield, one of Harris's old flames, refused to allow him his lodgings at the Tabernacle. More seriously, her husband did not proffer his customary invitation for the Welshman to preach in his pulpit. A few days later the two men clashed over Whitefield's hesitation in accepting Harris's offer to take over the Tabernacle in his absence: the reason given was that Sydney Griffith's presence as his companion was unacceptable not only to Whitefield but to many others who had complained to him about her.[66]. At the end of the month, still with no invitation to preach, Harris declared that he had been "turned out" of the Tabernacle, and parted amicably from Whitefield.[67]. By the summer of

1750 Harris had virtually separated from the Welsh Methodists. He withdrew to his home at Trevecka, where for fifteen years he led a Christian community, "the Family".

Thus Whitefield was deprived of his most obvious successor. Though he offered the leadership to Adams and James Relly jointly, they refused, apparently feeling that only a person of Whitefield's standing and charisma could hold the movement together.[88].

There is some evidence that Whitefield tried to secure the Countess of Huntingdon's oversight of the societies. This plan, according to her biographer, Seymour, was attempted in the winter of 1749, and was "the *only* he ever laid for perpetuating them." He apparently informed Lady Fanny Shirley that he had disengaged himself from the immediate care of the Societies, in order more freely to itinerate, urging the Countess as the most suitable person to take on the task from him, since she possessed influence at Court, which she had exercised successfully on behalf of the sufferers in the Cork riots. "All this", remarks Seymour rather cryptically. "and the want of a *leader*, led him to seek her patronage, especially for his Societies in the west end of town."[89]. Whitefield seems to have broached the idea at the Tabernacle, where it seems to have been well received. In the event, little seems to have come of this scheme, although there is scant evidence of why this was so.

After Harris' defection, the evidence for the course of Calvinistic Methodism rapidly diminishes and the picture becomes more obscure. Not only were the *English Calvinistic Methodist Minutes* not kept up, but we are deprived of the accounts of Harris' visits to London provided by his voluminous diaries. Since no obvious leader

now remained, it appears that the various societies were left in the care of different preachers. Whitefield seems to have stuck to his role as inter-confessional evangelist, and although he continued to preach at the London Tabernacle and at the other societies when present, he spent most of his time itinerating throughout England and Scotland. In England he stuck by his goal to remain free from any "party" attachments. His sincerity is evident in his determination not to set up Calvinistic Methodist societies in Ireland which might seem to be a rival to Wesley's. As he wrote to one of his Irish supporters in June 1752:

> "I hate to head a party, and that is absolutely inconsistent with my other business, to take upon me the care of societies in various parts. I therefore cannot promise to come to Ireland for that purpose, neither do I intend to engage in building any houses."[90].

This did not mean either the end of his involvement with Calvinistic Methodism, or that the movement disintegrated. In London in particular, he regularly spent the winter months ministering at the Tabernacle and, from 1756, at the Chapel at Tottenham Court, apparently retaining a pastoral oversight of both places. In 1751-53 he became involved in a scheme to rebuild the London Tabernacle and to erect a similar structure at Bristol. In a similar plan in 1756 "to have a pulpit in the fashionable quarter of London" he helped in the erection of the Tottenham Court Chapel. One historian - C.E. Watson - has found it hard to reconcile this activity with Whitefield's decision to relinquish control of the movement, commenting: "This building of new Tabernacles marks, of course, a modification of Whitefield's declaration that he was not out to form Societies or lead a party."[91]. However, the building of the Tabernacles did not necessarily imply a reversal of his previous

decision, for this did not involve Whitefield in any form of continuous, day to day control of the movement; he continued to itinerate as freely after 1753 as before. The scheme for the rebuilding of Moorfields seems to have been largely the result of practical considerations, for the old wooden structure had suffered at the hands of a decade of winters. Moreover, it seems to have been largely at the initiative of the Countess that the rebuilding proceeded, with the approval of men such as James Hervey, and Drs. Doddridge and Stonehouse. The building of the Bristol Tabernacle was likewise largely made possible through the generous contributions of the Countess and her friends.[92] The new brick Tabernacle at Moorfields was constructed around the old wooden frame, and was completed on June, 10, 1753. Capable of seating 4000, it was regularly filled to capacity and continued to serve, along with Tottenham Court Chapel, as the centre of Whitefield's ministry, when resident in London. At Bristol, the Tabernacle was opened on December 1st, 1753, thus providing a continuing base for Whitefield and the other Calvinistic preachers.

The erection of the chapel at Tottenham Court Road likewise did not imply any fundamental change of leadership style or direction. It was stimulated by the need to provide a secure and permanent base for Whitefield's ministry in the West End. He had begun preaching in the nearby chapel of Long Acre, now in possession of one of his early converts, the Rev. John Barnard, now an Independent minister. It was licensed and Whitefield was invited to preach there twice weekly, with permission to use the Liturgy if he so desired. This he did, preaching there for the first time on December 23th, 1755. The location of Long Acre, in the West End, was its main usefulness,

serving as a base for Whitefield's wealthy hearers, particularly those associated with the Countess of Huntingdon. Shortly after beginning his ministry there, however, a conspiracy was set on foot to drive the mission out of the area. A mob began assembling outside the chapel to disrupt the services by noise, and to insult the preacher and congregation after service was over. So persistent were the attacks that an alternative solution was found.

Hence, in early June, 1756, the foundation stone was laid for a permanent West-end chapel at Tottenham Court Road. The original intention had been to place it under the personal protection of the Countess, (hence its designation as a "chapel"), but this application was turned down. Thus, in Whitefield's own words, there was only one way left: "to license it as our other houses are; and thanks be to Jesus for that liberty which we have!"[93]. With the contributions of his illustrious friends the building work was completed rapidly and on Novemeber 7th, 1756, the chapel was opened for divine worship according to the forms of the Church of England, Whitefield preaching from I *Chronicle*s iii 11. The original building was a double brick construction, with a 70 square feet interior. In 1758 twelve almshouses and a chapel-house for the minister, were added. However, such was the number of persons wishing to attend that a large extension was built, resulting in a total edifice of 70 feet wide, 127 feet long, and 114 feet high at the top of the dome, able to accomodate between 3,000-4,000 people. The Chapel was designed to be served by Anglican clergy only, a limitation particularly designed to accomodate Whitefield's aristocratic hearers. Significantly, no dissenter or layman was asked to minister there until nine years after its opening. The problems of supplying a regular Anglican ministry

at Tottenham Court Road exacerbated the problems created by Whitefield's determination to continue as an itinerant. In August 1762, for example, he received a letter from an assistant referring to the continued successful work at the Chapel, but adding: "I believe the People will keep together in your absence if you can but get a proper pastor."[94]. His absences imposed some strain on the loyalty of his followers. Two years later, a constant attender at the Chapel, wrote to him that:

> "The Chaple keeps together to Admiration. Your sending us a letter as often as you can may be a Means of keeping them together."[95].

It seems clear that despite his relinquishing of control of the Connexion in 1748-49 Whitefield continued to exercise a considerable measure of oversight over both the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Chapel. His letters of 1761-62 reveal how, with his failing health, "London cares and London labours" were an increasing burden to him, and this, combined with his decision to make what he believed perhaps his final tour across the Atlantic, made him decide to commit the future care of both the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road to three trustees, Robert Keen, Charles Hardy and a Mr Beckman in January 1763.[96]. He did return to England in 1765 and continued to minister in both places, but he was increasingly forced to rely upon laymen to assist. In August 1767 he wrote to Thomas Adams, how "though laymen occupy the pulpits, at Tottenham Court chapel and tabernacle, congregations increase."[97]. He made his final voyage to America in September 1769, but to the last seems to have been anxious for the welfare of the London congregations, writing to Robert Keen: "let all means be used to keep up and increase Tottenham Court and Tabernacle Societies."[98]. Outside London, however, though he kept some kind of

general oversight on his preaching tours through England and Wales, he largely left the affairs of the provincial societies under the care of individual preachers or stewards, such as Thomas Adams at Rodborough, or Andrew Kinsman at Plymouth.

5. From Society to Sect.

The break-up of the Connexion merely hastened the drift towards Dissent. Although originally seen as Anglican, by the time of Whitefield's death many societies had already slipped into Nonconformity. This had never been his intention. The societies had been established, (much as the earlier ones in 1737 and 1739) to gather new converts and provide them with evangelical preaching and close fellowship, largely unavailable in both the formal Church services, or indeed in the the majority of the existing older religious societies. Yet, from the beginning of the movement there were strong pressures, particularly from Dissenting members, to secure protection under the Toleration Act and to license the Tabernacles and society rooms as Dissenting meeting houses. As early as the summer of 1741 there were plans for the licensing of the London Tabernacle, with the prospect of Joseph Humphreys, himself an ex-student from a Dissenting academy, becoming an Independent pastor of the congregation there. Whitefield wrote to Humphreys expressing his opinion that the plan was premature and that he was "not duly qualified for settling a church." He continued:

> "I must evangelise...you are for settling: do as GOD shall direct. I am easy...I have no freedom, but in going about to all

denominations. I cannot join with any one, so as to be fixed in any particular place. Every one hath his proper gift. *Field preaching* is my plan."[99].

This suggests that Whitefield had no plan for the formation of a separate denomination, but saw roving evangelism as his métier. Howell Harris, a more committed Anglican, was horrified at the possibility of the Tabernacle being licensed and had written to him in Scotland, expressing his strong views on the subject. Whitefield replied, emphasising his firm opposition to any such proposals:

> "I utterly disaprove of lycensing the Tabernacle. If Brother Humphris has done it in his name it is entirely wrong and without my consent. I fear he wants to settle too soon. If he is not satisfied, I had rather he w'd go into the country and settle there...I profess myself a Member of the Church of England, and do not intend going out till I am cast out. I shall not thank those who would turn religion into a Party, Good Lord deliver my soul. I know not that I differ with you in one thing."[100].

This reflects his basic conviction that the Calvinistic Methodist societies were still religious societies of the Church of England, which, despite their enlistment of many Dissenters should remain in the Church until forced to leave.

The pressure to separate, however, remained strong. Humphreys decided to pastor a congregation in Chinnor, while, both from within and without, Dissenters exercised a strong influence on the London Tabernacle. In August 1741, Harris expressed his fear that "the Dissenters have a design...to bring us over to them", stressing once more "that none are fit to be members of this Society, but such as not only have grace, but have freedom to leave his fellow members to enjoy their own private opinions, it being a spiritual Society of various Sects."[101]. By the summer of 1742, the Tabernacle Society had grown to include members of no less than ten different denominations: "Churchmen, Popish, Quakers, Independents, Scotch and English Presbyterians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Jews and Baptists".[102].

With such a broad membership it was clearly only possible for the Society to remain united if it imbibed the "catholic spirit" of Whitefield and Harris, and distinguished generously, as they did, between the essentials of faith and the *adiaphora*.

Yet, while clearly embracing a wide range of opinion, the Calvinistic Methodist Societies remained, with Harris's and Whitefield's encouragement, inside the Church of England. Writing to the Welsh Brethren in December 1741, Whitefield advised the Anglican ministers to stay in the Church of England until cast out, yet also to preach in the fields and even to give the Sacrament to Christians in other parishes "when they cannot have it elsewhere". This might be done, he concluded:

> "without a formal separation from the Established Church, which I cannot think God calls for as yet; only, I think, if a brother or sister has a mind to communicate among the Dissenters, and has freedom to receive in the Church too, they ought to be left at their liberty."[103].

Harris, struggling to keep the Welsh societies in the Church, gratefully followed his advice:

> "We settled, according to Bro. Whitefield's letter, not to go out of the Church till turned out. Such as can't receive the Sacrament in Church to have freedom to go to Meeting to receive, only not to leave us, nor to under any name but a *christian*... I did read the Rules, and agreed to them all."[104].

One of the major reasons for Whitefield's reluctance to leave the Church of England, seems to have been his constant hope that he would be made a Bishop. According to Harris, Whitefield informed him of "all the Scriptures, promises, dreams and providence that have been given him as to his being made Bishop."[105]. At an Association of all the English Brethren in London, August-September 1743 Harris reported that there was a discussion about whether to separate from the Church:

> "Bro. Whitefield and I stood against it, and at length the brethren were reconciled to stay as we are. The debate held long. I said I declared I did not go at first to set up any party but to reform all, and so do now act consistently. God has impressed it on Bro. Whitefield's heart that he shall be a Bishop, and by that means keeping him, too, as he is."[106]

On his return from America in 1748, Whitefield discussed with Harris how to come closer to the Church. "Whitefield declared his affection for the Church" Harris recorded, "and his willingness to comply in anything, even not to preach in the Fields if they let him have the churches."[107] No doubt this decision, as has been suggested, was taken partly to strengthen his case for a bishopric.

There was, however, an equally important reason for Whitefield's decision to stay within the Church of England, which was based on the grounds of evangelistic expediency. As an Anglican minister, he had a far wider potential audience and greater social *cachet* than if he had joined the Dissenters: he carried more conviction in his gown and bands, and certainly greater curiosity value. He also had more freedom of movement than those Dissenting ministers who were confined by their ministrations to a "gathered church". In his account of the London Association in 1743 he wrote how they had "agreed not to separate from the established church, but to go on in our usual way," the reason being that they were of more service "ranging up and down," preaching "to those multitudes who would neither come to church or meeting, but who are led by curiosity to follow us into the fields."[108] In a similar vein Harris had seen the earlier moves to license the Tabernacle as "a trick of Satan that we may be represented as Dissenters that he may keep off all the poor bigotted blind Churchmen from coming to hear."[109]

By 1744 the Methodists were coming under increasing official pressure to leave the Church. Bishop Gibson charged the Methodists with acting like Dissenters and urged them to seek protection under the Toleration Act.[110] Whitefield's defence was swift. The Methodists, he said, were "no sect, no separatists from the established church, neither do they call people from their communion." He acknowledged that some of his fellow-preachers had come from a Dissenting background, had been licensed and preached in licensed meeting houses before their acquaintance with him, and that some of the houses where the Methodists met had, without his knowledge, since been licensed. But the Methodist societies were Anglican religious societies, whose aims were similar to those of Horneck and Woodward, the original founders of the society movement, and the innovations introduced by the Methodists did not alter their status. They did not differ essentially from the existing religious societies in London and Westminster, which still received official approval:

> "If the one read a prayer, may not the other pray extempore? ..If the one meet in a vestry, or private house, may not the other meet in a Foundery or Tabernacle?"[111].

However, despite Whitefield's personal reluctance to leave the Church of England and his hope that the societies would remain within the Established Church, in practice he allowed the individual societies a considerable latitude on the issue of registration under the Toleration Act as Dissenting congregations - a move often hastened by the attentions of hostile mobs who took advantage of the anomalies of their legal status. As early as 1742, Thomas Adams had registered his house at Minchinhampton, and William Hogg, another preacher followed suit at Painswick. During Whitefield's long absence in America in 1744-48 and his withdrawal from leadership of the movement

in 1748-49, the trickle became a steady stream, and by the time of the licensing of Tottenham Court Chapel in 1756 most of the societies had sought similar protection.[112]

One of the best documented cases of the drift to Dissent is that of the Plymouth society, formed after Whitefield's visit to the city in 1744.[113] His converts, led by John Stevens, met at first in two private houses for their meetings, both licensed as dissenting meeting houses under the Toleration Act on October 2, 1744, and then in a new tabernacle, licensed on July 16, 1745. It seems that Stevens was behind the decision to license the meeting houses, for he asked Thomas Adams to license himself as a protestant dissenting minister; Adams did so, with Cennick's approval, and he, Cennick and Herbert Jenkins ministered to the society for a number of years. Together they succeeded in evangelising Plymouth Dock, where they set up another society. Divisions between Calvinists and Arminians, exacerbated by several visits by the Wesleys to the area, resulted in a final split on December 6, 1746, with the Wesleyan group establishing itself at the Dock; in Plymouth, where there was a tradition of Calvinistic Dissent, the society turned to the Whitefieldites. In 1746 Stevens was called from Plymouth to London to begin as an itinerant preacher, and left in charge Andrew Kinsman, a young man who been converted by reading Whitefield's sermons and the seventeenth article of the Church of England in 1740-41.

Kinsman not only became leader of the Plymouth society but also saw Calvinistic Methodist influence return to Devonport [the Dock], and on May 1st, 1753 registered his dwelling place there as a Meeting house. In 1763 Kinsman was ordained as minister of the Plymouth

Tabernacle; hands were laid upon him by two Baptists, by the Congregational minister, Benjamin Fawcett, and by two Methodists. The Tabernacle thus avoided direct connection with any one denomination. Kinsman began to baptise and keep a register of baptisms and from 1768 apparently began to i tinerate for the Calvinistic Methodists, while other itinerants helped supply his place at Plymouth and at the Upper Room at Devonport. Both Plymouth societies ended up in Congregationalism by the end of the century. In 1797 a new Tabernacle was built and licensed as a Congregational Church with its own rules and covenant, its members calling themselves "Independents believing in the fall of man and his recovery by Jesus Christ alone."[114]. In the same year the society at Devonport went a step further, subscribing to the doctrines of the Westminster Assembly.

The transition from religious society to independent congregation, and finally to Congregationalism, was typical of other Calvinistic Methodist societies, although the change was slow. When surveys of the different denominations were made in 1815 and 1848 the Calvinistic or Whitefield Methodists were still included as a distinct group, nonetheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, the churches described themselves as Congregational.[115]. In 1842, an article in *The Church and State Gazette* referred disapprovingly of the way in which "the Whitefieldites, Calvinistic Methodists...are gradually violating the original trusts of the chapels founded by George Whitefield...and are enlisting under the banner of the...[Congregational Union]."[116].

Before then, the majority still preferred to remain independent in what could be described as a departure from Anglicanism, rather

than an active embracing of Congregationalism. In the year after Whitefield's death (1771), Howel Harris described this in his Journal:

> "I find Mr. Whitefield's people have agreed on an Association among themselves and to get Independent Ordination with reading some of the Church prayers with extempore. The door seems open for all to leave the Established Church and to from themselves into Independent Churches over the kingdom."[117]

Harris blamed Whitefield himself for initiating this process through his practice of administering the sacrament in private houses.

Certainly 1771 seems to have been an important turning point in the history of the Dursley Tabernacle, located in the Calvinistic Methodist stronghold of Gloucestershire. The Dursley society first registered a private house in 1755, and a proper meeting house in 1760, moves made necessary by an increasing number of defections from the local Water Street Presbyterian-Independent Chapel. In 1764 the land and buildings of the Tabernacle were vested in Whitefield and other leaders of the Rodborough Connexion. Significantly, one of the three trust conditions stated:

> "That the building should only be used for the word of God and people who profess themselves to be of Calvinistic Principles in Connection with the said George Whitefield according to the doctrines contained in the Articles of the Established Church and who are commonly called Methodists."

The baptismal register for the Tabernacle only dates as a careful record from 1771. Prior to that date there were only four entries, two of the baptisms being performed by Whitefield in 1760 and 1761. Yet from May 1771 until 1795, 222 baptisms were recorded, being performed by twenty different people, some by ministers of non-Anglican congregations at Rodborough, Wotton-under-Edge and Frampton-on-Seven. Clearly, in the aftermath of Whitefield's death the move towards Independency at Dursley was considerably quickened, a process confirmed by the calling of a settled pastor, the Trevecka-trained,

David Ralph in 1795 and by the decision to join the Gloucestershire Association of Independent Churches, while still remaining part of the Rodborough Connexion. By 1825 Tabernacle congregation had begun to take on the characteristics of a more conventional Independent Church, with deacons actively involved in the running of affairs and with a notably less strict Calvinist theology.[118]

Dursley's membership of the Rodborough Connexion highlights the continuing existence of local Associational groups of Calvinistic Methodism, long after the decline of the national structure. The roots of this Connexion are to be found in Whitefield's preaching in Gloucestershire in 1736-41, which resulted in the conversion of Thomas Adams, William Hogg, William Vines and others, who carried on the revival with the help of the Gloucester Independent minister, the Rev. Thomas Cole.[119] The work continued to prosper, and in 1750, Thomas Adams, by then the leading figure in the Gloucestershire movment, supervised the building of a Tabernacle at Rodborough. Because of its seniority Rodborough began to assume a measure of oversight over an area which included Gloucestershire, Wiltshire (after Cennick's departure), and, after the death of Howell Davies in 1770, of the Pembrokeshire Societies. Rodborough even became responsible, to some degree, for Haverfordwest and Narberth and a few smaller societies. The ministers of this Association of churches met on the first Wednesday of the month (later the first Thursday) for prayer and consultation and to plan their continuing labours as itinerant preachers. After Adams' death in 1770, the same year that Whitefield died, his associates faced tremendous difficulties, not least because they had no Anglican clergyman to administer the Sacrament to them. To resolve the difficulty, William Hogg, now the senior preacher at

Rodborough, secured the services of Rowland Hill. Hill was young, aristocratic, eccentric and a brilliant preacher, who had managed to become a deacon but had been refused ordination as a priest by six bishops because of his religious enthusiasm and forced (as he put it) to go through life wearing only one ecclesiastical boot. Hill frequently ministered in the Rodborough societies, as did Torial Joss, an ex-sea captain, a convert of Whitefield and one who had carried on Whitefield's work in London and had by then been ordained by the Dissenters. Cornelius Winter, Whitefield's personal assistant in later life, was placed in charge of the Connexion's Wiltshire societies and was ordained in 1777 as a Nonconformist minister, becoming the pastor of the Painswick congregation, duly constituted an Independent Church. By the time of Hogg's death in 1800, and the appointment of Rowland Hill as Superintendent of the Rodborough Connexion, nearly all of its constituent churches had settled ministers, although they seem to have remained in close fellowship. Thus, in Gloucestershire alone the Whitefield's ministry had given birth to an impressive series of Independent causes: the Bristol and Kingswood Tabernacles, Rodborough Tabernacle, Dursley Tabernacle and (indirectly) to those at Wotton-under Edge Tabernacle, Nibley, Frampton-on Severn, Stonehouse and Ruscombe.[120].

Both in Gloucestershire and elsewhere, the surviving churches which owe their existence to the ministry of Whitefield and Calvinistic Methodism, are all Congregational Churches. Thus, rather than form a separate new denomination, the main results of Whitefield's ministry in England was the revitalisation of Nonconformity.

CHAPTER FOUR: CALVINISTIC METHODISM - FOOTNOTES.

1. Stuart C. Henry, *George Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness* (New York, 1957); E. Welch, *Two Calvinistic Methodist Chapels* (London, 1975) (hereafter *TCMC*).

2. J. Walsh, "*Origins of the Evangelical Revival,*" *op. cit.*

3. *Trevecka Letters (9), Letters 249, 251, CMHS,* 23, 2; Letter 265, London, Aug. 9, 1740 a letter to Howel Harris cf. a Mrs Higgins "awakened by Mr Whitfield at Gloster...but now thrown into abundance of trouble by the preaching of Mr John Wesley (and so are many more)," *CMHS,* 24, 2.

4. Trevecka Letter 260, HH to JW July 16, 1740 and Letter 257 John Acourt to HH July 3, 1740, *CMHS,* 23.

5. Trevecka Letter 312, 10 Oct., 1740, *CMHS,* 23..

6. *LGW,* 1, pp. 164-167; *GW,* 1, pp. 251-252; *CMHS,* 25, p. 67.

7. William Seward, *Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to England,* (London, 1740). C. Wesley op. cit. *LGW, 1,* p. 167; John Cennick, "An Account of the Most Remarkable Occurrences in the Awakenings at Bristol and Kingswood," in *WHS Proc.*, 6 (1907), p. 137; Trevecka Letter 266, Samuel Mason to HH, London, August 14, 1740, *CMHS,* 24.

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10. *LGW,* 1, p. 224.

11. Ibid., pp. 225-227.

12. M. Wilks, ed., *Village Discourses,* with a Life of Mr John Cennick (London, 1819).

13. Cennick, "Account," op. cit. pp. 134-137.

14. John Lewis, ed., *The Christian's Amusement* (London, 1740) (hereafter *CA*).

15. *CA,* 11 and 25.

16. Ibid., 7.

17. Tom Beynon, "Extracts from the Diaries of Howel Harris," trans. T. Beynon, Third Visit to London, 1741, *Bathafarn,* 1955, Sept. 15, 1741, p. 34 (hereafter "HHVL", *Bathafarn*).

18. Ibid., 16 July, 1741, p. 21.

19. *HHVL,* July 7, 1748.

20. G. Tudur, "Howel Harris", op. cit., pp. 171-193.

21. *HHVL,* July 23, 1748, p. 202.

22. G. Tudur, "Howel Harris", p. 196.

23. "HHVL", *Bathafarn,* 14 July, p. 21; 16 Sept., p. 34; 30 Sept., p. 39; and, 4 Aug., 1741, p. 26.

24. *GW,* 2, 231.

25. *HHRS,* Sept. 1, 1743. p. 51.

26. *HHVL,* 1 December, 1744, p. 59.

27. Ibid., 17 December 1744, pp. 63-64.

28. John Lewis, ed., *The Christian History* (London, 1743), 7, 4, p. 41, Bro. Cross to Bro. Cennick in London, August 1745 (hereafter CH).

29. John W. Christie, ed., "The Newly Discovered Letters of George Whitefield, 1745-46", (hereafter "Letters of George Whitefield...1745-46") *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, 32, June 1954, 2, p. 79.

30. Ibid., pp. 84-85, 162-164, 87-88.

31. E. Welch, "A Forgotten Thread in Congregational History: the Calvinistic Methodists", *CHST*, 21 (1972) (hereafter Welch, "Forgotten Thread").

32. Ibid., p. 91.

33. Ibid., p. 87.

34. Susan Durden, "A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines, 1740-1748", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27, 3 (July 1976) pp. 255-275.

35. MS. letter, Seward to Hutton, Feb. 2nd, 1739, Moravian Church House.

36. M. H. Jones, "John Lewis, the Printer of 'the Weekly History'", *CMHS*, 4, 3, pp. 84-92.

37. *CA*, 26.

38. John Lewis, ed., *The Weekly History* (London, 1741) (hereafter *WH*).

39. Durden, "First Evangelical Magazines", op. cit., pp. 260-262; William M'Culloch, ed., *The Glasgow Weekly History* (Glasgow, 1742).

40. John Lewis, ed., *An Account of the Gospel* (London, 1742) (hereafter *Accnt*).

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42. John Lewis, ed., *The Christian History* (London, 1748).

43. *GWL*, p .512.

44. *Accnt.*, 2, 2, p. 77.

45. Welch, *TCMC*, p. 14.

46. *LGW*, 2, 530.

47. Welch, *TCMC*, pp. xiii-*xiv*.

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49. *Accnt.*, 4, 5, pp. 40-43.

50. Welch, *TCMC*, p. 44.

51. Ibid., p. 16.

52. G. F. Nuttall, "George Whitefield's 'Curate': Gloucestershire Dissent and the Revival", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (1976), pp. 369 ff.

53. Welch, *TCMC*, pp. 16-17.

54. *LGW*, 2, pp. 77-78; *Accnt.*, 4, 1, July 30, 1743, Whitefield reported crowds of 12,000.

55. *LGW*, 2, pp. 100-105.

56. *CH*, 6, 1, pp. 6, 11; and 6, 2, p. 49.

57. Welch, *TCMC*, p. 16.

58. GWW, 2, pp. 231-233.

59. Welch, *TCMC*, pp. 16-17.

60. *GW*, 2, p. 153.

61. Welch, *TCMC*, pp. 17-18.

62. *LGW, 2, p. 50.*

63. Ibid., p. 191.

64. *GWL*, pp. 256-257.

65. Ibid., pp. 511-512.

66. *Selected Trevecka Letters*, 1, p. 1.

67. D. E. Jenkins, *Calvinistic Methodist Holy Orders* (Caernarvon, 1911), p. 91.

68. For the dispute over assurance see G. Tudur, "Howel Harris," pp. 161-163.

69. Ibid., pp. 166-167.

70. See ibid., p. 117.

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73. Jenkins, op. cit., p. 81.

74. G. Tudur, "Howel Harris," p. 178.

75. *GW*, 2, p. 232; *HHRS*, Aug. 29, 1742, p. 11.

76. *HHVL*, Nov. 25, 1745, p. 76; and Feb. 3, 1746, p. 84.

77. *Selected Trevecka Letters*, 1, pp. 192-197, Aug. 30, 1746.

78. Welch, *TCMC*, p. 40.

79. Charles E. Watson, "Whitefield and Congregationalism," *TCHS*, 8 (1920-23) pp. 171-172, 176-180, 237-240.

80. *HHVL*, March 7, 1744, and March 13, 1744, pp. 54-55.

81. Watson, op. cit., p. 239.

82. *LGW*, 2, pp. 191-192.

83. *GWW*, 2, pp. 169-170.

84. Welch, *TCMC*, p. 42.

85. Ibid., p. 44.

86. For Harris's complex relationship with Sydney Griffith see G. Tudur, "Howel Harris," pp. 211-253.

87. *HHVL*, December 30, 1749, January 1, 1750, and January 17, 1750, pp. 255-256, 261-262.

88. Ibid., May 2, 1749, p. 225.

89. A. Seymour, *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, 2 vols. (London, 1840), 1, p. 117.

90. *GWW*, 2, pp. 433-434.

91. Watson, op. cit., pp. 240.

92. *LGW*, 2, p. 290; Seymour, op. cit., 2, 378.

93. Seymour, op. cit., 1, pp. 203-205.

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99. *GWL*, p. 277.

100. Trevecka Letter 361, London, Aug. 4, 1741, *CMHS*, 1955.

101. "HHVL", *Bathafarn*, Aug. 4, 1741, and Aug. 8, 1741, pp. 26-27.

102. *HHRS*, Aug. 29, 1742, p. 11.

103. *GWL*, pp. 511-512.

104. Jenkins, *Calvinistic Methodist Holy Orders*, p. 56.

105. *HHVL*, Jan. 15, 1744, p. 41.

106. *HHRS*, Aug. 31, 1743, p. 51.

107. *HHVL*, July 10, 1748, p. 203.

108. *GWW*, 2, London, Aug. 20, 1743, p. 38.

109. "HHVL", *Bathafarn*, Aug. 3, 1741, p. 26.

110. [Gibson], *Observations*, pp. 3-4.

111. George Whitefield, "An Answer", *GWW*, 4, pp. 128, 130-131, 136-138.

112. Welch, "Forgotten Thread," pp. 89-92.

113. E. Welch, "Andrew Kinsman's churches at Plymouuth," *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 97 (1965), pp. 212-233.

114. Ibid., p. 233.

115. Welch, "Forgotten Thread," pp. 89-90.

116. David E. Evans, *As Mad as a Hatter! Puritans and Whitefieldites in the History of Dursley and Cam* ([Gloucester], 1982), p. 140.

117. *HHVL*, Dec. 26, 1771, p. 9.

118. Evans, op. cit., p. 71.

119. Nuttall, "George Whitefield's 'Curate'."

120. See G. F. Nuttall, "Rowland Hill and the Rodborough Connexion, 1771-1833", *CHST*, 21 (May 1972), pp. 69-73; Watson, "Whitefield and Congregationalism", pp. 241-245; and Watson, "Rodborough Tabernacle", *CHST*, 10 (1927-29), pp. 277-287.

CHAPTER FIVE - THE REVITALISATION OF OLD ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY.

By 1760 the older Dissenting denominations were manifestly declining. Religious liberalism, in the form first of Arianism and then Socinianism, had devastated many congregations up and down the country. The Presbyterians were the hardest hit: in 1714 they numbered about two-thirds of the whole body of English Dissenters, but by the end of the eighteenth century had been reduced to a mere twentieth. The General (Arminian) Baptists also faded disastrously. The Independents and Particular Baptists did not fare too badly, although by the middle of the century their Calvinist orthodoxy had often become narrow and rigid, and lacking in missionary fervour; by 1815, however, they had been transformed under the influence of the Revival into missionary-minded, growing, evangelical bodies, in which a fervent style of extempore preaching was now widely cherished where fifty years previously it had been spurned.

Yet, while it is clear that in general terms English Dissent went through a remarkable revitalization between 1760 and 1815, the nature of this process is harder to trace. At an early date Wesley amassed statistics of membership for his Methodist Connexion, whose expansion can be also measured through the setting up of new societies: the growth patterns of the old Nonconformity are much harder to quantify. Here the influence of the revival can only be traced along quieter, local channels: through a minister here or there coming under its influence, through gradual transformations of congregational ethos, through the appearance of little auxiliary preaching stations and by the surge of membership in individual

chapels. The virtual autonomy of individual congregations and the lack of any connexional organisation makes it more difficult to study eighteenth century English Nonconformity by reference to any single collection of sources; instead it is a story which can only only be pieced together from scattered information held in letter collections still largely unpublished, from the histories of individual chapels, and the biographies or obituaries of Dissenting ministers, many of them figures of no more than local fame. It is a theme which still awaits detailed study.[1]

Though Nonconformity produced some of its own indigenous shoots of growth, one ingredient in the revival of Old Dissent which immediately strikes the historian is the contribution of Whitefield. If, unlike his coadjutor, Wesley, he was not successful in creating a new denomination, he certainly reanimated existing ones. Whitefield's influence on English Dissent was essentially twofold. It was exerted first through the drift of a large number of Calvinistic Methodist societies into Independency, a subject largely dealt with in Chapter Four. Not only did this result in the creation of several large Congregational churches, but had an energizing effect on the Calvinist Dissenting world as a whole. Both the London Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road, for example, were beacons of evangelical Calvinist influence decades after the death of Whitefield; there, in the words of one historian "the greatest congregations of enthusiastic Calvinists gathered, there also that all the best-known Calvinist preachers were to be heard."[2] In addition to Whitefield himself, Calvinistic Methodism produced many other well known evangelical preachers - men such as Thomas Adams and William

Hogg - whose influence was felt far beyond the congregations to which they ministered.

The second Whitefieldian influence on old Nonconformity, even more important, though less easily identifiable, came through the scores of future Independent and Baptist ministers who owed their conversion and their homiletic style to his ministry. Together with the conversion of countless other laymen, this injection of spiritual energy helped produce a distinctive change in the character of both denominations. Instead of "high" Calvinism preached systematic-fashion by a "learned ministry" intent more on the preservation of the faithful than the conversion of the sinner, the Revival produced a new missionary-minded evangelical Calvinism which was preached extempore, sometimes in the fields and often by lay itinerants. The transformation is so widespread and striking that it is difficult to attribute it solely to the work of any one individual, but if a single contribution was paramount it was Whitefield's. In the words of Dr. Walsh:

> "Reading the memoirs of the Independent and Baptist ministers one is struck with the astonishing numbers who owed their 'first serious impressions' to one man - George Whitefield. If any single man deserves credit for the resurgence of Dissent, it is he."[3].

It is to this latter theme that this chapter will primarily be devoted.

In the 1730s, on the eve of the Revival, English Dissent felt itself in decline. The Presbyterians, still by far the largest group, were struck the most heavily. One young minister, Strickland Gough, in his anonymous *Enquiry into the Cause of the Decay of the*

Dissenting Interest (1730), reflected the attitude of the urban elite in his recommendation that Nonconformist pastors should pay more heed to respectable members of the congregation than to the common people, and in his plea for increased ministerial stipends so that gentlemen would not be "ashamed to breed their children to the ministry".[4] In their search for greater respectability many Presbyterian ministers were prepared to expose their congregations to the fashionable winds of theological liberalism which had begun to blow through many Dissenting academies. At the famous Salter's Hall Controversy of 1719 the majority of Presbyterian ministers took their stand on the sufficiency of Scripture, refusing to insist on compulsory subscription to a Trinitarian creed; a century later the majority of Presbyterian churches had become Unitarian.[5] Ironically, the starting point for this process was believed by some to be the legacy of the great Richard Baxter, whose revulsion from the "antinomianism" of many Independents led him to a "Middle Way" position between Calvinism and Arminianism, which allegedly began the slide away from predestinarian orthodoxy. After Salter's Hall, the metamorphosis was relatively swift. By 1732, according to the author of the *View of the Dissenting Interest in London*, of the forty-four Presbyterian ministers in the capital, nineteen were Calvinists, thirteen were Arminians and twelve adopted Baxter's "Middle Way". Significantly, the younger Presbyterians were "most inclined to the Arminian scheme", and their acceptance of Arminianism proved to be not so much a platform as a slope, inclining them first to tolerate and then embrace Arian views.[6] By 1750 John Barker of Salter's Hall, London, was reportedly "almost the only London minister who continued to regard himself as both a Calvinist and a Presbyterian", and Arianism had

begun to take hold.[7] This movement towards theological liberalism was accompanied by a sharp numerical decline, particularly when Presbyterianism in England began to move rapidly from centre stage of Dissent to the wings. By the second half of the century it had become quite common for the largely Calvinist element in a congregation to secede rather than submit to a new, unorthodox minister. In at least twenty known instances before the end of the eighteenth century, Congregational churches were formed as a result of Calvinist secessions from Presbyterian meetings.[8]

Nor were the Congregationalists themselves free from heresy, for at least half a dozen Independent churches drifted into Unitarianism.[9] But this was the exception rather than the rule: in 1732, in London, the thirty-one Congregational ministers were Calvinists almost to a man, in sharp contrast to the heterodoxy of many of their Presbyterian colleagues.[10] The firm Calvinism of the Congregationalists is not entirely surprising. Many, although not all, had supported the high Calvinist Richard Davis in the antinomian controversy of 1691-95 against the Baxterian position, and the majority of the Congregational ministers at Salter's Hall, like the Particular Baptists, insisted on the need for subscription to a Trinitarian position. The difference between the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians lies partly in their ecclesiastical traditions. The Presbyterian ministers, like the Calvinist parish clergy of the established Church, acknowledged that the visible church would include both the saved and the damned because God's decrees were not known to men, whereas the Independents were more confident in identifying the elect and insisted that church membership was confined to those who professed a religious experience. In chapels based on the

Congregationalist principle of autonomy, it was less likely that any association of 'gathered saints' would tolerate for long the preaching of an unorthodox minister.

For all its Reformed orthodoxy, the spirituality of early eighteenth century Independency was often inclined to be rather "dry". Gone to a large extent was the zeal and missionary-mindedness of its persecuted forefathers. Preaching was often rather dull: "sound in doctrine, dignified in delivery, intellectual in appeal and clear in diction",[11] but certainly not extempore. Of course there were important exceptions to this and Geoffrey Nuttall has discovered a strong residual evangelical Calvinism in early eighteenth century Dissent, prior to the the Revival.[12] Joseph Williams, the Kidderminster Dissenter, for example, recalled how, several years before the revival, he would often "pour out" his "soul, with strong cries and floods of tears".[13] Long before Whitefield burst onto the scene, one can find examples of aggressive itinerant evangelism among the Dissenters, as with the fiery Welshman, Richard Davis, pastor of the Congregational Church in Rothwell, Northamptonshire. In the 1690s his ministry spanned eleven counties within an eighty mile radius of Rothwell; he founded seven new churches and through his use of lay preachers as itinerant evangelists and his emphasis upon emotional conversion, rather than upon an educated faith, he attracted opposition similar to that created by Wesley and Whitefield fifty years later.[14] In 1737, Davis's successor, Matthias Maurice, published, with the support of Doddridge, *A Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* (1737), which emphasised the *duty* of sinners who hear the Gospel to believe in Christ; thus preparing Congregationalists for co-operation with the evangelical Calvinism of

Whitefield.[15] Despite this more urgent note sounded in some quarters, the characteristic marks of early eighteenth century Independency were introversion and *stasis*; the tone was nicely caught by Isaac Watts in one of his hymns:

"We are a garden wall'd around
Chosen and made peculiar ground."[16]

The Baptists, too, were increasingly divided on doctrinal issues. Whereas the General or Arminian Baptists were attracted to heterodoxy and moved into Arianism and Socinianism even faster than the Presbyterians, the Particular Baptists, like the Independents, remained both Trinitarian and Calvinistic. Perhaps this was an index of their comparative poverty: significantly, Trowbridge in Wiltshire, one of the few Particular Baptist Churches to become Unitarian, was also one of the wealthiest.[17] However, while the Independents' Calvinism came under the moderating influences of Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge, the Particular Baptists were deeply influenced by the high, almost fatalistic Calvinism of Dr. John Gill, which was inimical to missionary-mindedness. This was of considerable importance, because whereas the Independents as a body responded to the Revival from about the 1750s, the Particular Baptists as a whole (despite some important exceptions) remained immune to the aggressive evangelical Calvinism of Whitefield for another twenty years. Not until the 1770s did they prove more receptive to the Revival through the influence of evangelically-minded leaders like Andrew Fuller.[18]

The Quakers too drifted away from the zeal of of their persecuted forefathers. Instead of the aggressive evangelism and miraculous healing ministry of George Fox, the Quakerism of the mid-late eighteenth century had largely fallen into Quietism. The piety of

the Friends was inward looking, and emphasized the outward marks of Quaker distinctiveness, such as plain dress. Although there were some Quaker converts in the early years of the Revival, and evidence of a few secessions of Methodists to the Quakers, it was not until the 1820s and 1830s that evangelicalism replaced Quietism as the major influence among the Friends. Quaker resistance to the evangelism whether of Fox or Whitefield led to a loss in numbers; in every decade from the 1670s to the 1790s registered Quaker deaths exceeded registered births.[19]

Thus by the mid-eighteenth century Dissent felt itself in need of revival, though decay was far from universal. Philip Doddridge, writing in 1730 thought that the number of Dissenters in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire had "greatly increased within these twenty years"; 10 years later, he wrote that Dissent was not much "on the decay..except in...the Western and Southern Counties"; and "even here", he added "there is a secret strength".[20] Others were less optimistic. The anonymous author of *Some Observations upon the Present State of the Dissenting Interest* (1731) estimated that fifty Dissenting ministers had joined the Church of England since 1714,[21] a number which included a future Bishop of Durham (Joseph Butler) and a future Archbishop of Canterbury (Thomas Secker). Isaac Watts gloomily concluded that religion had fallen "under a general and remarkable decay".[22]

Many Reformed pastors, like their counterparts in Scotland and New England, bewailed this decay of spirituality and began praying for a revival. They also turned to a more affective preaching style, which emphasised conversion and "heart religion" partly as a reaction to the Enlightenment rationalism increasingly propounded by their

clerical counterparts. "Preaching Christ", as this conversionist ministry became known, became the rallying cry for evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic. Hopes for a revival in Britain were augmented by news of an awakening which had broken out in Northampton, New England in 1734-35, under the ministry of Jonathan Edwards. So impressed were Isaac Watts and his colleague John Guyse that they decided to reprint Edwards' *Faithful Narrative*, with the aim of arousing concern for a similar awakening in England.[23] Ironically, when Revival came to England, in 1737-39, (to Watts' astonishment and unease) it descended not on the conventicles but on the Church of England, and not through the agency of godly Dissenting ministers but by that of a young Anglican priest, George Whitefield.

Why did the Revival in England, unlike its Scottish and American counterparts, remain largely within the Anglican orbit until the second half of the eighteenth century? Part of the explanation is due to the fact that unlike in Scotland and New England where the Established Churches were Presbyterian and Congregationalist respectively, the English Nonconformists were still in a great minority. This did not necessarily preclude them from benefitting from revival, as is shown by the response of persecuted pietists in the German speaking lands. But after the Revolution of 1688 the English Dissenters were often timid and sluggish. Toleration seemed to have relaxed the creative tension which had stimulated their piety in the years of persecution under the Clarendon Code. They were not anxious to provoke disturbances like the Sachaverell riots of 1710 or the anti-Dissenting riots of 1715, and tended to keep their heads below the parapet. Aggressive evangelism - as the Methodists were

soon to realize - could have aroused the old mobs and might have prejudiced hopes for 'comprehension' in the Church of England which some still entertained. Comprising a mere six per cent of the population they were in any case not well equipped to take advantage of a revival which had broken out in the Established Church of England, and on the whole remained aloof from the movement during the 1730s and 1740s, which they continued to perceive as an affair of the Church of England. Hence, while recognising the American and Scottish revivals as genuine works of the Spirit of God, they continued to lament the decline of vital piety and pray for a similar outpouring upon England. In November 1741 Isaac Watts wrote to Benjamin Colman in Boston, "I am glad to hear of such a spirit of religion raised and spread thro your country...I wish we could find it amongst us". Similarly, in April 1742 he wrote: "We pray for the same revival, and as we rejoice in your mercys we wish the same blessings were diffused amongst our churches."[24].

Part of the reason for their aloofness from the English Revival was suspicion of the movement's leaders. The Wesleys were Arminian and still "High Church" in many of their attitudes, the Moravians were both doctrinally and ecclesiologically suspect, while Whitefield, hero of the American and Scottish Revivals, was inexperienced, impetuous and too prone to reliance upon enthusiastic impressions. Watts deliberately avoided publishing Colman's account of the beginning of the Awakening in New England because he:

> "well knew the first appearance of the representation of this great work of God in London would be more offensive to many, and less pleasing to most, by dating the spring of it from Mr. Whitefield's name."[25].

Such suspicion and opposition did not quickly disappear. In 1753, the Presbyterian minister, Samuel Davies, on a fund-raising trip for America, was advised not to stay with Whitefield in London as this would compromise the success of his mission among the Dissenters, who were "generally disaffected with him...Public intercourse with him would be imprudent."[26]

Dissenting critics were particularly troubled by Whitefield's Methodistical "enthusiasm". Enthusiasm was a blanket term, encompassing a cluster of different attributes. For many traditional Calvinists it implied too great a reliance on inward impressions and feelings, rather than upon the written Word; to theological liberals, it implied a denial of reason, and a dangerous fideism, whose irrationalism would bring Christianity into disrepute and encourage infidelity. One opponent of Whitefield's enthusiasm was John Barker, one of the few old-style Calvinistic London Presbyterian ministers. Having heard Whitefield preaching on Kennington Common, he reported to Doddridge that while not doubting the evangelist's sincerity, he considered him to be "a *weak* man" - he was "much too positive, says rash things, and is bold and enthusiastic." Whitefield's confidence in his own personal inspiration appeared to come "but little short of an assumption of inspiration or infalliblity."[27] The great Isaac Watts was equally uneasy. He wrote to Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London warmly endorsing the distinction the Bishop had made in his recent Pastoral Letter, between

the extraordinary and the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit. Instead of relying upon the ordinary sanctifying work of the Spirit available to Christians of all ages, Whitefield seemed to be laying claim to some of the special, miraculous gifts available to the early apostles for the task of establishing the gospel dispensation. Watts wrote:

> "I wish Mr. Whitefield would not have risen above any pretences to the ordinary influences, unless he could have given some better evidences of it. He has acknowledged to me in conversation, that it is such an impression upon his own mind that he knows to be divine, though he cannot give me any convincing proof of it. I said many things to warn him of the danger of delusion, and to guard against the irregularities and imprudences which youth and zeal might lead him into, and told him plainly, that though I believed him very sincere and desirous to do good to souls, yet I was not convinced of any extraordinary call he had to some parts of his conduct; and he seemed to take this free discourse in a very candid and modest manner."[28].

Even Whitefield's friends were uneasy. Philip Doddridge wrote in 1741: "who can wonder, if so much unpopularity has a little intoxicated him? He certainly does much good and I am afraid some harm."[29]. Joseph Williams agreed. Though he regarded the evangelist as "second to none I know of all the human race"; "nevertheless", he wrote, "I am far from approving all he has done, or all he has said. I apprehend there has been a considerable mixture of enthusiasm, and something of vain-glory."[30]. John Barker voiced the wider fear, held by critics on both sides of the Atlantic that "Methodism like any other enthusiasm will promote infidelity." He saw dangers in its lack of interior restraint and in its exaggerated contempt for reason:

> "Their devotion is unseasonable, irregular and injudicious...Their Spirit appears to me turbulent, unruly and censorious. They practice upon weak people, and poor people. They call them to pray and sing when they should be in their business or their beds...What they pretend to above their neighbours appears to me mere enthusiasm."[31].

The Dissenting critique of Methodist "enthusiasm" reflected the views of pastors who maintained the traditions of a learned ministry and of orderly, solemn public meetings and who disliked the extempore field preaching of Whitefield, Wesley and their lay itinerants. Having heard Whitefield on Kennington Common, Barker remarked that Methodist sermons were "low and loose, and not at all like what they seem to assume."[32] Dissenting ministers were uneasy about the way in which Methodist attacks on "unconverted" ministers and their pastoral ineffectiveness might reflect on the power of their own ministry. This was not an unreal fear. One Dissenting supporter of Whitefield rebuked Nonconformist pastors for their lack of "Faith and Service to the Brethren in the glorious begun Reformation," and chastised them for their "Spiritual Pride" in rejecting Methodist fervour as superficial emotionalism in comparison with the allegedly solid piety of well-instructed Dissenters:

> "There are among us that say, their [ie. Methodist] Preaching is weak in the Field, but ours is methodical, sound and deep in our Meetings."

This complacency was quite unjustified, he argued. God's power confirmed Whitefield's preaching to the hearts of his hearers, whereas for most Dissenters mere "Head-Knowledge" had been their resting-place.[33]

There was naturally a good deal of prejudice against Whitefield as an Anglican priest and agent of the established Church. Dissenting leaders like Watts, while prepared to recognise that he was the instrument of good among the Church of England, were not prepared fully to welcome him in *their* midst. When Colman wrote from New England, expressing his hope that Whitefield would join the Dissenters,[34] Watts demurred. Whitefield, he thought, like Luther

at the time of the Reformation from Popery, had been "raised up...to rouse the generality of the Church of England from its formalitys in religion and from some of the growing errors of the times." The Church, not Dissent, needed him. On August 19, 1741, Watts reported to his New England correspondent that Whitefield was:

> "preaching in the same manner as amongst you, but intirely as a minister of the Church of England, of which I am very glad; for tho I think God has succeeded his ministry greatly, yet his joining himself to us would be of no advantage to the success of his work."

Watts later explained to his puzzled correspondent why, unlike their New England counterparts, the English Dissenting ministers were some of Whitefield's "cooler friends":

> "His narrow zeal for the Church of England as a party, and some imprudencys, made him less accepted here in the beginning of his publick preaching. Besides that I think his services in America have been much more conspicuous and large, and God has now honour'd him to a much greater, and therefore some of us honor him more now. But it is not fit to discover too much, lest we should seem to invite him amongst us which we think will attain no good end. I must confess also there are several of us who rather despise than honor him."[35]

Thus although recognising his usefulness in ministry, Watts expressed a view, probably widespread, that Whitefield was too rash, too prone to enthusiasm to be welcomed in the Dissenting ranks.

Moreover, conscious of their minority status, the Dissenters were sensitive about countenancing behaviour that might have further exposed them to contempt, ridicule and perhaps renewed harrassment. They feared the consequences of the militancy and outspokenness of Whitefield's critique of the Establishment, even though they shared its assumptions. John Barker was clearly concerned lest his friend and correspondent Philip Doddridge was endangering his good relations with the "sober and moderate clergy" of the Church of England through his friendship with Whitefield - an anxiety perhaps related to the

delicate discussions concerning the reunion of Dissent with the Church which were afoot at the time.[36].

The opposition to Whitefield and the Revival showed regional, denominational and doctrinal variations. In the South-West the work of Whitefield and the Calvinistic Methodists had left the Dissenters sharply divided between those who approved and those who feared the new awakening. John Cennick noted on his arrival in Plymouth in the summer of 1744 "Dissenters of many denominations attending on Whitefield's preaching there", but at Exeter he observed how:

> "Some of the dead Ministers, and of the dead Hearers among the Dissenters are very bitter, and single out themselves to speak against us; but some of the rest, who have kept their Garments from Pollution, are very hearty, and wish us good luck in the Name of the Lord."

Another of Whitefield's associates, Edward Godwin, complained that the Dissenters at "Exon, Plymouth, etc...are some of our chief opposers".[37].

Differences like these can be partly explained on doctrinal grounds. In the South-West, the strength of Presbyterianism and the tradition of liberal views at places like Exeter partly account for the opposition of "dead" hearers and ministers. During his ten days in the South-West, Cennick reported little opposition "save a few of the Dissenting ministers", and "some Papers handed about privately, wrote by a Dissenting minister, asserting we were false Prophets, unlearn'd and Antinomians." In general, the Calvinistic Methodists attracted little support from the Presbyterians due to the increasing unorthodoxy of many ministers and congregations. There were, of course, exceptions to this; the Presbyterian minister at Leominster actually saved the Methodists from the mob.[38]. But the overall impression is that both among the Presbyterians and the General

Baptists Whitefield's Calvinist teaching was not well-received. Likewise after 1741 his increasingly clear stand on Calvinist doctrine ensured that he lost much of the Quaker support which he had been initially able to attract by his ambiguous doctrine of the "new birth" in 1737-39. But if the heterodox and Arminian opposed Whitefield, not all Calvinists welcomed him. Calvinist Independents were some of his staunchest opponents in London, and the high Calvinism of the Particular Baptists ensured that few of them countenanced Whitefield's ministry during his lifetime, for many regarded him suspiciously as a man whose moderation on predestination might conceal Baxterian heresy.

Yet despite opposition, Whitefield exercised an influence upon old Dissent from the earliest days of his ministry. His movement among Nonconformists, clearly visible in 1737-38,39. became freer in 1739. In a preaching tour north of London through Hertford, Northampton and Bedford he came across many welcoming pockets of Dissenters. At Northampton he was received by Doddridge, preached on the common and was comforted "by many choice children of God" who came wishing him success. Returning to London he wrote:

> "I find there are some thousands of secret ones yet living anongst us, who have not bowed the knee to Baal; and yet this way of acting brings them out. It much comforts me, wherever I go to see so many of God's children, of all communions, come and wish me luck in the Name of the Lord. I perceive the people would be everywhere willing to hear, if the ministers were ready to teach the truth as it is in Jesus."[40.]

Here, as elsewhere, Whitefield seems to have drawn together some of the many scattered remnants of old Puritanism; individuals and families left pastorless in isolated areas of the country when their meeting could no longer support a chapel or a paid minister. Instances of his fellowship with Dissenters abound; so do the invitations to preach which flowed in from Nonconformists in various parts of the kingdom. On May 22 at Hertford he breakfasted with Mr S..d's a Dissenting minister.[41.] On July 19 he received an enthusiastic letter from Risdon Darracott, one of Doddridge's ex-pupils and minister of the congregation at Wellington in Somerset, who expressed joy at the prospect of his visit to the region.[42.]

Some of those who drew spiritual sustenance from Whitefield had been exponents of an affective piety before they encountered Methodism. Joseph Williams had set out his deeply experiential faith in his Journal twenty or thirty years before Whitefield burst

onto the national scene, but now rejoiced in a close friendship with the young evangelist, with whom he enjoyed "a great many hours" conversation.[43] Doddridge, Independent minister of Northampton, was another who had long urged the necessity of evangelical preaching prior to the Revival and was perhaps the most consistent (though not uncritical) of Whitefield's supporters among the leading Dissenters. In late 1738, he wrote to Whitefield as one who had read his "excellent sermons" and been "comforted and edified" by his Journal, expressing his desire to meet Whitefield personally and to have "a lifelong correspondence and friendship beyond".[44] In a second letter of December 23, 1738, Doddridge expressed a longing to see the continuation of Whitefield's Journal, trusting that "it will breathe the same savour of vital and apostolical religion with the former part". As for the name of "enthusiast" with which Whitefield had already been branded, Doddridge wrote that he dismissed it as:

> "a harmless shadow, and am abundantly satisfied that it is worth our while to bid it defiance for the sake of one hour's communion with God or the least service of his children."

Doddridge was clearly more open to Whitefield's pietism than most of his Dissenting brethren; unlike Watts he did not see it as a possible mark of enthusiasm, but as a sign of grace. His recognition of Whitefield's "apostolical" and "primitive spirit" shows the extent to which the young preacher had captured his imagination. Doddridge also appreciated Whitefield's "catholic spirit", remarking favourably on the "universal love" among Whitefield's converts and reporting the similar spirit of consanguinity in the Spirit which was now visible elswhere in the "Gospel world":

> "I bless God I find it so likewise. A truly generous and catholic spirit is prevailing in different denominations, and I

trust it will still prevail 'till we all come to the unity of the spirit and the stature of a perfect man".[45]

This "catholic spirit" was perhaps the major key to Whitefield's acceptance amongst evangelical Nonconformity. Behind it lay a shared assumption that the *real* membership of a Church was membership of the invisible *Church of Christ* and that true religion centred on the heart, transformed by the Spirit of Christ, not on ecclesiastical structures or creeds. It rested upon a distinction between "essentials" and "non-essentials" which regarded church polity as a non-essential. Some evangelical Dissenters appreciated the openness of Whitefield and his associates. In the early days of Calvinistic Methodism there was considerable reciprocal relationship with Nonconformists. Not only were Dissenters prominent among the membership of the London Tabernacle, but they had contributed generously to the construction of the wooden edifice. They were allowed to preach in its pulpit. Howel Harris, a more rigid Anglican than Whitefield, initially baulked at Whitefield's free fellowship with London Dissenters, noting with some concern reports of Whitefield "going to the Baptists" and adding "felt unwillingness in me". Later he added how he was "made willing that a Baptist was to preach in the Tabernacle tonight".[46] By 1744 he had begun to follow Whitefield's example. On January 19th both men were with Mr. Griffydd, a Baptist Minister; on the 22nd Harris was at a Mr. Onion's meeting house where he heard "an excellent sermon"; on the 24th he went to Pinner's Hall where he was much edified; on the 30th was in conference "settling affairs with a Bro. a Dissenting Minister that joins with us"; on February 5th he was again at a meeting house; on the 17th he reported going "to Mr. Kean the Quaker" and on "to Mr.

Stennett's" (a Particular Baptist); on the 23rd he preached in a meeting house at Leicester Fields and on the 28th he was back at Pinner's Hall to hear Dr. Guyse.[47]

More remarkably, this catholicity of spirit also at times extended to intercommunion. In September 1742 Harris wrote:

> "Went to St. Paul's with some Dissenting brethren that went to receive the Sacrament there."

One of those who went to St. Paul's was "a Dissenting minister". In another entry he noted: "Some Dissenters here (Tabernacle) receiving in the Church and Meeting too."[48] Whitefield, of course, had shared the communion in Scotland and New England, but in England it was a different matter. In 1749 Harris reported Whitefield as saying that he had received the Sacrament with the Dissenters in the West Country and would do so here (London), "but is so mocked at". Yet by September 1749 Whitefield was clearly considering going a step further: Harris felt it necessary to mention "how the Lord is returning to the Church of England to stop Mr. Whitefield's communicating with the Dissenters."[49] Even Harris was prepared to encourage his hearers at the Tabernacle to "receive the sacrament among all occasionally; without this, talking of Catholicism is nonsense." He added: "I am free to take the Sacrament from all parties as Christians."[50]

Whitefield's path among the Dissenters was also eased by his open profession of the "old religion" of Reformed Calvinism. Unlike the staunchly Anglican and Arminian Wesley, Whitefield moved with considerable freedom among evangelically-minded predestinarian Dissenters. At a time when the "doctrines of grace" had almost entirely vanished from the pulpits of the Anglican church, and when

many of their fellow-Dissenters were beginning to depart from orthodoxy, Calvinistic Nonconformists were heartened by news of an Anglican clergyman vigorously defending their Reformation creed in a Church which had apparently apostasised from it.

As we have seen, Whitefield's move into the Calvinist camp was a gradual one. His earliest and most important literary contact with Calvinistic Dissent had been through Matthew Henry's *Commentary* on the Scriptures. During the months surrounding his conversion (1734-36) he had begun the daily practice of reading the Bible with the aid of Henry's *Commentary*, which began to open his mind to Reformed theology some years before he embraced a fully Calvinist position in 1739-40.

The influence of Henry helps, in part, to explain why Whitefield attracted the support of many Calvinistic Dissenters in 1737-38, at a time when his theology of the new birth and justification was still heavily influenced by Law and Scougal. As Bogue and Bennett later pointed out in their classic *History of Nonconformity*, many Dissenters perceived in Whitefield's preaching "the savour of their popular commentator" well before he broke with Arminianism.[51] Evidence of early Dissenting support is found both in Whitefield's *Further Account* and elsewhere. Dissenters responded favourably to his sermon on the New birth, which, when published, sold well to persons "of all denominations".[52] The powerful preaching of a man who was both born again and a natural orator caught the eye of many Nonconformists who were prepared to ignore the obvious limitations of Whitefield's theology at this stage. The unusual spectacle of a surpliced clergyman preaching doctrines by now associated with

Dissenters aroused curiosity and some expectation that the preacher might yet join the ranks of Nonconformity.

By the spring of 1739 Whitefield had begun to absorb Reformed doctrine that was distinctly Calvinistic. This was partly due to the continuing influence of the English Dissenters. Anne Dutton, for example, Calvinist controversialist and wife of the Particular Baptist minister Benjamin Dutton, wrote to the young evangelist in April 16, 1739, further instructing him in the doctrine of sovereign grace.[53] Over the next couple of years, his fraternal contact with the Congregationalists of New England and the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies 1739-40, combined with his public split with the Arminian Wesleys, further strengthened his grasp of predestinarian theology and thereby enhanced his reputation with the English Calvinistic Dissenters. Anne Dutton reflected the view of many in congratulating him upon his return to England in 1741 for his

> "noble testimony for ye Truth of ye Gospel, and agst ye Erroneous Tenets of Archbp Tillotson and ye Author of ye Whole Duty of Man" and his "safe Preservation from ye Errors of ye Quakers, and yt brave Testimony you bore for a Christ without us, as our Righteousness before God, agst those who set up a Christ within, ye Light of Nature in his Stead; and Hereby wd rob us of ye Father's Christ."[54]

Indeed, Howel Harris saw the division between Whitefield and Wesley in 1740-41 as providentially inspired; God was accomplishing the revival of the nation by "sending one to the Dissenters and the other to the Tories".[55] Certainly Whitefield's wholehearted adoption of Calvinism opened the way for his greater acceptance in Dissenting circles. Isaac Watts noted that since his success in America, his standing amongst English Nonconformists had soared.[56]

The predestinarian theology of the Calvinistic Methodists clearly provided a bridge into the Calvinistic Dissenting world. The links

between them were deliberately accentuated. The *Weekly History* for May 1741, for example, included the following advertisement:

> "The Dissenters ARTICLES of GOD'S Eternal Decrees, agreeable to the 17th Article of the Church of England...Taken out of Mr. Jonathon Warne's Attempt to promote Love and Unity between the Church of England and the Dissenters."[57]

A month later the paper contained a letter from a Yorkshire Dissenter, who related how his young children had been touched by reading Whitefield's Journals and Sermons. The man's mother had been brought up in the Church of England, but after being called by God's free grace "became dissatisfy'd hearing among the Clergy preaching contrary to the excellent Articles" and left to join the Dissenters. He was now writing as a disgruntled Nonconformist who was "much at a loss for some Years past, few, comparatively, [had been] preaching the Gospel of Christ, in any Part of the Neighbourhood" and desired that his children should hear the gospel from Whitefield.[58] Here we see Whitefield's ability to attract families reared in Anglican Calvinism who had left the Church because of her abandonment of the 'doctrines of grace' and had then become equally disillusioned with the declension from such doctrines of the local Dissenting ministers in the area. This lends some credence to Whitefield's claims that many Dissenters might be eager to join the Church if there were only more Gospel ministers such as himself within her walls.

If Whitefield's Calvinist orthodoxy was well attested by 1739-41, there was nevertheless a new note in his teaching which was immediately noticed. His emphasis on the necessity of religious experience brought a challenging freshness to the doctrinal Calvinism of many birth-right Dissenters. Young Nonconformists were attracted by the warmth of Whitefield's preaching: here was a fresh inflection

to a theological system which had become formulaic and familiar. Joseph Humphreys, for example, a trainee for the ministry at an Academy at Deptford, was electrified by Whitefield's preaching, began to expound to a society of Whitefield converts and was expelled from the Academy for his pains. Thereafter he became one of the leading preachers in Whitefield's Connexion, before departing to become pastor of an Independent congregation in Burford, to which he carried his new-found fervour.[59]

Whitefield's reception among the Dissenters was eased by the spectacular success of his ministry. At a time of declining numbers, when there was a steady trickle of ministerial secessions to the Establishment, some zealous pastors were glad to benefit from the labours of this spectacularly successful Anglican evangelist and sometimes were induced to imitate his method of preaching. Darracott and Benjamin Fawcett, another of Doddridge's ex-pupils in the South-West, opened their pulpits to Whitefield in 1742-43. Soon Darracott was able to report a "wonderful Revival of conversion-work" since the evangelist's visit to Wellington. He urged Whitefield to return, telling him how his:

> "late labours were wonderfully blest...The Richer sort admire yu and will be glad to see you at their Houses: A very considerable Family of Quakers particularly. In a Word, God seems to have much People among us; and you sem to be the Instrument in bringing them home."[60]

Another minister inspired by Whitefield's success was none other than "Old Cole" himself, the former butt of his ridicule, who took up the Revival cause with enthusiasm. Thomas Cole had been the Independent pastor at Gloucester for some years, preaching an evangelical Calvinism. Whitefield's ministry in Gloucester and the surrounding countryside in 1737 and 1739 had left behind it a number

of converts in need of spiritual care. As Whitefield's own system of itinerants and lay preachers did not begin to operate until 1741/2, the task of pastoral supervision in Gloucester in the meantime was taken up energetically by Cole. He began this work as early as the spring of 1739 and by the time of his death in 1742 had become widely respected among the Calvinistic Methodists.[61]. *The Weekly History* for August 14, 1742 contained news of Cole's death, a short account of his faithful ministerial labours and an elegy by John Cennick. His memorial concludes with a tribute to his relationship with the Methodists

> "to whose Ministers he was a cordial Friend, a faithful and judicious Councellor; and a constant Attender on their Labours here. In short, those who knew the Worth of this excellent Minister, and Christian, so well as Mr Whitefield, Mr Howel Harris, Mr Humphreys, and Mr Cennick will esteem his Death as one of the greatest Afflictions the Church in these can suffer."[62].

Another Dissenting minister, John Richardson of the Limestreet Congregation, London, was a beneficiary of Whitefield's work. On October 17th, 1742 he thanked Whitefield for increasing the membership of his own congregation, with awakened souls, adding

> "You seem, dear Sir both in Old and New England to be happily instrumental of planting whilst others come after you and water. You as a wise Master builder thro' the riches of free grace are helped to lay the foundations and the Lord owns others chiefly to build."[63].

Richardson's point was perceptive: the main beneficiaries of Whitefield's preaching in England were, in the long run, to be neither the Church of England nor his own Calvinistic Methodists but the Calvinistic Dissenters. The knowledge that Whitefield - unlike Wesley - was far more concerned to awaken souls than to annex them for his own organisation, did much to ease his acceptance by the Nonconformist ministry.

The case of Robert Cruttenden provides a case history of the process. His *Experience*, published in 1744, was prefaced and recommended by Whitefield and was "delivered to the Limestreet Congregation under the Care of Mr. Richardson." The account itself shows an "unconverted" Dissenter increasingly attached to Deist principles, who was then drawn to Whitefield's Tabernacle and after a year's attendance on the preaching there, was converted under John Cennick, was gradually convinced of the doctrines of grace and eventually joined Richardson's congregation. Whitefield's preface appealed to other like-minded pastors and urged them to submit to the converting work of the Spirit. It was addressed to:

> "Those serious Godly Ministers among the Dissenters who, through Prejudice or Misinformation, oppose, or are shy of us, as tho' some dangerous Sect was sprung up, may, from this, and such like Instances, begin to reason with themselves, whether we are sent of GOD or not? and whether it is not high time for them to acknowledge and adore GOD in his late Sovereign Way of working, and humbly say, Lord, send by whom thou wilt send. - Here is an account of a learned and Rational Man, brought to and built up in JESUS, by what the World would call unlearned and illiterate Preachers - This is not the first Instance..by Hundreds. - And I have often thought that our Saviour has inclined many converted unto his Grace by us, to join with the Dissenting Congregations, for a testimony unto them. - No set of men, I think, could do such things, or meet with such success, unless God was with them."[64].

The Dissenters at Bocking Chapel were apparently sufficiently aware of the Divine blessing on Whitefield's ministry that they went so far as to offer him the pastorate in about 1744.[65].

While Whitefield aroused a gamut of reactions from "orthodox" Dissenters, he also created a considerable stir in the Quaker community. Initially, many Quakers seem to have perceived strong similarities between their view of the "inner light" and Whitefield's doctrine of the new birth and the indwelling of the Spirit, particularly before his public adoption of Calvinism in late 1739-1740. On numerous occasions in early 1739 Whitefield was entertained by individual Friends. On 22nd January, 1739, for example, three London Quakers visited him, thanking him for his preaching of the new birth; on the following day he was cordially welcomed by Friends.[66] In the Bristol area, Whitefield and his travelling companion William Seward came across pockets of Quaker influence. In mid-March, Seward reported how they stayed at a Quaker's house near the city and that a few Friends visited them "several of whom we found had received the Holy Ghost as well as we - they gave us...of their Principles and our Brother with great love and Meekness...[endeavoured] to convince them".[67] Whitefield's account of the incident was that they had had an "agreeable conversation", but added his conviction that the Quaker arguments for omitting the outward call to the ministry were unconvincing. Nonetheless they parted "lovingly", Whitefield praying that he would "always be of a catholic spirit". It seems clear that while Whitefield and the Quakers were agreed on the necessity of an inward religion, they disagreed over the importance of the outward means of grace, particularly the sacraments. In his Journal for the March 23rd, Whitefield recorded:

> "Dined with Quakers at Frenchay, who entertained me and my friends with much Christian love; but we could by no means agree about the disuse of the two outward signs in the Sacrament, nor of their absolute refusal to pay tithes. But I think their notions about walking and being led by the Spirit are right and good. I should rejoice to find all Quakers thus minded. Much

> sincerity and simplicity seems to be amongst them, but I think, at the same time, they insist so much upon the inward life, but they place too much religion in their not using externals."[68]

Seward's account of the same encounter is equally revealing. He referred to "several Quakers who were much pleased with our Inward Light - Renouncing the Vanities of the World etc but they could not by any Means justifye their Neglect of outward signs."[69]

Like the Wesleys, at this early stage Whitefield was convinced of the necessity of baptism and anxious to extend that rite to those who had not yet received it. On April 17th, he baptised a sixty year old professed Quaker, Mr. Thomas W..d, at the Church of St. Mary de Crypt, after convincing him of "the necessity of being born of water as well as the Spirit."[70] On two other occasions, both in London, on May 16th and June 2nd, he sent Quakers "whom God was pleased to convince" to be baptised by his clerical colleague, the Rev. George Stonehouse of Islington.[71]

Whitefield's bold preaching of the new birth and the inner life of the Spirit gave many Quakers the hope of sharing in that current of renewal which they had lacked since the death of Fox; Whitefield, for his part, was glad to share fellowship with others who shared his concern for inward religion. As he wrote on May 14th:

> "spent the evening very agreeably with several Quakers...How much comfort do those lose who converse with none but such as are of their own communion."

On May 16th he again "dined with some serious Quakers and on the 19th at the home of another Quaker, Mr. B..n of Clapham. On June 19th he records having been visited by "some Quakers" at Hertford and July 14th breakfasted with a Friend at Thornbury in Gloucestershire.[72] In all these examples there is no indication of a serious disagreement over doctrine: this did not begin until Whitefield left for America in

the autumn of 1739, when he began to speak out for the imputed righteousness of Christ and against an over-dependence upon the Christ within. His attack on Quaker notions of an inner light, resulted in the severing of some of his close ties with the Friends on both sides of the Atlantic. However, the influence of Whitefield and the Calvinistic Methodists on individual Friends by no means ceased, and the Quakers were listed as one of the "ten sorts of people", who made up the membership of the London Tabernacle society in 1742.[73]. But after 1741 Whitefield's Calvinism limited the force of his appeal to the Quaker community as a whole, which remained largely resistant to evangelicalism until the second quarter of the nineteenth century.[74].

Whitefield's role in the revitalisation of Nonconformity is perhaps best illustrated in the transformation of the Particular Baptist and Independent denominations. By the mid-eighteenth century the Particular Baptists were characterised by declining numbers and by a predominantly high (or even hyper) Calvinist theology, which discouraged the offer of grace to sinners. Between 1760 and 1820 a remarkable change took place: the number of churches almost trebled, as the Baptists became mission conscious, directing their activities at the heathen both at home and abroad. This was largely a consequence of the Evangelical Revival and particularly of Whitefield's influence. Wesley's relationship with the Particular Baptists was strained because of his Arminianism and his stand on infant baptism, as well as his unfortunate habit of referring publicly to Baptists as Anabaptists. Whitefield did not offer the same provocation.

Whitefield's adoption of Calvinism in 1739-40 was essential for his acceptance by Baptists, yet, in a denomination which was still under the hyper-Calvinist influence of Gill and Brine, there was also considerable resistance to Whitefield's evangelical mode of Calvinism. Like other high Calvinists, many mid-century Particular Baptists were disturbed by his "Arminian dialect" and "semi-Pelagian address". In 1739 Whitefield's immature grasp of Reformed theology was picked up by both the Particular Baptist minister, Joseph Stennett and the Calvinist controversialist, Anne Dutton.[75] But even after Whitefield's Calvinism had become much clearer there were still indications of a divide. In the journals and letters of Whitefield and Harris for the 1740s, although there is evidence of considerable co-operation between Calvinistic Methodism and the Particular

Baptists, there were also signs of a difference of emphasis. On one occasion in 1741 Harris reported going to a Baptist Meeting, commenting that while he felt love for the people "they all seemed too dry". At the same time he mentioned the existence of a great party in Wales, who supported William Herbert and the Baptists "that preach the Shell";[76] evidence of the gap which could exist between the Methodist Calvinism and the more speculative high Calvinism of many Baptists.

However, by the time of Whitefield's death the Particular Baptists themselves had begun to undergo a significant theological shift due partly to the work of Andrew Fuller within the denomination, who from the 1760s and 1770s began to introduce an evangelical Calvinism, emphasising both the need for evangelism and holiness.[77] But paralleling this indigenous theological input was the indirect influence of Whitefield and the Revival, which is hard to quantify, but not to be underestimated. A number of Whitefield's spiritual children ended up in the Baptist ministry, while others sought to emulate his evangelistic success. His demonstration of the successful combination of a strong evangelism with a belief in election had a considerable appeal. The astonishing fruits both of his preaching style and his offering of grace to all cruelly exposed the limited success of many high Calvinist ministers whose congregations were dry and stagnant. There must have been many Baptists who observed as the Evangelical John Newton did, how Whitefield in London held an audience eleven times as large as that which gathered to hear Brine, a quarter of a mile away.[78] In the near future the legacy of Whitefield's pan-evangelical missionary-mindedness was to help propel the denomination into the formation of

the pioneer Baptist Missionary Society, and to inspire innumerable home missionary forays into the "dark" parishes of the English countryside, in the 'village preaching' campaigns at the turn of the century.

Before Whitefield could so influence the denomination he had to overcome ingrained prejudice against a priest of a Church which practised infant baptism. Here his "catholic spirit" was of course crucial. He regarded baptism, like church government, as one of those non-essential issues, which should not constitute a barrier to co-operation and fellowship among born-again believers. But he was also faced with the fact that many of his Baptist friends did not share his comparative indifference to such points. In 1742, he wrote to Oulton, Baptist minister of Leominster, a friend to the Calvinistic Methodists, emphasing the need for the London society to be kept "free from a party sectarian zeal", and reported his concern at news of "so much narrowness" amongst the Welsh Methodists, adding:

> "I hope dear Mr. O -- will be kept free, and not fall into disputing about *Baptism* or other non-essentials".

If Oulton and his fellow Baptists did not avoid broaching such controversial matters, all their talk of a "catholic spirit" would simply be a stalking-horse for bringing people over to their own party.[79] Clearly Whitefield expected his Baptist friends not to push baptism as a dividing issue, and gave tactful praise to those who remained reticent on divisive issues. At the Tabernacle Letter Day for May 30th, 1743, he read three letters from a "Mr I--c Gardiner a young Baptist Preacher who lives near Carlisle in Cumberland" and possessed "a sweet Catholic Spirit, and desires to join Mr. Whitefield, etc, in the work of God."[80]

Evidence of Whitefield's frequent encounter with English Baptists is striking, even in the early years of his ministry.[81] The first clear reference to this in his Journal was to his meeting with an elder of the General Baptist church at Deal, prior to his break with "Arminian" theology, an encounter in which both parties disagreed over the function of ministers, but agreed on the necessity of regeneration.[82] In June 1739, a Baptist minister, probably Jonas Thurrowgood, sent Whitefield a horse to bring him to Hertford, where Thurrowgood had registered a meeting house. After preaching in a field at Cirencester to about 3000 people, local Baptists brought him five guineas for the Orphan House. In July he preached at Tetbury to 4000 people; many Dissenters came to visit him and he paid a visit to the Baptist minister, Nathaniel Overbury.[83] The Baptist historian Whitley has concluded from the absence of any mention in the Journal of contact with Baptist ministers in London in 1739, that few visited him in the capital.[84]

William Seward, though an Anglican, was an important link between Whitefield and the Dissenters. In a letter of March 5th, 1739 he refers to how in Bristol, he and Whitefield "drank tea at a Rich Baptist's one who follows us wherever we go - and our Brother prayed with him."[85] On his return from America in 1740, Seward made a number of contacts with Baptist ministers, no doubt partly because of his increasingly strong stand on Election, Reprobation and against "Perfection". He established cordial relations with a Baptist Minister at Hampton, and with Oulton at Leominster.[86] On the 28th September he reported going to the Baptist Meeting where he heard "the Gospel in Purity". On the 30th he went to Malmsbury where he spoke in the Baptist Meeting house "agst the Doctrines of Perfection,

Universal Redemption and falling from Grace as held by Mr. Wesley, the Moravians and the Quakers." On 8th October he visited Oulton in Leominster and the two men travelled to Trevecka to see Howel Harris where a sermon was preached against Perfection.[87] Clearly at a time when the Calvinistic Methodists were making their painful break from the Moravian and Wesleyan branches of the revival, it was comforting for them to seek out the fellowship of fellow-Calvinists such as Oulton.

Indeed, on Whitefield's return from America in 1741, following his formal break with the Wesleys, links between the now firmly Calvinistic Methodists and their Calvinistic Baptist brethren grew stronger. In Howel Harris's journals of his visits to London numerous references to links between the Baptists and the London Tabernacle give a corrective to the suggestion of Whitley, Underwood and other Baptist historians that Whitefield had little influence among the Particular Baptists in the capital. In the summer of 1741 Whitefield clearly enjoyed a warm friendship with several London Baptists. At the same time Harris mentioned meetings with Baptists on July 7th, "with three Baptists full of grace" on the 12th. But such fraternal contacts also led to friction. In August, 1741 Harris noted how "the Baptists are turning out such of them as come to us".[88] Sectarian conflict spilled over into the Tabernacle. On one occasion Harris felt it necessary to remin d the Society that since they belonged to so many different sects they should abide by Whitefield's instructions not to discuss "externals" (issues of church polity) with those of a different persuasion.[89] During Whitefield's absence in America between 1744-1748, these tensions increased. In

1745, following the departure of Cennick to the Moravians, a Baptist "Bro. Sheep":

> "came in and was home about us leaving the Church, against the grandeur of the clergy, the forms of prayer and infant baptism, that they were all the dregs of Rome."

A few months later Sheep had apparently left and was now "preaching against us". Even after Whitefield's return, divisions continued, Harris reporting "many gone to the Moravians and Baptists."[90].

Elsewhere there is evidence of further links between the Baptists and Calvinistic Methodists. In the South-West, Whitefield and Cennick met with much support from local Baptists. In October 1743, during his ministry in Exeter, Whitefield spoke of "a Baptist Preacher, whom I love much." In December he visited Kidderminster and nearby Bromsgrove where he was received by "two or three Baptist" ministers and preached in the meeting house.[91]. Cennick followed up Whitefield's labours in the South-West and in 1744 reported having preached in the Baptist Meeting at Kingsbridge and having received "great encouragement from the Baptist Minister." While at Plymouth he preached twice at the Baptist meeting; the Baptist minister came to one of the Methodist meetings "ended the Evening in Prayer, and announced that he "intends to come among us."[92].

Whitefield's long-term influence on Baptist congregations is well brought out in the biographies of the astonishing number of Baptist ministers who attributed their conversion to his preaching. A few key examples will suffice. William Clarke, pastor of the Unicorn Yard in London from 1762 and at the Baptist church in Exeter from 1790-95, was one who received his "first serious" impressions under Whitefield's ministry. His biographer recorded:

> "If ever his understanding was divinely illuminated, and his heart savingly changed, the great work was effected when he was about ten years old, and under the ministry of the celebrated Mr. Whitefield."

Clarke came to regard Whitefield as a sort of spiritual father and "always expressed a peculiar attachment to the ministers of Mr. Whitefield's Connexion, which he invariably manifested by an attendance on their preaching as often as Providence gave him Opportunity."[93].

The famous Robert Robinson was another. Having gone to hear Whitefield, probably at the Tabernacle, to gain anecdotes with which to regale his future grandchildren, he was struck to the heart by a sermon in which Whitefield

> "abruptly broke off, paused for a few moments, then burst into a flood of tears, lifted up his hands and eyes, and exclaimed, "O my hearers! The wrath's to come, the wrath's to come!"

After weeks "under conviction of sin", Robinson was converted and began to preach for the Methodists at the Tabernacle in Norwich and the surrounding villages.[94]. In 1758 he informed Whitefield that although membership of his congregation numbered only forty persons, his hearers amounted to several hundred, and added:

> "My dear sir, I rejoice in your prosperity in the gospel. Go where I will, I find some of your spiritual children; some awakened by hearing you, and some by reading your sermons."[95].

Shortly afterwards he accepted the pastorate of the Baptist congregation at Cambridge, where he spent the rest of his life. Though his theology evolved in a liberal direction, Robinson always retained a high respect for Whitefield whom he regarded as his spiritual father.[96].

Others, such as Joshua Wood, son of a Leeds merchant, left the Wesleyan Societies to join with the Calvinistic Dissenters, as a

result of hearing Whitefield, by whom " his views of the evangelical system were enlarged" as he accepted a predestinarian system. He went on to become a Baptist minister in Halifax, in Devon, and at Salendine Nook near Huddersfield.[97] Whitefield's spiritual children among the Baptists came from a variety of backgrounds. William Tucker, the deacon hymn writer at Chard in Somerset, was converted under the preaching of Whitefield while serving an apprenticeship in London in 1765.[98] George Tizzard, a mountebank, converted by Whitefield, became a Baptist and was later ordained.[99]

There were no doubt also those like Andrew Gifford, pastor of the Baptist Meeting at Eagle street, and a third generation evangelical Calvinist, who were inspired by Whitefield though not converted by him. As a result of his doctrinal openness and a youthful scandal, Gifford was isolated for much of his ministry from the rest of his Particular Baptist brethren in the capital, but his open friendship with Whitefield brought him into close contact with other Calvinistic Methodists. He was present at the laying of the foundation stone at Tottenham Court Chapel and afterwards preached there. On Whitefield's death he edited and published a volume of his sermons as a token of his admiration. Once, when on his way to Tottenham Court Chapel he was asked if he was going to hear George Whitefield, he replied "I am going to light my farthing rushlight at his flaming torch";[100] a fitting testimony to the influence of the inter-confessional evangelist on a generation of Baptist ministers.

But it was not easy for Baptists to support Whitefield's work. There were those, especially the pastors of Baptist flocks, who resented the the watering down of allegedly "external" differences, In September 1742 Harris reported that two Baptists had been turned

out of their Church because they had received the Sacrament in two Independent Meeting houses.[101]. This is noteworthy because both denominations shared a similar congregational form of church government and theological beliefs, the key issue of baptism apart. There were some Union churches in which both denominations combined, the most famous being the Bunyan Church in Bedford whose members could hold contrasting views on baptism and even profess different denominational loyalties. The works of Independents like Doddridge and Matthew Henry were widely read by Baptist ministers and laymen alike, and Watts' hymns were commonly sung. The influence of Whitefield and the Calvinistic Methodists, in their emphasis upon experiential conversion and evangelism, helped further to bring the two denominations closer together. The *Evangelical Magazine* 1798, for example, was a joint effort until 1813. In his *Recommendatory Preface* to Bunyan's *Works*, Whitefield expressed his admiration for a man who was of such a "catholic spirit" that

> "the want of *water adult baptism* with this man of GOD, was no bar to outward christian communion. And I am persuaded, that if, like him, we were more deeply and experimentally baptized into the benign and gracious influences of the blessed Spirit, we should be less baptized into the waters of strife, about circumstantials and non-essentials."[102].

Of all the Dissenting denominations, the Independents gained most from Whitefield's ministry. It was a legacy somewhat grudgingly acknowledged by Walter Wilson, writing in the early nineteenth century:

> "If some of their congregations declined about the middle of the last century, it was owing to that universal indifference f religion which prevailed in the nation. But the labours of that eminent servant of God, George Whitefield, having occasioned a revival, the Independents received considerable accessions from the fruits of his ministry. "[103].

The change was was both quantitative and qualitative. The somewhat introverted, orthodox Calvinist body of 1750 had, by the turn of the century, been largely replaced by a missionary-minded, evangelical denomination, practicing new techniques of extempore field preaching in the villages, often staffed by lay itinerants, and imbued with an active concern to propagate the gospel in foreign lands. According to the Nonconformist historians Bogue and Bennett, between 1760-1810 the number of Independent Churches in England increased by 78%; by 1812 the Congregationalists, with 800 churches, had replaced the Presbyterians as the strongest of the Dissenting bodies.[104].

Part of the increase had come through the accession of a number of congregations which, (in Wilson's words) "without any particular views of church government,...have subsided into Independent churches".[105]. This is an allusion to the large numbers of Calvinistic Methodist societies belonging to Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon and other smaller groupings which had gravitated towards Independency. Whitefield's Connexion was strongest in London, Bristol, Gloucestershire and the South-West. As early as 1742, some of his societies had begun to seek protection under the Toleration Act, a process speeded up after he renounced his formal leadership of

the Connexion in 1749. In the decades following his death in 1770 the remaining societies became Independent, many of them joining the Congregational Union in the nineteenth century. Initially, however, many of them became officially "Nonconformist" to secure legal protection under the Toleration Act, though retaining many features that were distinctly Anglican. One historian has described their worship as a union of the Puritan and Anglican traditions. Though they continued to use the liturgy of the Church of England their sermons were far more dramatic than Anglican homilies and (following Whitefield's custom) they interpolated in their services occasional extempore prayers and exhortations or "encouragements."[106]

These Whitefieldite societies chose to become Independents partly from a lack of attractive denominational alternatives. As Calvinists they were unlikely to choose a Presbyterian denomination which was increasingly characterised by liberalism: as moderate Calvinists and paedobaptists they were unlikely to join the still largely high Calvinist denomination of the Particular Baptists.[107]

But perhaps Whitefield's greatest legacy to Dissent came through the large numbers of Independent ministers who owed their conversion or evangelicalism to him or his associates. He helped produce a new breed of evangelically-minded pastors who held somewhat more loosely to distinctive Dissenting principles than their forefathers and who were more concerned with evangelising the lost than instructing the elect. George Burder, Independent minister of Fetter Lane Chapel in London, and later famous as Secretary of the London Missionary Society (1803-27) and as an early editor of the *Evangelical Magazine* [from 1803], among other pan-evangelical endeavours, was

converted by Whitefield, as were his parents before him.[108] Many parallel examples can be cited. John Underhill of Sedgely, a staunch Anglican, was converted hearing Whitefield preach at Birmingham, and later became Independent minister at Gormal, near Sedgely.[109] John Thorpe was converted after mimicking Whitefield's preaching and became one of Benjamin Ingham's preachers before he took over as Congregational minister at Rotherham.[110] Thomas Waldegrave, a convert of Whitefield and a good imitator of his pulpit style, succeeded James Scott at Tockholes in Lancashire and continued an evangelical ministry there for sixteen years.[111] John Griffith provides an example of one raised in traditional Nonconformity who nonetheless owed his conversion to Methodism. His mother was a member of Thomas Bradbury's congregation in London, but he himself was converted hearing George Whitefield, and acted as a class leader of the London Tabernacle, before becoming a member of Samuel Stockwell's church at Red Cross Street and succeeding him in the pastorate in 1754. Others, although not converted by Whitefield, were greatly influenced by his ministry.[112] Titus Knight of Halifax who was brought up an Anglican, was converted in 1746-47, became a Wesleyan preacher in 1749, left Wesleyan Methodism in 1762 on doctrinal grounds and set up an Independent church in 1763. In the following year he became acquainted with Whitefield and became one of his assistant preachers, spending two months every year preaching at the Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Chapel, Greenwich, Woolwich and other places of the same Connexion.[113] Friendship with Whitefield, however, often brought with it persecution as well as inspiration, as Samuel Brewer, pastor of the Independent Church at Stepney discovered. Like Joseph

Humphreys, he attended the academy of the Rev. Dr. Taylor at Deptford. But:

> "while there, he used to attend together with the...Rev. Thomas Towle, and such other fellow-students as were zealously attached to the Methodists, the preaching of the...late Rev. Mr. Whitefield at Kennington Common and other places; at which time an intimacy commenced, which continued uninterrupted till the death of the great man. But his attachment to the ministry of this celebrated pracher being offensive to his reverend tutor, he experienced much persecution."[114].

Many other examples of Whitefield's influence on the Independent ministry could be given.

By the early nineteenth century the increasing number of Dissenters was clearly observable and attributed to the increase in evangelical ministers, inspired by Whitefield's example. According to Bogue and Bennett, two leading Dissenting historians writing in the 1800s, Whitefield's "mode of preaching has been in some degree adopted by most of the Calvinists in England, to whatever denomination they belonged".[115]. The transformation in Dissenting preaching styles was widely observed. Prior to the revival, Dissenting sermons, particularly among the Independents, were usually studied and methodical, but often lacked the fervour of a more extempore form of delivery. By the early nineteenth century, following Whitefield's example, the typical sermon was now likely to be less detailed, extempore, dramatised and powerfully applied to the circumstances and consciences of the hearers. But if Whitefield loosened up the homiletical style of the Dissenters, there was probably a reciprocal influence from the other side. Close association with Dissent may have encouraged Whitefield to tone down his exuberance and structure his discourses more carefully. There was, perhaps, an accomodation here of Methodist "enthusiasm" and Dissenting "order". Certainly

Howel Harris criticised Whitefield for having adopted the style of the Dissenters, accusing him in 1748 of having gone:

> "too much towards the Dissenters way in preaching more than he did formerly. How Mr. Davidson a Dissenting minister was the only one I heard preaching like him, insisting on the continuing believing and not having a past experience as all the others do."

Nor did Harris think this shift purely doctrinal. In the following year he felt it necessary to discuss with Whitefield his "mimicking the tone of the Dissenters".[116] Perhaps part of Whitefield's influence on the Dissenters' preaching styles was due to his own willingness to adapt reciprocally in some measure to the style of their preachers, as a result of his frequent contact with English Nonconformists and the descendants of American Puritanism in 1739-41 and 1744-48.

Not only did Whitefield affect Dissenting homiletics, but his "catholic spirit" had a long-term influence on Dissenting attitudes to church polity. His personal example of crossing confessional boundaries with such ease, combined with the reciprocal relationship between Calvinistic Methodism and Nonconformity, helped erode the dividing wall between evangelicals of different creeds, particularly the Independents and Particular Baptists. Both denominations shared a similar congregational form of church government and theological beliefs, apart from the key difference over baptism. There were some Union churches in which both denominations combined, the most famous being the Bunyan Church in Bedford, whose members could hold contrasting views on baptism and even profess different denominational loyalties. The works of Independents like Doddridge and Matthew Henry were widely read by Baptist ministers and laymen alike, and Watts' hymns were commonly sung. Methodist emphasis upon experiential

conversion and evangelism, helped to bring the two denominations even closer together. By the early nineteenth century Walter Wilson, an exponent of the old, pre-Revival Dissenting style bemoaned how in "giving way too much to that laxity of principle, and indiscriminate zeal which distinguish the Methodists", the Dissenters had lost the distinctiveness of their forefathers. Amidst this "the rage for charity", he thought, "the true spirit of nonconformity has been dead by at least one generation." In Wilson's view, the numerical growth of the Independents had been accompanied by a loss in spiritual and devotional fibre:

> "This has arisen chiefly from two causes: the introduction of uneducated and illiterate men into the ministry; and the prevalence of a spurious liberality. An indifference to religious doctrines has been the bane of the Presbyterian interest, and similar lukewarmness as to discipline bids fair to the ruin of independency."[117]

Whatever the debit side of Whitefield's "catholic spirit" may have been, it exerted a powerful influence on the pan-evangelicalism which inspired some of the great missionary organisations at the turn of the century. The Bible Society, the London Missionary Society (initially), and the *Evangelical Magazine* (1798), itself a joint effort of the Independents and Particular Baptists among others, were all the fruits of inter-denominational co-operation.[118] Many of those involved in such projects were evangelical churchmen and Dissenters, first awakened or inspired by Whitefield, who transmitted his missionary-minded, undogmatic Calvinism to the next generation. Thus, especially through his influence on the Particular Baptist and Independents, Whitefield played a vital role in the revitalisation of Old Dissent and in its transformation into vibrant early Victorian Nonconformity.

1. The best general study is Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford, 1978).

2. A. W. Harrison, *The Evangelical Revival and Christian Reunion* (London, 1942), p. 132

3. John Walsh, "Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century," in R. E. Davies and E. G. Rupp, ed., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain,* 1 (London, 1965), p. 293.

4. [Strickland Gough], *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Dissenting Interest* (London, 1731), pp. 28, 33-34, 36, 42-44.

5. Watt, *Dissenters*, pp. 464-466.

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34. Colman to Watts et al., October 3, 1740, Colman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

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36. *Correspondence of Doddridge*, 4, p. 283.

37. *CH*, 6, 1, p. 6; 6, 1, p. 11; 7, 2, p. 14 (1745).

38. Ibid., 6, 2, p. 49 ff; 7, 2, p. 14.

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40. *GWJ*, pp. 201, 272-275.

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42. MS. letter, July 19, 1739, c/o G. Thomas.

43. Op. cit. G. F. Nuttall, "Methodism and the Older Dissent", p. 263.

44. MS. letter, Dec. 12, 1738, c/o G. Thomas.

45. Loc. cit. Dec. 23, 1738.

46. "HHVL", *Bathafarn*, July 16, 1741, p. 22; and July 24, 1741, p. 24.

47. *HHVL*, 1744, pp. 41-42, 44-45, 49, 51-52.

48. *HHRS*, Sept. 5, 1742, p. 14; Sept. 12, 1742, and Sept. 14, 1742, p. 17.

49. *HHVL*, April 26, 1749, p. 221; and Sept. 3, 1749, p. 240.

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75. This is clearly implied in MS. letter of W. Seward to J. Stennett, Gloucester, April 17, 1739. See ch. 2, pp. 34-35; MS. letter, Anne Dutton to Whitefield, Great Gransden, April 16, 1739, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

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113. *Evangelical Magazine*, 1 (1793), pp. 89-97.

114. Ibid., 5 (1797).

115. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., 4 (1812), p. 313.

116. *HHVL*, July 23, 1748, p. 209; Dec. 10, 1749, p. 250.

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118. For more on Whitefield's long-term influence on pan-evangelicalism see R. H. Martin, op. cit., pp. 9-14.

CHAPTER 6 - WHITEFIELD IN SCOTLAND.

When Whitefield arrived in Scotland in the summer of 1741 he already had his English and American successes behind him and his arrival aroused expectations of a similar effusion of the Spirit in North Britain. Scottish ministers had for some time detected a spiritual decline in their country. The Glorious Revolution had seen Presbyterianism reestablished but much weakened in authority, while the Act of Union in 1707 had brought with it a shift of political authority to London and an overwhelmingly Anglican Parliament. To many devout Presbyterians, an incipient Anglicanization seemed to threaten Scotland. With it came new winds of theological liberalism, which by the second decade of the century had begun to blow through some of the highest levels of the Kirk. The response of evangelicals was to pray for a revival of religion. Little prayer societies abounded and in the 1720s and 1730s small-scale revivals broke out in individual locations such as at Nigg, East Ross, near Cromarty, in 1739. News of a dramatic outpouring of the Spirit in New England in 1734-35, the activities of the Methodists in England in 1739, and especially the American Awakening in 1740, aroused hopes that God would perform a similar work in Scotland. But the revival, when it came, took on an unexpected and complicated form, because the spark, here, as in Puritan America, was George Whitefield, an Anglican priest. In a country where anti-Episcopalianism was still ingrained in the Presbyterian consciousness, Whitefield was bound to receive opposition.

His Scottish ministry has received relatively scant treatment from both biographers and church historians.[1] This is particularly surprising given the frequency of his visits to Scotland, fifteen in all, and the effectiveness of his ministry. His first visit in 1741 drew large and attentive crowds in Edinburgh, Glasgow and several other major towns. He also helped inspire the minister and congregation of the small parish of Cambuslang, just south-west of Glasgow to start praying and preparing for a Revival. By early 1742 an awakening had broken out in Cambuslang, resulting in several hundred conversions, which soon spread to several other parishes in the Lowlands. Whitefield returned to Scotland later that year and was immediately identified as the symbolic figurehead of the Revival, becoming the centre of a raging controversy, largely between evangelical Kirkmen and their Secessionist opponents who destested the Awakening, branding it and Whitefield as the work of 'enthusiasm'. It was six years before he returned to Scotland, by which time the Revival and the controversy surrounding it had largely waned. But his ministry still provoked argument. Hitherto, opposition within the Kirk had been muted, but now in 1748, non-evangelicals began to exert their influence, as several of the major Lowland synods opposed his mission and barred him from preaching in their pulpits. In consequence, for the rest of his Scottish ministry Whitefield preferred to preach in the open air, particularly in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Nonetheless, here, as in America, after the fires of Revival had died down, he was increasingly accepted as an ecclesiastical statesman before his last visit in 1768. By the time of his death in 1770 he was widely mourned, even by former opponents, as a lost friend to Scotland and her religion.

1. "A Divided Kirk".

Whitefield arrived to find a Scottish Church deeply divided by the conflicts of the previous half century. These centred around the retention of ex-Episcopalians within the Church, the growth of heterodox teaching and the increasing power of patrons over ecclesiastical appointments.[2].

Although Presbyterianism was re-established in 1689, the retention of a number of ex-Episcopalian ministers within the Kirk was seen by many as a compromise of Presbyterian principles. In 1707 many ministers were further upset by the Act of Union, made worse by an Act of 1712, which granted toleration to all Episcopal clergy who supported the Protestant Succession. Until the death of Queen Anne and the failure of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715, there seemed the possibility that Episcopalianism might regain its former dominance.

Though Presbyterianism did not appear to be unshakeably based as the established religion at the Revolution, at least the position of the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession was seemingly secure within the Kirk. Scholastic Calvinism of the type preached by James Hadow, principal of St. Andrews, was still dominant in the early eighteenth century. But within a couple of decades, heterodoxy began to appear among the leaders of the church. In 1715 John Simson, professor of divinity at Glasgow, judged guilty of "Arminian" teachings, was only mildly rebuked in the 1717 General Assembly; in 1726-29 he was again in trouble for suspected Arianism, and this time condemned and suspended, although the Assembly stopped short of actual deposition.[3].

This mild treatment of Simson was resented by a group of evangelically-minded clergy, who began to gather around the standard raised by a work entitled *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. First published in London in 1646, it was rediscovered by Thomas Boston on the shelves of one of his Simprin parishioners, and reprinted in 1718 with an extensive preface by one of his minsterial colleagues, the Rev. James Hog, minister of Carnock. Based around a dialogue between Evangelista, a minister, and three of his people, Nomista, Antinomista and Neophyte (a young Christian), it contained extracts from Luther, Calvin and other leading Reformers and sought to steer the reader through the perilous extremes of antinomianism and legalism.[4] Following its republication it was attacked for its alleged antimomianism and after 1720 ministers were forbidden either by preaching or printing to recommend the book or defend it in public. This action of the Assembly shocked the evangelical supporters of the Marrow and was challenged by twelve ministers, known as "The Marrow Men", who drew up a representation requesting that the Act be revoked. They refused to accept the decision of the Assembly, in spite of rebuke and admonition from the Moderator, and were only saved from deposition by the secular government.

The "Marrow Men" remained loyal to their Calvinistic heritage, while attempting to infuse it with new evangelistic fervour. In particular, the author of the *Marrow* endeavoured to emphasise the universal call of the gospel, without departing from an orthodox predestinarian position. This position was neatly summarised in a sermon by one of "the twelve", Ebenezer Erskine:

"'Tis true indeed, the eternal destination, the purchase and application is peculiar only to the elect; but the revelation, gift and offer is common to all the hearers of the gospel."[5].

The evangelicals' dislike of the scholastic Calvinism of the seventeenth century was shared by their liberal Calvinist or "Moderate" opponents. The growth of rationalism in Scotland was part of the wider reaction against "Enthusiasm", and the growth of a new Lockean spirit of religious toleration, similar to that making progress in England and America. Within the Church of Scotland, however, the open acceptance of liberal theology found few adherents. Rather, the early eighteenth century saw the growth of a new "Moderate" party, which, while continuing to give tepid adherence to the orthodoxy of the Westminster Confession, was nevertheless influenced by the new currents of rationalism. The "father of Moderatism" was Frances Hutcheson, professor of moral philosophy in Glasgow, 1730-1746, who expounded an early form of Utilitarianism and was supported by William Leechman professor of Divinity from 1743. The Moderates did not secure a majority in the General Assembly until the second half of the eighteenth century, when, under the leadership of William Robertson, Principal of Edinburgh University and minister of Old Greyfriars, they were able to dominate the decisions of that Assembly for over thirty years. According to the recent historian of the "party", the Robertson Moderates were determined to build a "strong, unified, orderly Presbyterian church", capable of withstanding evangelical fanaticism, and countering ecclesiastical disobedience to the authority of the General Assembly.[6].

The main issue on which the Moderates took their stand was their firm support for the patronage laws. In 1712 the rights of patrons in the nomination of benefices, abolished at the Revolution, was

restored. In 1732 another act was passed which extended the influence of patrons at the expense of the local congregation. This further erosion of congregational authority incensed the evangelical or "popular" party, already angry at the apparent leniency shown by the Assembly to Simson and its harsh condemnation of the *Marrow*. While many patrons favoured more "liberal-minded" clergy, evangelicals viewed the acts as instruments for imposing legalist ministers upon evangelical congregations, and unleashed a flood of disputes about unpopular presentations to parishes. The opposition was led by Ebenezer Erskine, then Moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling. So virulent was his criticism of the 1732 Act that in the following year, he and three other ministers were first suspended and then excluded from their ministerial functions by the General Assembly. In December 1733 they formed the Associate Presbytery and issued a lengthy "Testimony" accusing the ruling party in the Church of enforcing policies contrary to Presbyterian principles, tolerating heresy and acting tyrannically against those who testified against them.[7].

There was widespread regret at the Assembly's decision and over the next six years attempts were made to heal the breach, but despite considerable concessions, including the removal of the sentence of suspension and the repeal of the 1732 Act, attempts to win the ministers back were unsuccessful. It was clear that by 1736 a new denomination had been created, although it was not until May 15, 1740, that Ebenezer Erskine and his colleagues, now eight in number, were formally deposed; an interim period during which popular support for the Secederes grew dramatically.

The concessions of the mid-1730s and attempts at reconciliation reveal the work of a substantial group of evangelical ministers, sympathetic to the aims of the Seceders, but who could not themselves contemplate schism: men such as John Willison, minister of Dundee 1716-1750; Alexander Webster, minister of Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh; John MacLaurin, minister in Glasgow 1723-54 and later John Erskine, minister of Greyfriars, Edinburgh 1767-1807. This group, known as the High Church party, shared the evangelical outlook of the *Marrow* and continued to contest the patronage laws from within the Church; even after the Secession, they probably remained the majority party until the second half of the eighteenth century.

Thus, only fifty years after the Revolution, Presbyterianism had splintered. Outside the Kirk, the rapidly growing Associate Presbytery and the small but even more radical Cameronians both kept alive the Covenanting spirit of their persecuted forefathers. The non-Presbyterians were represented by the the tiny independent Glassite sect and the "high", persecuted Episcopalians. Following the failure of the 1715 Rebellion which many supported, the Episcopalians, hampered by internal divisions and their strong attachment to the Liturgy, underwent a sharp numerical decline; their fate as a minority was sealed by the further defeat of the Jacobites in 1745. Within the Kirk, while overt rationalism was barely tolerated, Calvinist opinion included a liberal or Moderate wing, a more evangelical "party" and a third rather amorphous group of scholastic Calvinists, men such as John Bisset of Aberdeen, who opposed both the theology and patronage policies of the Moderates, but who were also ill at ease with the enthusiasm of Whitefield and the evangelicals.[8]

2. Whitefield in Scotland 1741-42.

This already complex ecclesiastical situation was further complicated by the long-awaited arrival of George Whitefield on July 30, 1741. Within seven months, his presence had been sufficient to stir up a revival as dramatic though not as large scale as in New England.

His reputation had preceded him. Through the rather hostile opinion of the *Scots Magazine* (often through extracts culled from the anti-Methodist *Weekly Miscellany*), the public had become acquainted with the existence of a young, surpliced clergyman preaching puritanical doctrines in the fields, and frequently clashing with the majority of his clerical brethren.[9] Although critical, these reports often served to enhance his reputation north of the Border. As the staunch Presbyterian, Ralph Erskine, recognised in his letter to Whitefield in 1739: "What they [the hostile press] design for your hurt and reproach does in the eyes of all that know religion redound to your advantage and honour."[10]

Not everyone was prepared to accept the views of the press. Many others reached their own conclusions through reading Whitefield's published writings, prior to and during his ministry in Scotland. In the manuscript testimonies of the Cambuslang converts, several reported that they had read his Journals, letters and sermons. These testimonies of 35 men and 71 women from a variety of ages, areas and social backgrounds are a rich source for popular reactions to the revival at Cambuslang, and to the ministry of Whitefield.[11] One of those interviewed, Mary Scot, a woman of 24 reported: "In reading Mr. Whitfild's 2 leters to Bishop Tillotson I was much

affected with yr last, so I had strong inclination to hear him".[12] Another young woman wrote: "When I read Mr. Whitefields Journals before he came to Scotland, I was glad that God had raised up so remarkable an Instrument of good to many...and I thought that if I might hear him, I might get good also".[13] Others were impressed by accounts of conversions in New England through Whitefield's ministry, read to them by their minister, William MacCulloch of Cambuslang.[14]

Eagerly awaited, when Whitefield arrived in Scotland he was wooed by the Secederes, with whom he had been in correspondence for two years, and by evangelical Kirkmen, keen to benefit from his successful evangelistic ministry. Prior to his arrival he wrote: "Invitations, both from the Secederes and others who do not secede from the Kirk, are very strong."[15] But he quickly became the source of major controversy. Arriving at Dunfermline on July 30, 1741, he preached at Ralph Erskine's seceding meeting house, Erskine then accompanying him into the pulpit of Edinburgh's Canon-gate church.[16] However, any hopes that Whitefield might be a bridge between the evangelicals of the Kirk and the Secession, were quickly dashed. In a meeting at Dunfermline on 5th August, the Secederes attempted to instruct him concerning the divine authorship of Presbyterian church government and the Solemn League and Covenant, and tried to insist that, while in Scotland, he only preached for them, but all without success.[17] In his unrestricted evangelism Whitefield thus clashed with men who shared his moderate Calvinism and his commitment to conversionist preaching, but who had far sharper views of the importance of church government and who, particularly in 1741, wanted to prevent him from preaching in the Church of Scotland in a manner which would strengthen the hand of her "corrupt judicatories."

The most important effect of this disagreement was that Whitefield spent the rest of his ministry in Scotland preaching almost solely within the boundaries of the Kirk. In 1741 he was warmly received by evangelical ministers, who saw him as a means of checking the growing rationalistic cause of the Moderates within the Kirk, and the secessionist cause of the Erksines without. Under fire from the Seceders for staying within a "corrupt" Establishment, the evangelicals warmly welcomed Whitefield into their pulpits, calculating that his success could be used as proof that God had not wholly departed from the Church of Scotland.

Whitefield's ministry in 1741 centred around Edinburgh, Glasgow and other strategic locations in the Lowlands. In Edinburgh he preached twice a day, with great success, to large and attentive congregations.[18] In Glasgow, he ministered twice a day for five days in the High Church yard to huge congregations where at least fifty persons were "savingly converted" while many others were greatly strengthened in their faith.[19] At Aberdeen he preached on the invitation of Ogilvie, for two or three years his correspondent and evangelical minister of the city. However, Ogilvie's co-pastor was John Bisset, described by Whitefield as "neither a Seceder, nor quite a Kirk-man, having great fault to find with both".[20] Having prejudiced the magistrates of the city against Whitefield's coming, Bisset now publicly prayed and preached against him. Avoiding the controversy, Whitefield preached with such success that the magistrates of the city apologised for the treatment he had received and offered him the freedom of the city. Ogilvie humbly acknowledged that the evangelist had been sent to teach him "how to preach."[21] From Aberdeen Whitefield went to Dundee, home of the

leading evangelical, John Willison, preaching there and in surrounding towns before returning to Edinburgh and then leaving for Wales. The fruits of this first visit were evident: many experienced a first-time conversion, countless others felt their faith revived.

More significantly, this visit acted as a catalyst for the revival which was to break out in Cambuslang, Kilsyth and other western parts of the Lowlands, in the spring of 1742. Cambuslang, on the south shore of the river Clyde, six miles south-west of Glasgow's city centre, was a traditional agricultural community which had recently shared in the prosperity of the neighbouring metropolis and in the 1730s had benefitted from the growth of the cloth industry.[22] Following Whitefield's visit to Glasgow, a new concern for religion appeared in the parish throughout the winter of 1741.[23] In MacCulloch's manuscript testimonies of the Cambuslang converts of 1742, at least fourteen declared that they had been present at Whitefield's preaching in "High-Church Yeard", Glasgow, in 1741. One "heard nine Sermons of him in Glasgow and fouer in Paisley".[24] Another young woman from Cambuslang, who had heard Whitefield in Glasgow, was astonished at the change in the life of one of her friends who had been converted under his ministry. She reported:

> "I was frequently hearing...of some people that had been awakened at Glasgow, on whose lives there was a great change to the better: But I was not much concern'd about my self as yet: Only I prayed More frequently, and read my Bible often; and took pleasure in reading that Minrs [Whitefield's] sermons; and the weekly history after it was published."[25]

Most important was Whitefield's influence on MacCulloch himself. Although he had preached on regeneration during the 1730s, several of his congregation noted a discernible change of emphasis, beginning in 1740, when he not only began to read reports of conversions in New

England under the ministry of Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, but in February 1741 started to preach on the necessity of regeneration with a greater sense of urgency. Following Whitefield's first visit to Scotland there was a further change in MacCulloch's preaching. After hearing him preach on the new birth on Martimas 1741, John Aiken thought that "Either the Minister or I was changed".[25] Others agreed, one young woman commenting how in the wake of Whitefield's visit "my own Minister [MacCulloch] preached much better than he used to." In January and February 1742 MacCulloch noted that his congregation was becoming increasingly responsive to his sermons on regeneration.

The decisive change seems to have been brought about partly by the actions of two converts of Whitefield's Glasgow ministry, Ingram More, a shoemaker, and Robert Bowman, a weaver, prominent within the parish's fast-growing artisan community. In January, they began travelling from house to house with a petition to request MacCulloch to give a weekly lecture. At the same time they resorted to a traditional seventeenth century instrument of revival, by setting up a network of prayer societies within the parish. Ninety heads of families, representing over a half of the total households of Cambuslang, subscribed to the document, and the societies began to meet for prayer every night, usually led by laymen. In mid February, at the third of a series of prayer meetings for the spread of the gospel, MacCulloch preached and fifty persons came under serious conviction of sin.[26] As the number of converts grew, not only MacCulloch, but More and Bowman and other lay leaders, mostly weavers, carefully organised the follow-up. It is noticeable that more than two-thirds of the Cambuslang converts whose origins can be traced came

from the artisanal community, more than a half from weaving families; a strikingly high proportion in a still predominantly agricultural community. This susceptibility of artisans and craftsmen illustrates a pattern noted by historians of the English Revival.[29] Excitedly, MacCulloch wrote to Whitefield of these events, urging him to return to Scotland and help gather in the harvest.[30]

In June 1742, Whitefield returned for his second visit to begin four of the most dramatic months of his ministry. He headed immediately for Edinburgh, where, it was reported: "the Fruits of his last Visit appear visibly, and the Work of God is breaking out in many Places."[31] He preached in the churches, in the open air and in the hospitals where his congregations were bigger than ever. During this time a huge open-air amphitheatre was erected in the park of Heriot's Hospital, known as the Orphan house Park; as his biographer, Luke Tyerman commented: "Such was Whitefield's cathedral in the metropolis of Scotland."[32]

He then journeyed west to Kilsyth, where a revival had broken out, following the events at Cambuslang, under the evangelical ministry of James Robe, soon to become the great apologist of the Scottish revival. Whitefield preached to a crowd of ten thousand. Writing to John Cennick he tried to describe the scene: "Such a Commotion I believe you never saw. Oh what Agonies and Cries were there!" He arrived in Glasgow to an enthusiastic welcome: by three in the morning crowds were gathering to hear him, and at seven he preached to many thousands and again in the evening.[33] From Glasgow Whitefield travelled to Cambuslang. MacCulloch had written to him of a "very earnest Desire in Multitudes" to hear Whitefield preach and "a Longing" for his arrival. Recognising Whitefield's crowd-pulling

appeal he invited him to come and preach at the weekly lecture and to remain for some time: "Vast multitudes us'd to resort here often, and no doubt will increase much upon Notice of your Coming."[34] Upon arrival, Whitefield immediately preached three times and with astonishing results, especially at eleven at night when, he wrote, the "Commotions...far out-did all I ever saw in America."[35]

After preaching in the West for a week - at Paisley, Irvine, Mearns, Cumbernauld and Falkirk - in every place drawing "the greatest commotion among the people as was ever known," he returned to Edinburgh.[36] From there he wrote to a correspondent, comparing the Revival to that which he had experienced in America:

> "The awakening here in Scotland is unspeakable. The congregations in the West, are just like those which you and I saw in *Foggs-Manor* [Fagg's Manor], in Pensylvania. GOD seems to awaken scores together."[37]

In mid-July he returned to Cambuslang to assist in an out-door celebration of Communion. Like the little prayer societies, the eighteenth century Communion seasons provided a link with revivals of an earlier generation, when at the open-air Communion of Shotts in 1630 the Spirit's reviving presence had been much in evidence. Whitefield's own account of this fresh divine effusion is worth quoting at some length:

> "On Sabbath-Day, never was such a Sight seen in *Scotland*. There were undoubtedly upwards of thirty Thousand People..and the Holy Sacrament was administred in the Fields...On Monday I preached again..But such an universal Shock I never saw before..thousands all bath'd in Tears; some wringing their Hands, others swooning, others crying out..All Night you might you might see Persons in different Companies praying to, and praising God."[38]

Accompanied by Webster, MacCulloch and several other ministers, Whitefield preached throughout the weekend to great effect.

MacCulloch estimated that there had been 500 converts since the revival began at Cambuslang five months previously, not including "those who have been awakened by Mr. Whitefield's Sermons in this Place; [he had preached seventeen times to date in Cambuslang] because I cannot pretend to compute them." [39].

The testimonies of the Cambuslang converts are evidence of the extraordinary effect of Whitefield's preaching. Most of them were young, in their late teens or early twenties, had had a fairly strict Presbyterian upbringing, but no experience of conversion until being awakened at either Glagow or Cambuslang. One of Whitefield's sermons, *Thy Maker is Thy Husband*, was particularly effective.[40]. Preached for 1½ hours on a Sunday night to the whole gathering after the sacrament was over, it was referred to most frequently by the converts, some of whom had clearly responded to its deliberate use of sexual imagery.[41]. One young man recalled how:

> "He [Whitefield] said he was sent to take a wife for his Master's Son, asking if there was any there that wanted to take Christ for their Husband, and bidding them come and he would marry them to Christ, after which he laid out the Terms and I found my heart Sweetly to agree."[42].

David McLarty, single and twenty-one, "almost cried out for joy at the sweet offers of Christ as a husband to my soul, and I was ready to strike hands on the Bargain". Meeting another young man, whom he knew, he threw his arms around him and said that Whitefield had married his soul to Christ.[43]. Sixteen year old Margaret Carson vividly recollected the alternative; not to be married to Christ was "to have the Devil for your Husband and you sleep all night in the Devil's arms."[44].

A second Communion was held at Cambuslang in August, during which an estimated 30,000 - 40,000 people were said to have attended, with 3,000 communicating. As many as twenty-four ministers were present to assist, including Webster from Edinburgh, the highly reputed John McLaurin and John Gillies from Glasgow, Robe from Kilsyth and the ageing John Bonar of Torpichen, one of the original Marrow Men. MacCulloch described Whitefield's ministry at this second communion:

> "Mr. Whitefield's sermons on Saturday, Sabbath and Monday were attended with much power, particularly that on Sabbath night about ten o'clock, and that on Monday, several crying out, and a very great but decent Weeping and Morning was observable thro' the Auditory. On Sabbath Evening while he was serving some Tables, he appear'd to be so filled with the Love of God, as to be in a Kind of Ecstasy or Transport, and Communicated with much of that blessed Frame."[45]

This was the high water mark of the revival and the scenes of spiritual fervour aroused post-millenial expectations. The young John Erskine wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Sign of the Times Consider'd* indicating that the work begun in New England and at Cambuslang was but a mere "PRELUDE of the Glorious Things promised to the CHURCH in the latter Ages." Having examined Scripture-Prophecies for "the Signs and Forerunners of the Revival of Religion in the latter Days", he saw them fulfilled in the present awakenings in New England and the West of Scotland.[46]

Erskine's frequent references to the events in New England, both of the 1734 Northampton Revival and the Great Awakening of 1740-42, highlight the importance of links between Scottish and American evangelicals. Scots ministers attempted to exploit this to their advantage, presenting the larger colonial Awakening in America as linked to the revival that had begun at Cambuslang, and evidence that this was indeed a Divine work. As Susan O'Brien has shown, Erskine,

Robe, MacCulloch and Webster and others engaged in a fruitful transatlantic correspondence with their American counterparts, Benjamin Colman, William Cooper, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Foxcroft and Thomas Prince, with Whitefield as a linkman in a great revival network. [47].

Further links were established through the writings of Jonathan Edwards, who became accepted among Calvinist circles as the transatlantic revival theologian. Scots ministers eagerly seized upon *The Distinguishing Marks*, which provided them with a detailed analysis and rationale of conversion, and which could be used both in detecting the "defective" from the true conversion, and in countering the attacks of their Erskinite opponents. The work was recommended by Whitefield to MacCulloch and advertised in the evangelical magazines as "earnestly recommended by the Reverend Dr. Watts, and the Reverend Mr. Whitefield to the serious perusal of all Christians, and to Ministers of every denomination in particular."[48].

The anti-revival network was less well-established but nevertheless well-informed. The channel ran from the New England "Old Lights" to English Dissenters and Scottish Presbyterians. The most serious colonial anti-revival publication was Charles Chauncy's anonymous pamphlet on *The State of Religion in New England since the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Arrival There* (1742).[49]. This knowledgeable piece attempted to refute those who had glorified the New England Awakening, and was swiftly denounced by both Whitefield and John McLaurin, in an effort to minimise the damage it could do in Scotland.[50]. Soon after, New England antirevival sermons began to be published in Scotland, notably Chauncy's *New Creature* and John Caldwell's *Impartial Trial of the Spirit*. The final assault,

delivered a few days after Whitefield had left for England, was the publication of Chauncy's anonymous letter to George Wishart, one of Edinburgh's liberal ministers and brother of the Principal of Edinburgh University. In it Chauncy berated the New England revival for its extempore preaching, illiterate lay exhorters and emotional excesses, which bore all the hallmarks of enthusiasm.[51].

But it was the Seceders who were the quickest to attack the link with the American revival. James Fisher, minister of the Associate Presbytery in Glasgow was keen to point out that "the Work at Cambuslang...was produced by their [the supporters of the revival] extraordinary fervent Desires of the Success of the Work abroad, whereof Mr. Whitefield was the chief Human Instrument, and to be sharers of the same very Spirit," and devoted a lengthy section of his pamphlet to Jonathan Edwards' *Distinguishing Marks* "so highly extoll'd by Promoters" of the Cambuslang revival. Whatever Edwards' intention might have been, Fisher argued,

> "the manifest Design of his Work, is to overthrow the very Foundation of Faith, and all practical Godliness, and to establish mere Enthusiasm, and strong Delusion, in the Room of true Religion, revealed and required in the Word."[52].

The Seceders went so far as to declare a public fast to attack the Revival.

Despite opposition, the revival spread from Cambuslang to nearby parishes in and around Glasgow, moving northwards through Calder, Kilsyth, Cumbernauld to the Presbytery of Auchterarder. North of the River Tay, aside from some fruit in Dundee and Aberdeen (due partly to Whitefield's visits and the presence of active evangelical ministers, Willison and Ogilvie respectively), there was little evidence of revival until 1743-1744, when it appeared in the northern counties of

Ross and Sutherland.[53] Thereafter there were no important fresh outbreaks, but the long-term effects of the Awakening were considerable. On his return to Scotland in 1748, Whitefield was pleased to report of the revival that "the fruits of it yet remain."[54] This is backed up by MacCulloch's report drawn up in 1751, listing 400 people awakened in Cambuslang who had not fallen away.[55] In Kilsyth, James Robe admitted large scale backsliding, but in 1751 claimed that there were still "some who continue not only living but lively Christians."[56] The immediate fruit went to the Church of Scotland, which further derived some benefit from the alienation of many from the Seceders because of their opposition to the revival: in the long run, however, many of the new converts appear to have left the Kirk, when evangelical ministers were succeeded by Moderates. At Kilsyth, for example, Robe's successor, John Telfer, alienated many of the congregation, who decided to join the Relief Church. In Cambuslang there was a similar secession under MacCulloch's successor, Dr. Meek, to the Relief Church at Belshill. Sadly, the Moderate stance on patrons' rights caused a friction which eventually damaged almost every parish associated with the revival movement of 1742.[57]

3. Reactions to Whitefield.

But what was it in Whitefield's ministry in Scotland, that made it both influential and yet controversial? How did an Episcopalian priest achieve so much in Presbyterian Scotland?

a) The Calvinism of the Marrow.

Crucial to Whitefield's success in Scotland was his Calvinism, which enabled him, unlike Wesley, to claim a link with the country's rich Reformation heritage, and ensured him an altogether more cordial reception than his more firmly Anglican colleague.[58] By the time of his arrival in Scotland in August 1741, Whitefield was known to be confirmed in his Calvinism and thus gained a sympathetic hearing in a country where the Westminster Confession was still accepted as the standard of orthodoxy.

Moreover, Whitefield's Calvinism was of a type that harmonized well with the evangelicalism of the Marrow and therefore with the doctrine of both the Seceders and the Evangelical party within the Church of Scotland. As we have already seen, one of the major sources of Whitefield's early Calvinism in 1739 had been his correspondence with Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, and through them, with the evangelical Calvinism of Thomas Boston and the Marrow. Throughout Whitefield's absence in America, they had continued to correspond; the Erskines found the young evangelist increasingly open to the Calvinist decrees, and plied him with copies of their sermons, more of Thomas Boston's works and the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*.

Not surprisingly, on his arrival in Scotland in 1741, Whitefield began preaching sermons which contained little that was inconsistent

with a moderate or evangelical Calvinist position. His sermons preached in September 1741 at the High-Church-Yard in Glasgow reveal that his doctrine was by now clearly orthodox: in his discourse on *The Believer's Golden Chain*, for example, he emphasised the importance of the doctrine of election, recommending Thomas Boston's writings to his hearers, and rounded on Arminianism as "Popery at the Bottom."[59]

The Secederes, and other nonconforming Presbyterians, while disagreeing with Whitefield over church government and the extent of his mission, continued to acknowledge his doctrinal orthodoxy. The anonymous author of *A Conference Betwixt a Conformist and a Nonconformist, anent hearing Mr. George Whitefield Preach the Gospel*, while launching bitter invectives against Whitefield's churchmanship, did not object to "the Matter of his Doctrine," which was "pretty faithful, particularly upon the Head of Justification before God, thro' the imputed Righteousness of Jesus."[60] Likewise Ralph Erskine, writing in August 1741, after their dispute earlier in the month, allowed that the young evangelist was concerned with "the Doctrines of Grace, the flowers of the garden," although unwilling to turn his thoughts "so far from these as to take any care if the hedges, by which the flowers of the garden should be fenc'd."[61]

The Kirk evangelicals also appreciated Whitefield's orthodoxy. One of their leaders, John Willison of Dundee, emphasised tht Whitefield was:

> "throroughly *Calvinist* and sound in the Doctrines of original Sin, the New-birth, Justification by Christ, the necessity of imputed Righteousness, the Operations of the Holy Ghost, etc."[62]

Likewise, Ogilivie of Aberdeen confirmed that there was indeed "nothing new" in Whitefield's doctrine.[63]

Few critics questioned Whitefield's Calvinist orthodoxy. John Bisset was one, attacking the Arminianism of his earlier sermons of 1737-39 and criticising his replies to *The Querists*, but even the High Calvinist Bisset did not find any evidence of Whitefield's Arminianism while preaching in Scotland.[64] The grounds of attack did not rest on his commitment to Calvinism but on his tolerance for non-Calvinists. James Erskine, writing to James Hutton in London, explained:

> "He professes and preaches Calvinism as to the Decrees of Grace etc: yet says he knows good men who are rather Arminian, and disapproves of uncharitableness towards such."[65]

If this irenical spirit kept the door open for reconciliation with the Wesleys, it was less easily understood north of the Border. As for the Episcopalians, they, like their English and American brethen naturally opposed this Anglican Calvinist. The anonymous author of *A Letter from A Gentleman in the Country, to his Friend in EDINBURGH, concerning Mr. WH--F--D*, took him to task for his antinomian doctrine of *sole fide*, suggesting that he should read Burnet and other Anglican authors concerning the need for repentance and good works.[66]

b) Experience or Enthusiasm.

Whitefield's Calvinism was not merely dogmatically orthodox, it was also highly experiential. As in New England, this powerful combination of Reformed doctrine with a strongly experiential emphasis upon the New Birth had a great impact on his Scottish hearers.

In his experimental preaching in 1741-42, Whitefield acknowledged his debt to the enduring influence of the Scots Episcopalian, Henry Scougal. In his sermon on *The Kingdom of God* Whitefield refers to his

own encounter with Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* and how he discovered that Christianity did not belong to any particular denomination or depend on the performance of outward means, but was a "Union of the Soul with God, the Image of God wrought upon the Heart, or *Christ Jesus* formed in us."[67]. In *The Duty of a Gospel Minister* he emphasised the need for every minister to have an inward understanding of the doctrines of grace. With a dig perhaps at the Moderates in the Kirk he added that:

> "It is true a Man may study a Scheme of Divinity; and in order to get into a Place, to please a Patron, or some great Man, he may get *Calvin's* Scheme, or any other Scheme of Religion: What is all this? if it doth not come from the Heart, the poor People cannot expect to be profited at all."

He urged all ministers present to examine themselves to see "whether ye feel these Truths ye are preaching or not."[68].

Whitefield's insistence on the necessity of assurance of salvation was new to many of his Scottish hearers. In the *Believer's Golden Chain* he asked his congregation:

> "Has there been an Application of Jesus Christ to your Hearts, otherwise your Faith is no Faith at all. Talking of a distant Christ..is not sufficient...Do you know there was a Time when your Soul was espoused to Jesus Christ...? Do ye feel God dwelling in your Heart? Have ye got the Witness of God's Spirit in yourselves?"[69].

One of the Cambuslang converts, recollected hearing Whitefield observe "that many satisfy'd themselves with the faith of adherence but were a little pains about the faith of assurance", and concluded: "I thought I had been far from giving due pains as I ought to obtain the faith of assurance."[70].

The importance of experience was not new to those Scottish evangelicals who had imbibed the spirit of *The Marrow of Modern*

Divinity. In assessing the theology of the *Marrow*, Professor Hugh Watt has concluded that while it contained substantially the old Calvinistic doctrines, it nonetheless brought about a change of emphasis:

> "..in the preaching of the Evangelicals whether of the Church of Scotland or of the Secession or of the Relief..there was a distinct reaction from the impersonalities of a rigid doctrinal scheme, into a warmth of personal religion, called by opponents "enthusiasm", and by its supporters "sweet Gospel truths.""[71].

Evangelical Kirkmen were particularly appreciative of the experiential tone of Whitefield's preaching. Ogilvie of Aberdeen was one, who, while conceding to opponents that there was nothing novel in Whitefield's doctrine, hastened to point out that there were:

> "two things in Gospel Ordinances, Purity and Power: the first in Mercy we still have in some good Measure, the Complaints of want of this are very open. But the last we sadly confess the want of: And this is what attends the Gospel dispensed by him [Whitefield]."[72].

The testimonies of the Cambuslang converts are evidence of this "power" at work. Several felt strong and sensible convictions of sin on hearing Whitefield preach. One youth of about fifteen years old recollected hearing Whitefield say: "O Lord how many are there that trample they blood under their feet, and Despise thee and they Gospel:" upon this (he reported) "I got a full view of my Sins, and tho't I saw nothing but the wrath of God before me, and hell was ready to receive me."[73].

Some conservative Calvinists regarded Whitefield's preaching of "experience" as unbiblical "enthusiasm". John Bisset was quick to acknowledge that he did not regard "as enthusiastical, the insuperable Work of the Spirit of God, in the Regeneration and Conversion of a Sinner, or the precious Doctrine of Justification freely, by Grace,

through the Faith of Chirst, as the Lord our Righteousness." But enthusiasm was very different: it was "a strong and fervent-like Impression upon a Person, without any Thing of Reason or Revelation, to account for it, or to support it" - impressions of which, Whitefield was all too fond. Bisset cited examples of enthusiasm from Whitefield's *Short Account* and other published writings. Like New England "Old Lights", he was unsatisfied with the evangelist's account of his conversion. How could Whitefield have experienced "great Foretastes" of God's love while at St. John's Bristol, when all the while he was still unconverted? [74].

Similarly, the Secederes became uneasy at Whitefield's enthusiasm, the fruits of which they perceived among the Cambuslang converts. William Wilson criticised Whitefield's account of his conversion, since he did not seem:

> "to have any better Foundation for it, than that which the blasphemous deluded Quakers, and other Enthusiasts place their happiness upon, which is only the indwelling of the Spirit of Error and Delusion in their Souls; for all his pretended Foretastes of God's love, Raptures, Rays, Impressions, and Spirit's Workings to adopt, purify and direct him, have nothing of the Word of God in them."[75].

The "evil Consequences" of the "faintings", "convulsions" and "bodily distresses" found in the Cambuslang converts were evidence not of a great conviction of sin, as the Evangelical party contended, but of the devil's work.

c) Extempore field preaching.

If Whitefield's stress on immediate experience struck the Scots as unusual, so too did his preaching style. As in England and America, so in Scotland he held audiences captive by his dramatic

pulpit delivery. The choice of his sermons, most notably that of "marrying" his hearers to Christ, was as elsewhere, perfectly suited to the situation of many of his audience. John Gillies, later a close friend, observed at first-hand the evangelist's technique. Like Cornelius Winter, he remarked upon the serious demeanour with which Whitefield delivered his messages, "with a solemnity of manner, and an anxious expression of countenance." Not content with mere oral communication, Whitefield was a master in the use of body language:

> "every accent of his voice spoke to the ear, every feature of his face, every motion of his hands, and every gesture spoke to he eye; so that the most dissipated and thoughtless found their attention involuntarily fixed."

Even apparent lapses, such as a faltering voice or an outburst of tears, merely served to heighten the sense of drama and the impact of his theme.[76].

Rationalist critics did not question his success: instead, like Rev. Alexander Garden of South Carolina, they put this down to his unique style, rather than to his doctrine or to any supernatural influences at work in the lives of his hearers. One opponent noted how, as in New England, many who attended his preaching "'tho (as they themselves owned) they heard no new Doctrine, yet they found themselves penetrated and affected beyond what ever they had been from the ordinary Ministrations of their own Pastors." He thus advised Whitefield's hearers to examine themselves "whether their being so much affected was owing to the Singularity of his Action, Voice, Vehemence, his own Seriousness, or to the Weight of his Doctrine, and the Forcibleness and Strength of the Motives and Arguments by which he supported it."[77].

If Whitefield's extempore preaching was not new to his Scots hearers, neither was his field preaching. Whereas in England he had aroused tremendous opposition to his field-preaching, this was not the case in Scotland, where the covenanters had passed on to their descendants a tradition of religious gatherings in the fields. This practice had continued, particularly during the dispensing of the Lord's Supper,[78] as was most strikingly demonstrated at the two Communions at Cambuslang in the summer of 1742. The situation was ideal for Whitefield, whose peculiar talents for speaking in the open air to large audiences had been well demonstrated for the past two years in England and America. When he began preaching in the open air at the Orphan-Hospital Park at Edinburgh, for example, this was no novelty to an audience, who were far too numerous to have been contained in any church of the city, and who were well accustomed to field-preaching. Whitefield's practice thus came not as a shock, but as a reminder of the Covenanting past.[79]

d) Itinerancy and Ministerial Commission.

It was not Whitefield's practice of open air preaching that was questioned, but his right to preach at all. What was an ordained Anglican clergyman doing, haranguing crowds in Presbyterian Scotland?

The Secederes, the first to invite him, were, paradoxically, the first to question his commission. The original intention of the Erskinites was to elicit Whitefield's support for their secession from the Church of Scotland. Even before his arrival in Scotland, differences of opinion over this issue began to emerge. In a

revealing letter to Ebenzer Erskine, dated May 14th, 1741, Whitefield wrote:

> "I received a kind letter from your brother Ralph, who thinks it best for me wholly to join the associate presbytery, if it should please God to send me to Scotland. This I cannot altogether come into. I come only as an occasional preacher, to preach the simple gospel to all that are willing to hear me, of whatever denomination...My business seems to be to evangelise, to be a Presbyter at large."[80].

However, the Associate Presbytery were clearly concerned that Whitefield's preaching for the Church of Scotland would weaken their own position. As Ebenezer Erskine wrote in reply; the proposal that Whitefield join them arose from "no party views", but that if he could agree to preach for them "it might contribute much to weaken the enemy's hand, and to strengthen our's in the work of the Lord."[81]. The Erskines clearly recognised Whitefield's effectiveness as an evangelist and the damage that he could do to their cause if he was seen to be preaching for the Church of Scotland. It was this concern which was at the root of their eventual dispute at Dunfermline on August 5th, 1741.

Their fears were partly justified. There is evidence that Whitefield's ministry and, in particular, the Cambuslang revival, was instrumental in drawing many back from the brink of secession. Of the 106 cases in the MacCulloch Manuscripts, nineteen of the converts gave testimony that they had at one time worshipped with the Secederes. In the hostile opinion of John Bisset, the Evangelicals had "invited, imployed, and caressed, a subverter of our Covenant, as it would seem, for this end, to break the Secederes."[82]. Certainly leading evangelicals capitalised on the events at Cambuslang to demonstrate that the Spirit of God had not departed from the Church of Scotland.

Alexander Webster in his pamphlet *Divine Influence*, drew from the revival the lesson that:

> "It may teach the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY not to limit the Holy One of Israel in the Dispensations of his Grace, since God has yet made Choice of our Zion, and delights to dwell with the Gates of our Jerusalem."[83]

The evangelicals used several different arguments to justify their acceptance of an Episcopalian minister. The anonymous author of *An Apology for the Presbyterians of Scotland who are Hearers of the Reverened Mr. George Whitefield* sought to demonstrate that keeping communion with Whitefield implied no disloyalty to Presbyterian principles. He argued that after the Reformation there had been no controversy between episcopal and presbyterian church government and that conflict had arisen from the religious struggle of 1638, citing the example of Andrew and James Melville as hearers of the bishops and deans of the Church of England in 1606.[84] John Willison of Dundee saw Whitefield as a New Testament-style evangelist, with a ministry to the church at large.[85]

Others in the Kirk resented Whitefield's preaching in Scotland. In John Bisset's opinion:

> "the hearing and embracing the Ministry of an Episcopalian, by any professed Presbyterian, is unlawful, and inconsistent with his professed Principles, and solemn ties and Obligations."

What need was there to summon Whitefield to preach? There were still "many Ministers in Scotland, who preach[ed] the Doctrines of Reconciliation, and far beyond Mr. Whitefield..."[86] Another stressed Whitefield's lack of a proper education and his relative youthfulness:

> "Was there really a Necessity of sending down a young Man, meanly educated, of Batchellor of Arts standing, and about twenty eight Years of Age, to teach the Scottish Clergy their Duty.."[87]

e) "In Scotland a Kirkman".

The main opposition to Whitefield's ministry in Scotland - whether from the Seceders, the Cameronians, and "High" Kirkmen such as Bisset in 1741-42 - was on account of his Anglicanism. Memories of the Civil War were still very much alive and many Presbyterians still considered the Solemn League and Covenant, with its oath to extirpate episcopacy, as binding. In addition, many saw the Act of Union as as spiritual disaster for Scotland, opening the door to theological liberalism and moral decay; the Seceders, for example described the Act as "one of our public national sins."[88] It is hardly suprising that Whitefield was sharply opposed from many quarters; what is remarkable is the extent to which he was able to overcome such prejudices. James Erskine, commenting on this during the evangelist's first visit in 1741, wrote: "That our Presbyterians would hold Communion with such a one, would have appear'd incredible 20 or 30 years ago or less..."[89] In the hostile opinion of John Bisset, Whitefield had "done more to promote effectually the Cause of Episcopacy, and a liking to it in Scotland, than all the Means, fair or foul, that have been used since our Reformation from Popery."[90]

Whitefield's own attitude towards his Episcopalian background, while ministering in Scotland, partly explains his success. Concerning his own ordination, he let slip to Ralph Erskine that "he then knew no other way, but said that he would not have it that way again for a thousand worlds."[91] This was confirmed by the independent report of John Willison, who wrote in October 1741:

> "I know Mr. Whitefield sees so far already into the Corruptions of the Church of England, that if he were now to be ordain'd he wou'd not take it from the Bishops there for the World, and

ambivalence was expressed by John Willison, himself a staunch Presbyterian:

> "Tho' Mr. Whitefield be ordained according to his Education, a Minister of the Church of England, yet we are to regard him as one whom God has raised up to witness against the Corruptions of that Church, whom God is still inlightening, and causing to make advances to us, he has already conform'd to us both in Doctrine and worship, and lys open to light to conform to us in other Points."[98]

Both the Erskines and Willison misinterpreted Whitefield's openness to Presbyterian principles as a sign that he might be prepared to renounce his Anglicanism, a step that he seems not to have even contemplated. Unlike his ministry in the American Colonies in 1739-41, there is little evidence to suggest that in Scotland Whitefield was widely received as a "Dissenter Priest" - undermining and attacking the Anglican Church from within - or that he himself tried to cultivate such an image. In fact, while keen to work with the Church of Scotland, at times he deliberately emphasised his attachment to the Church of England. In a revealing letter to James Hutton, written during Whitefield's first visit in 1741, James Erskine noted how:

> "He [Whitefield] avows and owns himself a Member and Minister of the Church of England, and that the Government and worship of it is lawful, and that Presbitery is not of Divine Right, and that the Solemn League and Covenant is a sinfull Oath as too much narrowing the Communion of Saints."[99]

This was hardly the kind of language to ease Presbyterian consciences, though it may be interpreted to some extent in the context of his defence against the rigidly Presbyterian stance of the Seceders. However, in the same year his friend, John Willison, found him equally determined not sever his connections with the Church of

England. In reply to a letter from Willison, Whitefield expressed his dismay at his "sectarian spirit", adding:

> "You seem not satisfied, unless I declare myself a Presbyterian, and openly renounce the Church of England. God knows that I have been faithful in bearing a testimony against what I think is corrupt in that Church. I have also shewn my freedom in communicating with the Church of Scotland, and in baptizing children in their own way. I can go no further."[100].

Whitefield's willingness to communicate with the Church of Scotland while affirming his Anglicanism was remarked upon by his wife, writing to John Cennick on June 16, 1742, during Whitefield's second visit to Scotland. She wrote how he:

> "publickly declared here that he was a Member of the Church of England, and a Curate thereof; and yet was permitted to Receive and to Assist at the Lord's Supper in the Churches at Edinburgh".[101].

Opposition to Whitefield's Episcopalianism was widespread. The Seceders, John Bisset and the Cameronians all regarded this as the prime reason for opposing his ministry in Scotland. One fiery pamphlet was entitled *The Declaration, Protestation, and Testimony of the suffering Remnant of the anti-Popish, anti-Lutheran, anti-Prelatic, anti-Whitefieldian, anti-Erastian, anti-Sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland.*[102]. All were agreed that since Whitefield was ordained by "an Erastian Bishop", rather than by a presbytery or group of elders, his was "no valid Ordination at all." Adam Gib, in his bitter pamphlet against Whitefield went so far as to conclude that he was in fact therefore "no minister of Christ".[103]. In *The Declaration of the True Presbyterians* against Whitefield and the work at Cambuslang, the Seceder William Wilson of Perth charged him with being "a Member of the prelatick Church of England, whose

hierarchical form of Church-Government, by Archbishops, Bishops, etc. is directly Antichristian."[104].

There was similar resentment at his assisting in the Communion of the Church of Scotland. It was scandalous for him to administer the Bread and the Wine, representing Christ's Body and Blood, in his "foul prelatick Sectarian Hands." It was not permissible to hold communion with a man who was "a scandalous Idolator, being a Member of the Idolatous Church of England", whose deplorable Liturgy retained popish rituals like the signing of the Cross in Baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, vestments and Holy Days.[105].

Whitefield caused great unease by his alleged denial of Christ's kingship over the visible Church. The Seceders had taken great trouble to try and persuade Whitefield of the importance of the visible church and of the divine authorship of Presbyterian church government. By taking the Oath of Supremacy, they charged, he denied Christ's Headship over the Church.[106]. In his defence, Whitefield replied that he accepted Chapter 23 of the Westminster Confession of Faith; that he did "own the Lord Jesus to the blessed Head and King of his Church," although he avoided direct comment on the Royal Supremacy.[107].

But it was perhaps Whitefield's doctrine of the "catholic spirit" which most offended his Presbyterian critics, particularly the Seceders and Cameronians. Far from earning him a reputation for charitableness, it led to the charge that he caused "our beautiful and comely Presbyterian Order of Church Government and Discipline..to be lightly esteemed and undervalued," by joining not only with Kirkmen, but with "Episcopals, Independents, Quakers, and all the Sectaries in

our Land." [108] Adam Gib was convinced that his relativism about issues of church polity threatened not only Presbyterianism, but church government itself:

> "The Panacea, the all-heal Medicine that he [Whitefield] applies to the divided Church, is not merely an Antidote against Presbyterian, Episcopal, Popish or Independent Forms of Communion, but is such a catholick love, as will make light of all Forms of Communion, from a Notion that these Things are beneficial and so worth while, may be found any of these Communions." [109]

His fellow-Seceder, James Fisher of Kinclaven, agreed. Whitefield's "Catholick Scheme of universal love and Communion of all Churches," was built upon the false principle, "that there is no foundation in Scripture or Reason for any one particular Form of Church-Government by another." The same held true of all the "subordinate Promoters of this Work" - Gilbert Tennent in the colonies, Howel Harris in Wales, Willison, Ogilvie, Robe and Webster in Scotland. [110]

At the same time, Whitefield's catholic spirit struck a chord in the bosom of evangelical Presbyterians more concerned with conversionist preaching than with differences over church government. Ogilvie of Aberdeen for one considered "his [Whitefield's] attachment to no Party but to Christ and true Grace alone...a peculiar Excellency in him." Christianity had long been broken into different sects and parties, but now one had appeared "who loudly calls us, and whose Voice the Lord seems to back with Power, to look in to the Original Plan of that Religion we profess." [111] Even as staunch a Presbyterian as John Willison preferred "a pious Christ exalting and Soul winning Minister, whatever be his Denomination", to one of his own party, who had not a true spiritual commission. [112]

Whitefield was keen to defend himself from the imputation that he preached an "indifferentism" to all form of church government. He was, he said,

> "far from being against all church government. How can any church subsist without it? I only urge...that, since holy men differ so much about the form, we should bear with one another, though, in this respect, we are not of one mind...I would bear and converse with all...who do not err in fundamentals, and who give evidence that they are true lovers of the Lord Jesus. This is what I mean by a *catholic spirit.*"[113].

In reply to Ralph Erskine, who had accused him of being preoccupied only with the doctrines of grace, which were like the flowers of the garden, but unconcerned about erecting the hedge of church government and discipline, he acknowledged that his first call was to evangelise, but went on:

> "so far from not setting a hedge about our Lord's garden, if I were called to it, I should set a much closer hedge than that which 'The Associate Presbytery' are planting. I should enquire into people's experiences, before I admitted them to the Lord's table. I should have church members meet in church fellowship, and tell one another what God has done for their souls."[114].

Here speaks one whose religious experience had been shaped within the context of the Methodist societies. It seems likely had Whitefield set up new churches he would have modelled them more along the lines of the gathered churches of New England. Yet (unlike Wesley), Whitefield refused to consider setting up separate Methodist societies or churches north of the border. He remained committed to work within the Church of Scotland.

f) Orphan House.

Among the subsidiary causes of hostility to Whitefield were his large collections for the Georgia Orphan House in 1741-42. In his

first visit alone, the *Scots Magazine* was keen to point out, he received £422 18s. 3½d. from public collections, and £149 18s. 2d. from private benefactions, along with small presents of goods.[115] One correspondent, a Mr. Nisbet, who had lived in the Carolinas for thirty years, questioned the expense and practicality of the orphanage, particularly in relation to the relative poverty of Scotland:

> "And of what use can an hospital be in a desart and abandon'd colony? or how can such a house be maintained or supported in that situation, exposed to Spaniards, Indians and runaway Negroes?...as I love my country [Scotland] and know it to be poor, it gives me a great deal of concern that so much money should go out of it, for a project that can answer no valuable purpose."[116]

Whitefield was blamed for so playing on the emotions of simple hearers that he induced them to give beyond their means. His dramatic depiction of the Biblical widow throwing her two mites into the treasury had resulted in several hearers who were themselves on charity giving their all, and having to beg their next meal. His means of collecting were brought under scrutiny: "he makes his last prayer short; thereafter pronounces the blessing, without singing psalms, and then immediately falls a-collecting; in which indeed he shews a great dexterity."[117] Others, Secederes in particular, suspected the motives behind his charitable work. Ralph Erskine suggested that he had begun to preach for the well endowed Kirk because of the relative poverty of the Seceding congregations.[118]

Both in Britain and America hostility towards the Orphan House was such that in 1745-46 Whitefield issued a full account of the institution, published in Scotland, prior to his return in 1748.[119]

4. Later Visits, 1748-68.

By the time of Whitefield's third visit in 1748, the revival had largely died down. He had moderated his tone and retracted some of the "enthusiastic" statements of his earlier ministry. Yet whereas in 1741-42 most opposition came from radical Nonconforming Presbyterians, in 1748 he was greeted with a post-revival reaction from within the Kirk, every bit as severe as that he encountered from the Congregational Establishment in New England in 1744-45. Only a handful of ministers invited him to preach in their pulpits in 1748: in Edinburgh only Alexander Webster and Gusthart, in South Leith John Walker at Canongate and Robert Walker; elsewhere only a few committed evangelical supporters like Robe, Gillies and Erskine in the Glasgow Presbytery, MacCulloch at Cambuslang, Gillespie at Carnock, Adam at Falkirk employed him, while several others, particularly in Glasgow, offered moral support, although unable to give him their pulpits. Erskine related how:

> "Many Ministers who countenanced him in 1741 and 1742, when both his conduct and way of preaching were more exceptionable, kept at a distance from his late harvest, or even appear'd his enemies, and his opposers in general were a great deal more keen and open than in his two former visits, tho' he had given them no new pretext."[120]

Why this sudden change? Reports of the excesses of the work in New England had by now filtered through, but John Erskine's biographer, Sir Henry Moncreiff, writing in 1818, listed other reasons why opposition within the Kirk had not been so vehement in 1741-42. The attack of the Seceders had been so intemperate that Kirkmen were reluctant to be seen to join sides with them by opposing Whitefield. Moreover, given Whitefield's popularity, a direct attack would have been unpopular. He had drawn some of the most distinguished Scots

families to hear him, and had been invited to their houses - among them that of the Lord High Commissioner in the General Assembly. Finally, the long established practice of the Church of Scotland of engaging in occasional ministerial communion with other churches as an act of Protestant solidarity had militated against any direct opposition.[121].

In 1748, however, the ecclesiastical courts registered their formal opposition to his ministry. Several of the major synods, Glasgow and Ayr, Perth and Stirling, Edinburgh and Lothian and Tweedale passed resolutions against allowing him to preach in their pulpits. In the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, the debate focussed upon Whitefield's alleged enthusiasm. One opponent recalled:

> "Has he not said, that every Believer has a full Assurance of Faith, and that 'tis a foolish Thing to bid one examine if he has Faith, for if he has it, he must feel it...Has he not encouraged a Dependence on Impulses, and immediate Revelations, as if Men were now to expect the same Extraordinary Evidence of the Spirit, with which Christians in the primitive Times were favoured."[122].

Even Whitefield's evangelical supporter, John Erskine, acknowledged that the young Anglican had previously given "too great a Regard to Impulses", though to his credit he had since "discovered and renounced this dangerous Principle;" clear reference to Whitefield's admission in 1748, that he had "too much made inward impressions..[his] rule of acting." Erskine admitted too that in 1741-42 Whitefield had preached the necessity of a full assurance of salvation but claimed that he had since changed his stance:

> "it was his Opinion, six Years ago, that every true Believer had a full Assurance of his justify'd State...[and]...that he has said or done things, that tended to encourage an unwarrantable regard to Impressions...But...now he scarce preaches a Sermon, without guarding his Hearers against relying on Impressions, and telling them, that Faith, and a Persuasion we are justified, are

very different Things, and that a holy life is the best Evidence of a gracious State."[123].

Whitefield's homiletic method also came under scrutiny in the debate, particularly his technique of "moving the Passions, without informing the Judgment." Again, John Erskine defended his ally by detecting a change in his preaching style since his return to Scotland, making it rather more in keeping with that of the New England Calvinists. He pointed out that:

> "Mr. Whitefield's Sermons, even when first in Scotland, appeared to some of the best Judges useful and edifying; and these he has preached since he last came among us, have been as accurate and methodical as popular Discourses ought to be; and calculated to inform the Judgment, as well as the Heart; free from the exceptionable, unguarded Expressions which gave Offence when he was first with us."[124].

Erskine argued in vain that Whitefield should be accepted on the basis of the long established practice of the Church of Scotland, with regard to an occasional ministerial communion with foreign churches.[125]. Instead, the Synod eventually adopted a resolution which severely hampered Whitefield's evangelical friends from inviting him into their pulpits. It stated:

> "taking into Consideration, that great Inconvenience may arise from Ministers employing itinerant Preachers, or Stranger Ministers, from Abroad, with whose Characters they may not be sufficiently acquainted, or who may be of doubtful Character, declare it their Judgment, that no Minister of this Synod employ Stranger Ministers, or Preachers, 'till they have Sufficient Evidence of their License or good Character, and be in Readiness to give an Account of his Conduct to his own Presbytery when called."[126].

Similar statements were issued by the synods of Perth and Stirling, Lothian and Tweeddale and the Presbytery of Edinburgh.

Whitefield took these condemnations to heart. According to James Robe, on his return visit in 1750, he "resolved [to] accept of

no invitation from any minister at least about Edinburgh."[127] As in England in 1739, so now in Scotland he was barred from all but the pulpits of a few friendly evangelical ministers, and spent the rest of his ministry in Scotland mainly preaching in the open air, particularly in the Orphan-Hospital Park in Edinburgh and the High-Church-yard in Glasgow. Details of his later visits are rather sparse. He came in, 1751, 1752, 1753, 1756, 1757,[128] 1758, 1759, briefly in 1761 on account of ill-health, then in 1762, 1763, and 1768; in most cases confining his visits to Glasgow and Edinburgh, (in 1757 and 1763 only Edinburgh). Occasionally he preached in other places; in 1762, for example, he was again at Cambuslang. Of these later visits John Gillies wrote:

> "Though after the years 1741 and 1742, there were no such extensive awakenings, Mr. Whitefield's coming to Scotland was always refreshing to serious persons, and seemed to put a new life into them, and also to be a means of increasing their number...It drew several persons to hear the gospel, who seldom went to hear it from other ministers. Young people were much benefited by his ministry, and particularly young students, who became afterwards serious evangelical preachers."[129]

During Whitefield's later years the opposition of 1748 began to diminish, and he began to acquire a measure of respectability, comparable to that of his last three visits to the American colonies. This was in part due to the public retraction of some of the errors in his published writings; to his deliberate decision to preach with greater care on subjects such as assurance or being led by impressions, but also to his delivery of patriotic sermons at times of national crisis and his ability to raise money for local charities.

During the Seven Years War he had begun to preach sermons either stirring up people to fight or pray for the victory of the King's armies against the Popish enemy, and delivered sermons of thanksgiving

for British victories. In Scotland he did likewise, and thereby enhanced his reputation. The *Edinburgh Evening Courant* made particular note of this. In September 1756 Whitefield preached twice a day for three weeks at Edinburgh's Orphan House Park "to very crowded Auditories". The paper commented:

> "As he was frequently very explicit in opening the Miseries of Popish Tyranny and arbitrary Power, and very warm in exhorting his Hearers to loyalty and Courage at Home, and in stirring them up to pray for the Success of his Majesty's forces both by sea and land abroad; we have reason to believe that his Visit at this Juncture has been particularly useful."[130]

Whitefield's charity sermons for various local causes restored a reputation once damaged by the Georgia orphan house affair. Since 1748 he had made a commitment to make no more collections in Scotland for this institution, concentrating his attentions, as in New England, on domestic needs and charities. The effect of this on public perceptions of him was significant. In June 1757, a correspondent for the *Scots Magazine* in Glasgow reported reverentially:

> "The Rev. Mr. Whitefield, at the desire of several of our magistrates, preached a charity-sermon for the benefit of the poor of the city, from Mark vi 34 etc. At the conclusion of his discourse he pressed the charity with many solid arguments...The whole amounted to 58 l. sterling, which is all to be applied to the relief of our poor. After sermon the magistrates waited on Mr. Whitefield, and thanked him for this good office, which has given great and general satisfaction."[131]

Much had indeed changed since the reception had he received less than ten years ago at the Glasgow Synod.

By the time of his last visit in 1768, he had become a familiar and respected figure; almost an institution. Congregations were large, nostalgia was much in evidence, as well as optimism. He reported:

> "Twenty-seven year old friends and spiritual children remember the days of old...and there seems to be a stirring among the dry bones...I am here only in danger of being hugged to death."[132]

Two years later, the once hostile *Scots Magazine* joined in the eulogies over the loss of a man "well known over all the British empire as a faithful, laborious, and successful minister of the gospel of Christ".[133]

CHAPTER SIX: SCOTLAND - FOOTNOTES.

1. *LGW*, 1, pp. 491-530, and 2, pp. 1-30 provides a good summary of some of the main primary source material for 1741 and 742, but is rather scrappy thereafter. *GW*, 2, pp. 83-98, 121-137, is less detailed, and largely follows Tyerman. See also J. Gillies, *Memoirs of the Rev. George Whitefield* (Boston, 1813), pp. 53-55, 58-59, 84, 105-109, 115, 141-142, 147, 154-155, 170. Church histories of Scotland have tended to neglect Whitefield and Cambuslang, concentrating rather on the rise of Moderatism. D. MacFarlan, *Revivals of the Eighteenth Century* (London and Edin., [1845]; reprint. ed. Wheaton Ill., 1980) is, however, useful. More recently A. Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival* (London, 1971), is a sound narrative, but not very critical. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace* (1991) is helpful in placing the Cambuslang Revival in its wider transatlantic context, but was unfortunately published too late to be of much use to this thesis.

2. For background information on the eighteenth century Scottish Church see J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1960), pp. 261 ff.; A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843* (Edinburgh, 1973); and A. J. Campbell, *Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, 1707-1929* (Paisley, 1930).

3. Drummond and Bulloch, op. cit., pp. 31-35.

4. E.[dward] F.[isher], *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, ed. C. G. M'Crie (Glasgow, 1902). See also D. Beaton, "The *Marrow of Modern Divinity* and the Marrow Controversy," in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 1 (Edinburgh, 1926), pp. 112-134 (hereafter *SCHS Records*); and H. Watt, "The Influence of Martin Luther on Scottish Religion in the 18th Century," *SCHS Records*, 6 (Glasgow, 1938), pp. 147-160.

5. E. Erskine, "Christ in the Believer's Arms," in R. and E. Erskine, *A Collection of Sermons* (London, 1738), 1, p. 142.

6. See Burleigh, *Church History*, pp. 295-297; R. B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 32. Sher makes a clear distinction between earlier liberals such as Leechman, and the later group under Robertson. In this context the term "Moderate" denotes "not a general mood of moderation in the Kirk but the particular beliefs and ideological principles of the Robertson Moderates," p. 17.

7. Drummond and Bulloch, *Scottish Church*, pp. 40-44. For a detailed but rather one-sided account of the Secession see J. McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (3rd ed., London, n. d).

8. S. Mechie, "The Theological Climate in Early Eighteenth Century Scotland," in *Reformation and Revolution*, ed., Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh, 1967), pp. 258-72. Mechie proposes a fourfold division of theological thought in early eighteenth century Scotland: Scholastic Calvinism, evangelical Calvinism, liberal Calvinism, and rationalism.

9. The *Scots Magazine*, Feb. 1739, p. 64 (hereafter *SM*); ibid., pp. 64-68, article reprinted from *WM*, Feb. 10, 1739; May 1939, pp. 199-202. The paper continued its hostile line until Whitefield's arrival in

Scotland, when it began to include some articles in his favour, e.g. ibid., July 1741, p. 331.

10. MS. letter, R. Erskine to G. Whitefield, Dunfermline, July 6, 1739, c/o G. Thomas.

11. MS.,"Examination of persons under Spiritual Concern at Cambuslang, during the Revival in 1741-42 by the Revd. William MacCulloch, Minister at Cambuslang," 2 Vols., New College Library, Edinburgh (hereafter M'C MS.).

12. M'C MS., 1, p. 244.

13. Ibid., 2, p. 334-35.

14. Ibid., 2, p. 333; ibid., 1, p. 103.

15. *GWL*, p. 278.

16. Ibid., p. 307.

17. Ibid., pp. 307-308; for the Seceders' version of the meeting see Donald Fraser, *The Life and Diary of the Reverend Ralph Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1834), pp. 332-335.

18. *WH*, 21, Whitefield to Harris, Edinburgh, Aug. 15, 1741.

19. Ibid., 41-42, extract from letter of MacCulloch to Whitefield.

20. *GWL*, p. 328.

21. *The Glasgow Weekly History Relating to the Progress of the Gospel At Home and Abroad Being A Collection of Letters, partly reprinted from the London-Weekly-History, and Partly printed here at Glasgow*, (Glasgow, 1743), 28. This was the Scottish equivalent of the London *Weekly History*, set up by MacCulloch after Whitefield's first visit in 1741 (hereafter *Glasgow WH*).

22. Ned C. Landsman, "Evangelists and Their Hearers," *Journal of British Studies*, 28 (1989) pp. 120-149; Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 29-31, 44-52. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 159-160 has concluded that Cambuslang was "as likely a candidate for revival as any Scottish parish."

23. M'C MS., 2, p. 343.

24. Ibid., 2, p. 243.

25. Ibid., 1, pp. 20-21.

26. Ibid., 1, p. 461.

27. Ibid., 1, pp. 20-21.

28. [J. Robe], *A Short Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang* (Glasgow, 1742), p. 5.

29. Landsman, "Evangelists and Their Hearers", pp. 120-149. For a powerful refutation of Landsman's arguments, see Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 201-217, where he states that "Landsman fails to demonstrate convincingly his central thesis that 'under the guidance of those master weavers, the Cambuslang converts forged a conception of conversion that diverged dramatically from that prescribed by the preachers,'" (ibid., p. 205).

30. *WH*, 60, MacCulloch to Whitefield, April 28, 1742.

31. Ibid., 64.

32. *LGW*, 2, p. 4.

33. *WH*, 66, Whitefield to Cennick, Glasgow, June 16, 1742.

34. Ibid., MacCulloch to Whitefield, Cambuslang, June 7, 1742.

35. Ibid., Whitefield to Cennick, Edin., June 19, 1742.

36. *GWL*, p. 403.

37. Ibid., p. 404.

38. *WH*, 75. Whitefield to Cennick, New Kilpatrick, nr. Glasgow, July 14, 1742.

39. Glasgow WH, 30. Extract of MacCulloch letter, Cambuslang, July 14, 1742.

40. A copy of this sermon can be found in the National Library of Scotland.

41. For further discussion of use of sexual imagery and its effect on the Cambuslang hearers see Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 213-216.

42. M'C MS., 2, p. 325.

43. Ibid., 2, p. 163.

44. Ibid., 2, p. 500.

45. *Glasgow WH*, 39, extract of letter from MacCulloch.

46. John Erskine, *The Signs of the Times Consider'd* (Edinburgh, 1742).

47. See Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 167-179; Durden, "Transatlantic Communications".

48. *WH*, 53. See G. D. Henderson, "Jonathan Edwards and Scotland," in *The Burning Bush*, (Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 151-62. Henderson argues for the importance of commercial contacts between Scotland and America in the 1730s and 1740s, particularly through the Glasgow tobacco trade.

49. A. M., *The State of Religion in New-England, since the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival There* (Glasgow, 1742).

50. *GWH*, 35-37 (John MacLaurin).

51. C. Chauncy, *New Creature* (Boston, 1741; Edin., 1742); J, Caldwell, *Impartial Trial of the Spirit* (Boston, 1742; Glasgow, 1742); [C. Chauncy], *A Letter from a Gentleman of Boston, to Mr. George Wishart, Concerning the State of Religion in New England* (Edinburgh, 1742).

52. J. Fisher, *A Review of the Preface to a Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Kilsyth*, (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 8, 10, 11.

53. Macfarlan, *Revivals of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 218-256; J. Gillies, *Historical Collections, 2 Vols. (Glasgow, 1754), 2, pp. 339-402.*

54. *GWW*, 2, p. 191.

55. J. Robe, *A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth* (1789 ed.), p. 308.

56. Ibid., p 274; for further evidence of the lasting fruits of the Revival see Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 2, pp. 390-398.

57. Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival, pp. 200-202.*

58. W. Forbes Gray, "John Wesley and Scotland", *SCHS Records,* 8 (1942-4), p. 210.

59. G. Whitefield, *The Believers Golden Chain* (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 7-9, 15.

60. *A Conference Betwixt a Conformist and a Nonconformist, anent hearing Mr. George Whitefield Preach the Gospel.*

61. MS. letter, R. Erskine to G. Whitefield, Dunfermline, Aug. 17, 1741, National Library of Scotland.

62. *Glasgow WH,* 13. Copy of a letter by Mr. Willison, to his Friend at Edinburgh anent Mr Whitefield, Oct. 8, 1741.

63. Ibid., 28. Ogilvie letter, Aberdeen, Oct. 3, 1741.

64. J. Bisset, *A Letter to a Gentleman in Edinburgh* (3rd. edn., 1743), pp. 60-70.

65. MS. letter James Erskine to James Hutton, Edinburgh, Aug. 1741, postscript, A3. Archives book p. 87, Moravian Church House, London.

66. *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country, to his Friend in EDINBURGH* (Edinburgh, 1741), p. 13.

67. G. Whitefield, *The Kingdom of God* (Glasgow, 1741), p. 20.

68. G. Whitefield, *The Duty of a Gospel Minister* (Glasgow, 1741), pp. 8, 10.

69. G. Whitefield, *The Believers Golden Chain,* pp. 16-17.

70. M'C MS., 2, p. 391.

71. H. Watt, "The Influence of Martin Luther on Scottish Religion in the 18th Century," *SCHS Records* 6, p. 159.

72. *Glasgow WH,* 28.

73. M'C MS., 1, pp. 171-172.

74. Bisset, *Letter,* pp. 51-53.

75. [William Wilson], *The Declaration of the True Presbyterians Within the Kingdom of God* [Glasgow, 1742], pp. 15-16.

76. Stout, *Divine Dramatist,* p. 140.

77. *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country to his friend in Edinburgh,* pp. 23-25.

78. For the link between revival and the Communion service, see Crawford, *Seasons of Grace,* pp. 24-25; Drummond and Bulloch, *Scottish Church,* p. 49.

79. Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, *Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D,* (1818), pp. 101-102.

80. *GWL,* p. 262.

81. D. Fraser, *Life and Diary of the Reverend Ebenezer Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1831), pp. 425-426.

82. Bisset, *Letter,* p. 5.

83. A. Webster, *Divine Influence - The True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang (Edinburgh, 1742).*

84. An Apology for the Presbyterians of Scotland.

85. *Glasgow WH,* 13, Willison letter.

86. Bisset, *Letter,* pp. 26, 49.

87. *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country,* p. 7.

88. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace,* p. 57; Campbell, *Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland,* p. 59.

89. MS. letter J. Erskine to J. Hutton, loc. cit.

90. Bisset, *Letter,* p. 92.

91. R. Erskine to Ebenezer Erskine, Dunfermline, July 31, 1741, in Fraser, *Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine,* p. 326.

92. *Glasgow WH,* 13.

93. *Apology for the Presbyterians of Scotland,* p. 11.

94. *Glasgow WH,* 13.

95. *SM,* Oct. 1742, p. 460.

96. Fraser, *Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine,* p. 302.

97. R. Erskine, *Fraud and Falsehood Discover'd (Edin., 1743), p. 1.*

98. Glasgow WH, 13.

99. MS. letter J. Erskine to J. Hutton, loc. cit.

100. *GWL,* p. 406.

101. *WH,* 66. Postscript of Whitefield letter to John Cennick, Glasgow, June 16, 1742.

102. *The Declaration of the True Presbyterians Within the Kingdom of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1742).

103. A. Gib, *A Warning Against Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield,* 1742, p. 10. See also David Forester, "Adam Gib, the Anti-Burgher," in *SCHS Records,* 7 (Glasgow, 1941), pp. 147-150.

104. *Declaration of the True Presbyterians,* p. 18.

105. Ibid., pp. 10-14. For similar arguments see Fraser, *Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine,* p. 302.

106. MS. letter Alexander Moncrieff to G. Whitefield, July 17, 1741, in "Raffles Collection," Library of Congress; A Gib, Warning, p. 13.

107. GWL, p. 515.

108. *A Conference Betwixt a Nonconformist and a Conformist.*

109. A. Gib, Warning, pp. 30 ff.

110. J. Fisher, *A Review of the Preface to a Narrative...at Kilsyth,* (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 49-51.

111. *Glasgow WH,* 28.

112. Ibid., 13.

113. *GWL,* p. 515.

114. Ibid., p. 317.

115. *SM*, Sept. 1742, p. 437.

116. Ibid., Oct. 1741.

117. Ibid., Oct. 1742.

118. MS. letter, R. Erskine to G. Whitefield, Dunfermline, Aug. 17, 1741, National Library of Scotland.

119. G. Whitefield, *A Brief Account of the Rise, Progress, and present Situation, of the Orphan-House in Georgia* (Edinburgh, 1748).

120. MS. letter J. Erskine to T. Foxcroft, Feb. 14, 1749, in Bortman MSS., Mugar Library, Boston.

121. Moncrieff Wellwood, *Life and Writings of John Erskine*, pp. 128-130.

122. [J. Erskine], *A fair and impartial Account of the Debate in the Synod of Glasgow - Air, Sixth October 1748, Anent Employing Mr. Whitefield* (Edinburgh, 1748), p. 6.

123. Ibid., pp. 15, 17-18.

124. Ibid., pp. 6, 17.

125. Ibid., p. 8.

126. *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Oct. 17, 1748; see also ibid., Oct. 25, Oct. 31, Nov. 7 for the similar reactions of the Synod of Perth and Sterling, the Presbytery of Edinburgh and the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, respectively.

127. Gillies, *Memoirs*, pp. 141-142, recalled how Whitefield's preaching at Edinburgh in May 1757 "was attended by many ministers; it is said, a hundred at a time. Many of them appeared to be deeply affected; and thus their prejudices were removed."

128. MS. letter, James Robe to T. Foxcroft, Kilsyth, Aug. 16, 1750, Mugar Library, Boston.

129. *LGW, 2, pp. 284-285.*

130. Edinburgh Evening Courant, Sept. 9, 1756.

131. *SM*, June 1757, p. 322.

132. *GWW*, 3, pp. 370-371.

133. *SM*, 32, Oct 1770, p. 574.

THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

If Whitefield's ministry left its mark in Britain, it did so far more dramatically in the American colonies. It was here that he met with his most spectacular success. He made seven visits to the colonies: in 1738, 1739-41, 1744-48, 1751-52, 1754-55, 1763-65 and 1769-70. His first contact was with the newly settled colony of Georgia, where he briefly took up care of the parish of Savannah in 1740, and set up an orphanage nearby. Visitations of his orphan house became the ostensible reason for his later visits to the colonies. Far more significant than this essay in philanthropy was his role as the catalyst of an inter-colonial Revival. Beginning in 1739 his preaching ignited and united fires of revival in the Middle Colonies, and in Charleston, South Carolina, before touching off a Great Awakening in New England in the Fall of 1740. But here, as elsewhere, despite his "catholic spirit "Whitefield was paradoxically as much the catalyst for division as for revival, stirring up conflict between Anglicans and "Dissenters", particularly in New England and the Middle Colonies, where the Church's hold was weakest, and his inter-confessional message was most warmly received. Though his mission brought American Christians together in vast crowds, his inheritance was a mixed one: in the Middle Colonies he was the source of divisions between Calvinist Presbyterians and German Moravians, and between Presbyterian "New Sides" and "Old Side" opponents of the Revival; in New England his presence split Congregationalism into "New Lights", "Old Lights" and Separatists. By the time of his fifth and sixth visits, however, the controversy surrounding the Revivals had largely diminished, and the "Great Awakener" was now viewed as a sort of ecclesiastical elder statesman. His clear sympathy for the colonies in their struggle against the British government helped ensure that by the time of his death in 1770 he would be widely mourned as a friend to America and her religion.

CHAPTER 7 - GEORGE WHITEFIELD AND THE SOUTHERN COLONIES.

Whitefield's inter-confessional ministry was notably less well-received in the South, than in either New England or the Middle Colonies. Here there was no widespread revival and, with the notable exception of Charleston, South Carolina, Whitefield failed to attract the attention and arouse the controversy which made him a household name north of Maryland. Why was this so? Why did the South prove so unresponsive to Whitefield's message? The main factor was that the Church of England was legally established in Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and favoured in Georgia. In Maryland and Virginia Anglicans outnumbered Dissenters by three to one. In these areas of Anglican dominance Whitefield was largely deprived of the assistance of the sympathetic local Dissenting pastors who had been the key to his success in New England and the Middle Colonies, and saw his message of Calvinist evangelicalism fall on the largely deaf ears of congregations who had imbibed the spirit of Bishop Bull or Tillotson. His one oasis in this largely Anglican desert was Charleston, the chief town of South Carolina, where Whitefield was able to draw upon the support of Calvinist Dissenters and stir up opposition to the Anglican authorities.

The question still remains; why was Southern Anglicanism so insulated against Whitefield's revivalist message, especially in 1740-41? A closer examination of the religious situation in the Southern Colonies and of Whitefield's role in it will provide some answers.

Georgia, the southernmost colony, was an unlikely scene for a widespread revival. Settlement of the colony had only begun in 1733 and by 1736 Georgia could claim only six small villages, the largest and most important of which was Savannah, which had probably less than 500 inhabitants. The colony was governed by twenty-one Trustees, who favoured the Church of England but were hospitable towards Dissenters, who were granted freedom of worship and material assistance in building their churches and parsonages.[1] Whitefield began his ministry in 1738 as a successor to John Wesley at Savannah. His scheme to build an orphanage there was the ostensible reason for his return in 1739/40, and was to be the main incentive for his further five visits to the colonies.

South Carolina was much more populous, and, in Charleston, possessed a metropolis in which Whitefield's techniques of mass evangelism could operate effectively. He paid a brief first visit to the city in 1738, and during his return there in 1740 saw a revival which was to foreshadow his later successes in New England. Several factors combined to make Charleston particularly susceptible to a Whitefieldian-style revival. It was the major commercial centre of the South, with a population in the 1730s of approximately 6,800 out of a total population for the colony of 55,000, about 40,000 of whom were negro slaves. In addition, the city was the home of the *South Carolina Gazette* which published a relatively full account of Whitefield's activities prior to his arrival in 1740, and then provided a forum for the debates between his opponents and supporters over the next few years.

Moreover, Charleston reflected the religious diversity which made South Carolina unique among the southern colonies. The largest

congregation in the city was the Congregational meeting of the Harvard graduate, Josiah Smith, one of Whitefield's staunchest allies, while the city also possessed Huguenot, Presbyterian and Baptist meeting houses. The Rev. Alexander Garden, Rector of the main Anglican Church of St. Philip's, and also the Bishop of London's Commissary for the province, was faced with the unenviable task of reinforcing the authority of the Church of England in this pluralistic religious milieu. It has been estimated that in 1740 out of the inhabitants of Carolina 45 per cent were Episcopalians, 10 per cent were Baptists, 2½ per cent were Quakers and the remaining 42½ per cent were made up of Dissenting groups such as Presbyterians, Congregationalists and French Huguenots. In South Carolina in 1750 there were sixteen Anglican, five Baptist, four Congregationalist and nine Presbyterian churches. Moreover, while the Church of England was legally established in South Carolina, it relied heavily on the services of the English-paid SPG missionaries, who, as in the Northern Colonies, aroused much antipathy among the Dissenters. Nonconformists enjoyed toleration, but resented the fact that Anglican churches were built and repaired and Anglican clergymen paid from the provincial treasury. For seventy years the church question had been causing friction between Dissenters and Anglicans.

By contrast, in North Carolina Whitefield lacked an urban counterpart to Charleston, while the vast majority of its 40,000 inhabitants were scattered throughout the countryside.[2] Bereft of the press coverage of the *South Carolina Gazette* or the northern papers, Whitefield travelled through the province in late 1739 frustrated by the small size of his congregations and his inability to stir a seemingly indifferent population. At Bath Town, for example,

on December 23rd he preached to a mere 100 people, notwithstanding the fact that this was "an extraordinary congregation, there being seldom more than twenty at church."[3] The Church of England was established in North Carolina but had a chronic lack of settled ministers, and the Dissenters, comprising mainly Baptists and a few Quakers, were under relatively minor restrictions.

In December 1739, travelling in Maryland and Virginia, close to his recent triumphs in Philadephia and the population centres of the Middle Colonies, Whitefield immediately noted the smallness of his congregations. This was partly the result of demographic factors. Both colonies lacked an urban metropolis and although their combined population was higher than that of the Middle Colonies, the inhabitants were largely scattered and not clustered into the kind of communities in which Whitefield was so successful in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New England. As he himself noted in his Journal:

> "the main cause of irreligion, both in Virginia and Maryland...[was]...their not incorporating into towns: for hereby people living at a distance from the church, are apt to make every little thing serve as an excuse to keep them from public worship."[4]

Moreover, communications were much slower in the South and neither the *Virginia Gazette* nor the *Maryland Gazette* gave Whitefield the extensive newspaper coverage that he had enjoyed in the Middle Colonies and was to enjoy in Charleston and later, New England. Hence at his first appointment at North East, Maryland in December, 1739 he reported: "Little notice having been given, there were not above fifteen hundred people...";[5] this was a large audience for the colony, but a mere shadow of those which he had been accustomed to attract in the Middle Colonies only a few weeks earlier.

In addition, the ecclesiastical situation in Virginia and Maryland was not suited to the spreading of Whitefield's revival message. Unlike Charleston and the Dissenter-dominated Northern colonies, the environment was not one of religious pluralism. In the two provinces Anglicans outnumbered by three to one the churches of the Baptists and Presbyterians combined. Here, legal establishment was accompanied by numerical dominance. This preponderance did not allow the degree of rivalry that existed between the Dissenters and the Church of England elsewhere. Whitefield's criticisms of the Church had less impact and his evangelical Calvinistic message gained a less friendly reception among what was predominantly a traditional Anglican population.

In later visits Whitefield often enjoyed a warm reception in the South but never saw a widespread Awakening on the scale witnessed in New England in 1740-41. On his third visit to the colonies in 1744-48, he spent a considerable time evangelising in the South, and experienced some measure of success among the scattered communities of Virginia and particularly Maryland in 1746-47. On a further visit to Virginia in 1755 he helped to arouse a small revival, largely on account of the groundwork done by the Rev. Samuel Davies, a Presbyterian minister who had been labouring successfully for several years, setting up several congregations and finally, in 1754, obtaining a declaration from the English Attorney-General that the Toleration Act did extend to Virginia. In this atmosphere of Dissenting growth and against a background of Church-Dissent struggle, Whitefield's message met with an unusually friendly hearing.

Thus, whether in Charleston in 1740, or Virginia in 1755, the occasional successes of Whitefield's ministry in the Southern Colonies

seem to have depended upon the presence of an active group of Dissenters, particularly of sympathetic ministers, such as Josiah Smith in Charleston, or Samuel Davies in Virginia. Elsewhere, where the Anglicans enjoyed not only numerical superiority, but a high degree of official protection, Whitefield's message failed to make any major impact. This lends credence to W. H. Kenney's suggestion that Whitefield depended upon a pluralistic religious situation, in which Anglican-Dissenter tensions were high, in order to play out his unique role as "Dissenter Priest".[6] Yet there were other contributory reasons which made Whitefield and his message unacceptable to Anglicans in the South.

The response of Southern Anglicans has been explained as part of the wider reaction of the American Church to the intrusion of an evangelist who was known already to have clashed publicly and notoriously with Church leaders in England in 1739. Thus William M. Manross has argued that colonial ministers opposed Whitefield because they were "acting on instructions from home".[7] Undoubtedly Whitefield's conflicts with the English Church, well-publicised in all the major colonial papers prior to his arrival in America, were to exercise an important influence on the attitudes of both Anglicans and Dissenters. Yet it is noticeable that in the leading Southern papers, *The Virginia Gazette* and *The South Carolina Gazette*, accounts of the evangelist's activities in England centred upon the size, whereabouts and social status of his audiences, giving very little space to his disputes with the Anglican authorities.[8] Nonetheless, if there was little in the southern press about Whitefield's English activities to alienate Anglicans, information still arrived by way of

personal correspondence from colleagues in England, as well as through the growing pamphlet war between Whitefield and English Church leaders whose reverberations began to reach the colonies shortly after his arrival.

Nonetheless, not all Southern Anglicans were immediately hostile. At Williamsburg, Virginia, for example, Commissary James Blair initially greeted Whitefield "with joy", asked him to preach and voiced disappointment that he could not stay any longer. Whitefield decided for his part that Blair was "by far the most worthy clergymen I have yet conversed with in all America."[9]. Yet by May 29, 1740, Blair, clearly influenced by growing reports of Whitefield's conflicts with church leaders elsewhere, wrote to the Bishop of London: "If he [Whitefield] is under censure or prohibited to preach in your Lordship's Dioceses as there is a rumour since: your Lordship's Directions shall be performed."[10]. Commissary Garden of Charleston, South Carolina was likewise favourably disposed towards the young evangelist during his first visit in September 1738. Whitefield at this time described him as "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" who received him "in a most Christian manner".[11]. Yet by the time of their second meeting in March 1740, Whitefield's well known clashes with Anglican leaders in England and the Middle Colonies had clearly prejudiced the Commissary against him.[12].

Soon Whitefield's personal encounters with the Anglican authorities and a growing awareness of his Calvinist doctrines were to antagonize them still further. William Stephens, Secretary to the Georgia trustees, was one who experienced Whitefield's ministry at Savannah in 1738 and 1739-41, at first hand. His first impressions of the young missionary in 1738 were favourable, and he found him

more compatible than his predecessor, at Savannah, the rigid High Churchman, John Wesley.[13] At this stage Whitefield's message was still primarily shaped by a Holy Club desire for inward renewal through a constant attendance upon the means of grace, and so caused Stephens little apparent unease. The only hints of any disagreement were implied rather than clearly stated and concerned the strong likelihood that Whitefield had also begun to preach a recognizably Reformed view of justification by faith alone, while still at Savannah.[14]

If there was uncertainty concerning Whitefield's doctrine in 1738, by the time of his return to Georgia in the winter of 1739/40 he had begun unequivocally to preach the doctrine of justification by faith alone, a Reformed view of the new birth and, increasingly, a Calvinistic view of election and reprobation. In so doing he quickly began to alienate the mainstream of Anglican opinion in Savannah, including Stephens and others, who had apparently not taken offence at his preaching in 1738. Stephens reflected the opinion of several in the congregation at Savannah when he noted that Whitefield's sermons on 20th January 1740 and the previous Sunday had been:

> "...wholly on the Doctrine of Justification and Regeneration; which we hoped would ere long be followed by an Exhortation to the Practice of all Christian Duties, that so our Faith might be shewn by our Works; otherwise a dry and inactive Faith, it is to be feared, might prove a dangerous State."[15]

Towards the end of December Whitefield made a final visit to the colony, having spent several weeks amongst the Calvinists of New England and duly began to preach not only election but a doctrine of particular redemption. As Stephens described his sermons for Sunday 21st December:

> "The main Drift...was to maintain the Doctrine of a peculiar Election, of such as were predestinated to be saved, condemning

> utterly an universal Redemption by Christ's Blood; which terrible Doctrine was shocking, to all such as by a sincere Repentance, and true Faith in Christ, hoped for Salvation thro' his Mediation."[16]

Whitefield's doctrinal position became the major source of contention between correspondents in the *South Carolina Gazette*. Those writers who can be identified - Joseph Smith, Alexander Garden, Isaac Chanler, Baptist minister of Ashley River, and Thomas Simmons, a General Baptist minister in Charleston - were each leaders of their particular denomination or church in the Charleston area. The first round of controversy between Smith and Garden in 1740 clearly revealed the major sources of doctrinal conflict. Smith, a Harvard-trained Independent minister, who had close ties with leading pastors in New England, rejoiced to find in Whitefield "a Gentleman of the same tenets" as himself.[17] In a sermon he announced happily that the evangelist's doctrines were "evidently founded upon Scripture, exactly corresponding with the Articles of the Establishment". Whitefield had made the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin central to his preaching, while the doctrine of justification by faith alone he had "in the warmest language impress'd upon us", at the same time clearing himself of all suspicions of Antinomianism. As for regeneration, this "was another Great Doctrine which the excellent Man much insisted upon: Hardly a single sermon but he mention'd it, sometimes more than twice."[18]

If Smith, a convinced Calvinist, warmed to Whitefield's preaching of Reformed doctrine, Garden, operating under the pseudonym, "Arminius", attacked the evangelist from the central position of mid-eighteenth century Anglicanism. He attempted to refute Whitefield's stance on man's total depravity, argued against his notion of *sole*

fide, and urged the necessity of both faith and works in justification. [19]

Whitefield's doctrine was soon the source of a second bout of controversy, which found its way into the public arena via the *Gazette* in 1741. Although it is not clear exactly who the protagonists were -- it seems clear that leading Baptist ministers were involved. The Particular Baptists, led by Isaac Chanler at Ashley River, and Tilly at Charleston were staunch supporters of Whitefield and his Calvinistic teachings, while the Moderate or General Baptists were led by Thomas Simmons and tended to be strongly hostile. This produced a division within the Charleston Baptist Church, in which several leading Anglicans became involved, lending their support to the anti-Whitefieldian, Simmons. The fortunes of the Particular Baptists took a blow in 1744, with the death of Tilly, after which Chanler occasionally ministered from Ashley River, until the group formed a Separatist congregation in 1746. Whitefield's connection with this new congregation is evident. A place of worship had just been finished when Whitefield passed through the city on his fourth visit to the colonies on March 5th, 1751-52, and he "as it were, consecrated it by celebrating divine service in it for the first time."[20] This is merely one example of Whitefield's powerful influence on the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists in the South.

One of the main issues at stake in the *Gazette* in 1741 was Whitefield's view of election. His supporters had the difficult task of defending Whitefield from charges of inconsistency and unorthodoxy in doctrine. One writer was keen to assure the public:

> "that Mr. Whitefield appears to hold Election in no such Sense, and in no other than the 17th Article of the Church of

> England...this Doctrine Mr. Whitefield subcrib'd. This he preaches. For this is he censur'd."[21]

His opponents, however, alleged that he was both self-contradictory and heterodox in his teaching. One writer noted a notorious instance of Whitefield preaching from Mr. Smith's pulpit, on his "favourite Topick of Election", but leaving his audience in some doubt as whether he held to a Supralapsarian or Sublapsarian Scheme: in the afternoon he had avowed the latter but appeared to defend it by Supralapsarian arguments.[22] Another correspondent verified this incident, adding that Whitefield had asserted "that God had from all Eternity wrote down in distinct Columns, the particular Names of all such as shou'd be saved, and of all that shou'd be damn'd."[23] At this early stage in his theological development the young evangelist was evidently rather confused by the complexities of Calvinist doctrine.

More important than Whitefield's Calvinism for his Anglican contemporaries, was his revivalism and his emphasis upon an experiential new birth, which clearly distanced them from him. This factor has been overlooked by the Anglican historian, Gerald J. Goodwin. In his analysis of the failure of colonial Anglicans to support the Calvinistic Awakening and its chief figure, Whitefield, Goodwin notes the simultaneous successes of the Wesleys' "Arminian" revival from within the English Church and concludes that therefore "there was nothing inevitable about Anglican opposition to the Awakening".[24] However, while the Calvinism of Whitefield and the major colonial revivalists was undoubtedly a hindrance to the Church's acceptance of the Great Awakening, the Wesleys' evangelical variety of "Arminianism" was also a stumbling block to the great mass of

clergy whose "Arminianism" was shaped in a High Church or latitudinarian mould. Despite their differences over election, "Christian Perfection" and final perseverance, both Whitefield and the Wesleys were united in their evangelical emphasis upon conversion as an experience that was both inward and "sensible", (evident to the senses); an emphasis, which to most Anglicans was evidence of Dissenting "enthusiasm".

It was this issue of a "sensible" experience of the new birth, which most clearly divided Whitefield from the majority of Southern Churchmen, just as it had divided Wesley from churchmen in England. Secretary Stephens, in his Journal for March 9th, 1740, noted with some disdain how:

> "Mr. Whitfield preached, and prayed, as hitherto, sticking fervently to the Doctrine of a New Birth, and Justification by Faith, provided it be such, as to produce an Evidence within ourselves, that the Spirit of God is working in our Hearts; which he insists on, we may feel with a real Sensation; and till that is wrought within us, we are in a State of Damnation."[25]

Commissary Garden similarly dismissed this notion of an instantaneous or "sensible" new birth. For him, as for Whitefield's more famous English opponent the Rev. Henry Stebbing, regeneration was:

> "not a sole, critical or instantaneous, but a gradual co-operating Work of the Holy Spirit, commencing at Baptism, and gradually advancing throughout the whole Course of the Christian life; including all the Steps or Degree of Faith, Repentance, renewed Dispositions of the Mind, and Habits of Obedience, 'till we all arrive at the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ."[26]

Whitefield's teaching of an inward, instantaneous work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the accompanying testimony of the Spirit, Garden argued, would inevitably lead on to extremes of fanaticism, resulting in a belief in miraculous powers. His reliance upon impulses and the impression of the Spirit was enthusiasm and a return

to the confusion of "Oliverian Days." The Commissary shared the view of English critics that Whitefield stood in a long line of enthusiasts.[27] Whitefield attended St. Philip's, Charleston, in July 1740, only to hear "all manner of evil" spoken against him:

> "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 the *Dutarts*, who lived, not many years ago, in South Carolina, and were guilty of the most notorious incests and murders..."[28]

Garden's mentioning of the Dutarts, who had practiced their weird religious rites only fifteen years previous to Whitefield's arrival in the colony, was clearly intended to frighten the public away from his ministry.

Yet what to Anglicans was enthusiasm was to many Dissenters an orthodox emphasis upon religious experience. In a Sermon eulogizing Whitefield, Josiah Smith not only insisted upon the need for an experiential new birth, but also vindicated the evangelist from the the charge of enthusiasm. Smith reminded his hearers how Whitefield strongly insisted upon impressions or "inward feelings of THE SPIRIT", but also:

> "...guarded against the invidious Censure of assuming the Character of an Apostle. He renounced all Pretensions to the extraordinary Powers and Signs of Apostleship, Gifts of Healing, Speaking with Tongues, the Faith of Miracles, Things peculiar to the Ages of Inspiration, and extinct with them. He also allow'd these feelings of the Spirit, were not in every Person, or at all Times, in same Degree; and that, tho' a full Assurance were attainable, and what every one shou'd labour to attain, yet not of absolute Necessity to the Being of a Christian. - Only he asserted, that we might feel the Spirit of God, in its sanctifying and saving Impression, and witnessing with our Spirits."[29]

Smith was satisfied with Whitefield's dispensationalist theology concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and with his caution in dealing with the doctrine of assurance.

More irritating, perhaps, than Whitefield's doctrine were his critical judgements on the ministry of his fellow clergymen. His published reply to the Bishop of London and his attacks upon Archbishop Tillotson and the author of *The Whole Duty of Man* were widely resented in the Anglican Southern colonies. On one occasion, Whitefield was reported to have declared that "he took the Bishop of London to be no better Judge, or knew no more of Christianity, than Mahommet or an Infidel" and that Gibson's work on the "Oeconomy of our Redemption" was not only false but "was sufficient to send Thousands to Hell," as were the works of Archbishop Tillotson, and the author of the Whole Duty of Man.[30] Such attacks upon respected Anglican leaders and his blanket condemnation of the Anglican clergy were particularly influential in prejudicing Commissary Garden against him. Garden's attitude towards the evangelist in March 1740 had notably hardened from the time of his warm reception in 1738; the key issue was clearly Whitefield's adverse judgements "against the generality of the clergy".[31]

His censoriousness embarrassed his Dissenting friends. Smith, a widely respected minister, and a staunch supporter of both Whitefield's doctrine and mission was uneasy about "some few harsher Epithets and Expressions..which dropp'd from his Lips". These, he considered, "may be pronounced Failings, but such as often attend a warm Zeal for Orthodoxy in points of last importance; arise from a Principle of Conscience, and are found interwoven with the brightest Characters."[32]

It was, however, Whitefield's preaching style which had the most dramatic effect upon his Southern audiences. Smith concluded:

> "He is certainly a finished Preacher, a great Master of Pulpit Oratory and Elocution...; yet his Discourses are very extraordinary when we consider, how little they were premeditated, and how little many of them he gave us the little Time he was with us. Many I trust, have felt, and will long feel the Impressions of his Zeal and Fire."[33]

If he was impressed by Whitefield's extempore delivery, he was also aware of the evangelist's effective use of application to his audience: "How close, strong and Pungent were his Applications to the Conscience? Mingling Light and Heat: Pointing the Arrows of the Almighty at the Heart of Sinners, while he poured in the Balm upon the Wounds of the Contrite; and made the broken Bones rejoice". Smith vividly described how Whitefield's preaching had such a profound effect upon his audiences and his impact on the city of Charleston:

> "The Awe, the Silence, the Attention, which Sat upon the face of so great an Audience, was an Argument how he cou'd reign over all their Powers...So charm'd were 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 preach'd, the keener Edge he seem'd to put upon their Desires of having him again."[34]

Others dismissed this as a false panegyric and "absolute flattery". One writer, clearly appreciative of a more "rational" form of delivery, held that a preacher should first gain a thorough grounding in the original languages of the Scripture and an awareness of the cultural background to the Bible before presuming to expound upon or interpret particular passages. Had Whitefield "in all his Preachings or Expoundings...ever made Use of, or had any Reliance on these necessary Assistances"?[35]

Commissary Garden saw Whitefield's homiletic technique as the sole reason for his success, endeavouring to persuade his Charleston

parishioners that it was not the evangelist's doctrine which attracted them but "the Sound of that Gentleman's Voice in your Ears; that enchanting Sound! The natural and alone Cause, which produced all the Passion and Prejudice, that prevailed 'mong some (the weaker some indeed) of you, in his Favour."[36]

But why should such influence be deemed so damaging to the Anglican cause? One reason was that Whitefield appeared to be thoroughly un-Anglican, not just in doctrine, but in practice. In the Charleston area in 1740, for example, he preached almost entirely outside the Church walls, either in Smith's large Congregational meeting, his most popular venue, or in Chanler's Baptist meeting at Ashley River, or occasionally at the city's Baptist and Huguenot meetings, in private houses and the open air. Moreover, following his public clashes with Commissary Garden, by the summer he advised the people that "since the Gospel was not preached in the church to go and hear it in the meeting-houses."[37] Citing his advice, several Dissenting ministers set up an alternative weekly lecture to carry on the work. The first sermon, entitled *New Converts to Cleave to the Lord*, was preached by Isaac Chanler, and published with a preface by the Boston Congregationalist minister, William Cooper, during Whitefield's first visit to New England. Both men give full credit to Whitefield for this inter-confessional enterprise; Cooper includes an extract from a letter, probably from Smith, relating how "under the influence of His [Whitefield's] preaching, the Baptist ministers have join'd us in a stated and weekly lecture, to which the People shew a surprising Disposition and Affection."[38] If this is evidence of Whitefield's success among the Calvinistic Dissenters of Charleston,

it also helps to explain why he was seen as a threat to the Established Church. As if to emphasise his own disaffection with the city's Anglican worship, by the late summer of 1740 he had decided that since "that Jesus Christ was not preached in the church", his conscience would not allow him to attend worship there any more; instead he went to the Baptist and Independent meeting-houses "where Jesus Christ was preached."[39].

Leading Dissenters like Josiah Smith admired the "Catholick and Christian Spirit" of such a man who professed "love to good Men of every Denomination" and who was "not bigotted to the Modalities, and lesser Rites and Forms of Religion, while zealous enough, and very warm and jealous in all its Essentials."[40]. To Anglicans, however, Whitefield's disregard of such "lesser Rites and Forms of Religion", appeared an example of Dissenting enthusiasm. His regular practice of dispensing with the liturgy and replacing it with extempore prayer was to cause particular resentment in Anglican circles. Secretary Stephens was one who found this particularly offensive, reporting how on the occasion of his departure from his Savannah congregation in December 1740, Whitefield, after the sermon:

> "laid aside the Common Prayer-Book; and instead of those Prayers that remained to be read...fell into a long extemporary Prayer of his own, full of Flatus and Enthusiasm, and uttered with a *Stentor's* Voice."[41].

Stephens summarized the disruptive effect of Whitefield's ministry on traditional Anglican worship in Savannah:

> "the Liturgy in most Parts of its several Offices, has been either curtail'd, mangled, or omitted, the Psalms, and ordinary Lessons appointed have been disregarded to make Room for extemporary Expositions, on any Part of Holy Scripture, which the Expositor liked Better for his Purpose. Surplice, Gown, Cassock, and all such innocent Decencies, have been thrown aside, as useless, or worse."[42].

Small wonder that his Anglican credentials were questioned.

His "catholic spirit" was further demonstrated in his free communion with Southern Dissenters. In August, 1740, Whitefield asked Mr. Tilly, the Charleston Baptist minister, to preach the sermon at his own Church in Savannah, and encouraged him to receive the Sacrament "in the Church of England way".[43] A few weeks later in Charleston, he began the practice of administering the Sacrament in a private house, where "Baptists, Church folks, and Presbyterians, all joined together, and received according to the Church of England, except two, who desired to have it sitting". Whitefield willingly complied with this request, believing "that it was a thing quite indifferent".[44]

Such activities could not long escape the notice of Commissary Garden, who cited him to appear before an ecclesiastical court to answer charges of preaching and celebrating communion in dissenting meetings without use of the Book of Common Prayer. Thence followed a complicated battle concerning the extent of Garden's authority over Whitefield, with the Commissary appealing to the Bishop of London but failing to obtain a decision. Garden finally suspended Whitefield from office, but received no official backing for his action from London.[45]

This final rupture with Commissary Garden was the high point of tension between Whitefield and the Anglican authorities in the colonies, but merely symptomatic of what was a generally hostile reception from the Anglican clergy. There were, however, a few exceptions. In early July, 1740, Whitefield was received with "much tenderness and respect" by a Mr. Jones, minister of the parish of

Beaufort, South Carolina. The minister was not without his reservations: he thought that Whitefield "went too far in condemning Archbishop Tillotson"; "he could not see clearly into the doctrine of *free justification*, without regard to anything forseen in the creature". Nonetheless, he admitted that one of his parishioners had been satisfactorily converted under the evangelist's ministry, that he had asked him to preach at the evening service and had offered him the pulpit on his return from Georgia.[46] Here is an example of a non-Calvinist minister, who disapproved of Whitefield's censoriousness, but who nonetheless recognised the fruits of his ministry and was prepared to countenance his preaching. Significantly, the Revd. Jones was soon called to account for his actions by Garden, and a copy of his letter then sent to the S.P.G.[47]

Unlike Jones, the majority of Southern clergy were not prepared to brave official disapproval. They tended to follow the lead of the authorities in London and Charleston, ostracising Whitefield and endeavouring to keep their congregations free from the revival contagion. In this, it seems, they were relatively successful. Whitefield's reports of generally low attendance at his congregations outside Charleston and his frequent references to the indifference of the Southern population in 1740-41 is in sharp contrast to the great impact that he made upon the Dissenter-dominated Northern colonies. Apart from Charleston, where the Dissenting cause was strong, the only major exception to this appears to have been in Whitefield's own congregation in Savannah, where the influence of the nearby orphanage at Bethesda seems to have been paramount. Following Whitefield's departure in early 1741, the new minister, Orton, soon came under fire

from Whitefield's followers, who (in Stephens' words) began "denouncing Damnation to every one that did not sensibly feel the Holy Spirit moving within them", were then hauled before the the local magistrates, refused to offer bail, and landed up in prison, before being eventually fined for their insults.[48] However, following Orton's death in August 1742, significant cracks began to appear in the Anglican front. When his place was only supplied by lay readers, Savannah churchmen failed to compete with the sermons of the revivalists at Bethesda and the congregation declined significantly in the absence of a regular minister.[49] This suggests the importance of the clergy in insulating the Church from the revival. When that "protection" was removed, the congregation often dwindled.

Thus Whitefield was largely ostracised by southern clergymen in 1740-41, and frequently ignored by their congregations. Later evidence from 1746-48 suggests that he enjoyed only modest success in Virginia and Maryland, though less hostile opposition than in his previous visit.[50] It is possible that if in 1740-41 Whitefield had not been so overtly Calvinistic in his teaching, nor so openly critical of leading Anglicans, both past and present, he could have achieved more success in the South: certainly reports of his later years suggest that he was more moderate in his Calvinism and less obviously atagonistic to the Anglican authorities, and hence more likely to receive a sympathetic hearing from both ministers and their congregations. In November 1764, for example, during his sixth visit, he was invited to preach at Newbern, North Carolina at the request of the inhabitants of the town, where he ministered to "a very Numerous Congregation". The local S.P.G. missionary, the Rev. James Read, reported back to the Society that, though unable to attend

personally, he had asked a friend to give him a report of the occasion. He was pleased to discover that apart from a rather heated application at the close of the sermon, Whitefield generally had "kept quite clear of enthusiastic Rant", and that overall his discourse had been:

> "of some real service here, for he particularly condemned the rebaptising of adults, and the Doctrine of the Irresistible influence of the Spirit, for both which the late Methodists in these parts had strongly contended, and likewise recommended Infant Baptism, and declared himself a Member and Minister of the Church of England."[51].

As long as Whitefield preached with moderation, avoided "High" Calvinist teaching and openly declared his loyalty to his native Church, there were clearly Anglicans in the South who were prepared to countenance and benefit from his ministrations.

In general, however, Whitefield was perceived more as a "Dissenter Priest", than as an upholder of the cause of the Established Church, to the ultimate detriment of his influence in the Anglican-dominated Southern colonies. In Charleston, the one city of size and influence, where the Dissenters were able to rival the Anglicans and where tensions between them were high, he experienced a considerable revival in 1740-41 and was well-received in later years. Apart from here, and Virginia in 1755, where the unique circumstances surrounding Samuel Davies' clashes with the Anglican authorities made that colony temporarily susceptible to Whitefield's inter-confessional appeal,[52]. the Southern colonies were, in general, the least fruitful area of his ministry.

1. For background information on Georgia see R. C. Strickland, *Religion and State in Eighteenth Century Georgia* (New York, 1939); D. T. Morgan Jr., "The Great Awakening in the Carolinas and Georgia, 1740-1775" (Ph. D. diss., University of N. Carolina, 1968).

2. For information on the Carolinas see Morgan, "The Great Awakening in the Carolinas and Georgia".

3. *GWJ*, p. 376.

4. Ibid., p. 388.

5. Ibid., p. 364.

6. W. H. Kenney, "George Whitefield, Dissenter Priest of the Great Awakening, 1739-41," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 26 (Jan. 1969), pp. 75-93.

7. William W. Manross, *A History of the American Episcopal Church* (3rd ed., N. Yk, 1959), p. 64.

8. *The Virginia Gazette*, 75, Dec. 30/Jan. 6, 1737/8. *The South Carolina Gazette*, 284, July 7/July 14, 1739; ibid., 288, Aug. 4/11, 1739; ibid., 291 Aug. 25/Sept. 1. 1739 (hereafter *SCG*).

9. *GWJ*, p. 371.

10. William S. Perry ed., *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*, 5 vols. (Hartford, 1870-1878), 1, pp. 362-364, letter of May 29, 1740.

11. *GWJ*, p. 165.

12. *GWJ*, p. 400.

13. William Stephens, "A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia Beginning October 20, 1737," *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, 4, p. 214.

14. Ibid., p. 215.

15. W. Stephens, *The Journal of William Stephens, 1741-1743*, ed. E. Martin Coulter, 2 vols. (Univ. of Georgia Press, 1955), 1, pp. 494-495 (hereafter Stephens, *Journal*).

16. Ibid., 2, pp. 58-59.

17. *SCG*, 307, Jan. 5/Jan 12., 1740.

18. Josiah Smith, "The Character, Preaching etc. Of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield", in CA, 8.

19. *SCG*, 309-311, Jan. 19-Feb. 9, 1740.

20. Leah Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1685* (1935), pp. 18-20, 33, 38-39.

21. *SCG*, 387, postscript July 23, 1741.

22. Ibid., 395, Sept. 12/Sept 19, 1741.

23. Ibid., 397, postscript Sept. 26/Oct. 3, 1741.

24. Gerald J. Goodwin, "The Anglican Reaction to the Great Awakening", *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 35, 4 (Dec. 1966), p. 344.

25. Stephens, *Journal*, 1, p. 531.

26. Alexander Garden, *Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (Boston, 1740), Letter 4, Charleston, April 15, 1740, p. 28.

27. A. Garden, "Regeneration and the Testimony of the Spirit," in A. Heimert and P. Miller eds., *The Great Awakening* (New York, 1967).

28. *GWJ*, p. 442.

29. Smith, "The Character, Preaching etc.", *CA*, 8.

30. Stephens, *Journal*, 1, p. 529-530.

31. *GWJ*, p. 400.

32. Smith, "The Character, Preaching etc.", *CA*, 8.

33. Ibid., *CA*, 9.

34. Ibid.

35. *SCG*, 395, Sept 12/Sept 19, 1741.

36. Garden, "*Regeneration*," op. cit.

37. *GWJ*, p. 444.

38. Isaac Chanler, "New Converts exhorted to cleave to the Lord", *CA*, 27, *WH*, 1.

39. *GWJ*, p. 450.

40. Smith, "The Character, Preaching etc.", *CA*, 9.

41. Stephens, *Journal*, 2, p. 63.

42. Ibid., p. 9.

43. *GWJ*, p. 448.

44. Ibid., p. 450.

45. For this dispute see Kenney, "Dissenter Priest," op. cit., pp. 84-85.

46. *GWJ*, pp. 438-439.

47. Revd. Mr. Jones, Aug. 15, 1740, SPG Minutes 1740-44 in "SPG Papers," Lambeth Palace..

48. Stephens, *Journal*, 2, pp. 29-34, 37, 49; *GWL*, pp. 418-421, GW to the Trustees of Georgia, Aug. 17, 1742.

49. Stephens, *Journal*, 2, pp. 186, 203, 223-224, 228.

50. "Newly Discovered Letters of George Whitefield, 1745-1746," Journal of Presbyterian Historical Society, 32 (June 1954), pp. 255-257, 261, 264-265 provides evidence of his growing acceptance in Bohemia, Maryland in June 1746.

51. SPG Papers, B. 5 (North and South Carolina), 141, Newbern, N.C. December 21, 1764, in Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

52. For a concise summary of the situation in Virginia see *LGW*, 2, pp. 338-339.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE MIDDLE COLONIES.

Whitefield's arrival in the Middle Atlantic Colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York in October 1739 was one of the turning points in his career. Hitherto, he had laboured successfully, but largely within the confines of a disapproving Established Church in England and Wales. Now, in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, he found himself in a region dominated by Dissenters and free from Anglican control. Here was an environment in which his radical message of the new birth would find ready hearers and in which his attacks upon the degeneracy of the present clergy would be well-received.

His ministry was also to act as a catalyst for a widespread colonial Awakening. In the Middle Colonies, separate revivals had broken out under the the ministries of the Dutch Reformed minister, Theodore Frelinghuysen, the Presbyterian, Gilbert Tennent and the German Dunker leaders, Peter Becker and Conrad Beissel, in the two decades prior to the Great Awakening. It was Whitefield who was to transform these localised awakenings into a widespread Revival, which, for a brief period in the spring-summer of 1740, seemed to have spanned the doctrinal and confessional gulf and attracted adherents from almost all of the major middle colonial churches.

In 1740 as figurehead for the Revival he also became the target for opposition from his fellow Anglican clergymen, who remained almost unitedly hostile, as well as from "Old Side" Presbyterians and many of the Quaker leaders. In 1745, on his return, he became embroiled in divisions within the revivalist camp

itself: between Gilbert Tennent and his Calvinistic Presbyterian allies and the Moravian Brethren, with whom Whitefield was allegedly too friendly. Eventually and with some reluctance, Whitefield decided publicly to ally himself with the Tennent group, thereby weakening his relationship with the Moravians, and further restricting his role as an inter-confessional evangelist.

The denominational map of the Middle Colonies was a complex one. Among the first to establish themselves had been the Quakers, who, by 1700 were politically and numerically dominant in most areas outside New York. In the following three decades their hegemony began to be challenged by the influx of about 100,000 Germans and the sizeable immigration from Northern Ireland of Scotch-Irish, who began to form a fledging Presbyterian church structure. The German sects, the Mennonites, Schwenkfelders and Dunkers, like the Quakers, were not faced with the problem of providing a trained and educated ministry, and were relatively successful in establishing themselves in the frontier regions. They were thus largely spared the struggles of the main denominations - the German and Dutch Reformed, the German and Swedish Lutherans, the Presbyterians and the Anglicans - who all suffered because their ministries were largely undermanned and underpaid. One historian, Martin E. Lodge, has described the subsequent growth of anticlericalism and lay disaffection with their own particular denominations, as the professional clergy failed to meet the spiritual needs of their flocks. Many ministers tried to stem this growing tide of indifference and keep their congregations intact by introducing a legalism which made few spiritual demands upon their congregations, simply advocating attendance at public worship

and outwardly correct morals and doctrine. This tended to increase the sense of lay dissatisfaction. Not surprisingly perhaps, the region was to experience a number of revivals from the early 1720s under the ministry of Frelinguysen in the Raritan Valley, Tennent in New Brunswick, and the Dunkers among the German sectaries of Pennsylvania.[1]

It was into this ecclesiastical melting pot that George Whitefield, ostensibly on his way South to Georgia, stumbled. He was eagerly awaited by a Middle Colonial public, which had become accustomed to accounts of his English ministry through the reports of the New York and Philadelphia press.[2] But advance publicity alone fails to explain the dramatic impact of his ministry in the autumn of 1739. Certain facets of his theology, churchmanship and homiletics made Whitefield particularly well-suited to act as "Great Awakener" in this pluralistic ethnic and religious climate.

By now, his doctrine of an experiential new birth was sufficiently universal in appeal to attract Quaker believers in an inner light, German pietists with their strong emphasis upon conversion and the inwardness of religion, and draw support from more orthodox Presbyterian Calvinists such as Gilbert Tennent. Moreover, his fervent conversionist preaching provided a comforting assurance to those perplexed by the uncertainties of frontier existence and offered a satisfying alternative to the formal religion preached by many ministers. As Lodge has plausibly suggested, Whitefield's doctrine of the new birth, sensible conversion and his "catholic spirit" gave a

spiritual confidence and dogmatic certitude to settlers, bewildered by the religious heterogenity of the Middle Colonies.[3].

Not only his theology but also his churchmanship were of great benefit in initiating a widespread colonial revival. On arriving in this Dissenter-dominated region, his role as "Dissenter Priest" was to make him particularly attractive to colonial Dissenters worried by the growing power of an increasingly aggressive colonial Church backed by imperial authority and influence. Dissenters of all persuasions gladly flocked to hear an English clergyman lambasting the colonial clergy for their departure from the truths of the Reformation, preaching extempore sermons in the fields in gown and cassock, praying extempore and administering the sacraments in Dissenting meeting houses without reference to the Book of Common Prayer.[4].

It was, however, Whitefield's role as a mass evangelist which had most effect upon his vast audiences in the Middle Colonies. As Harry Stout has observed, his arrival signified something of a revolution in the history of mass communication, not only in his method, but in the extraordinary size and heterogenity of his audiences. Nothing in the history of colonial popular assembly had hitherto paralleled this. While the major denominations suffered from a shortage of ministers and their clergy struggled to establish a direct, authoritative identification with their congregations, the inhabitants of the Middle Colonies, fell victim to the mass appeal of Whitefield's oratory.[5].

Not only was the scope of Whitefield's itinerancy striking, so too was his style. Even a sceptic like Benjamin Franklin was able to appreciate the extraordinary power of his oratory, noting

> "He had a loud and clear voice, and articulated his voice so perfectly, that he might he heard and understood at a great distance, especially as his auditories observed the most perfect silence."

On one occasion, he computed that Whitefield could be heard clearly by more than 30,000 people. Franklin offers interesting insights into Whitefield's "extempore" preaching style. Unlike many of the radical New Lights in New England, Whitefield clearly did not preach extempore in the sense of not preparing beforehand and of being totally reliant upon immediate inspired utterance, allegedly from the Spirit; instead, as he himself pointed out to the Harvard Professors in 1744, his extempore sermons were the result of careful preparation. Franklin observed that many of Whitefield's discourses were carefully memorised and polished up by continual use:

> "By hearing him often, I came to distinguish easily between sermons newly composed and those which he had often preached in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetition, that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of the voice, was so perfectly well turned and well placed, that without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse."

Franklin was personally well aware of the mesmeric effect of Whitefield's oratory. On one occasion he heard him preach in Philadelphia, when towards the end of his sermon he began to make a collection for the orphan house in Georgia; Franklin considered the project impractical and determined not to give, recalling:

> "I resolved silently that he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket, a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory 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."

An acquaintance, who shared Franklin's sentiments on the orphanage, knowing that Whitefield was likely to ask for an offering, had emptied his pockets before leaving home; this was vain, for he too succumbed,

and ended up asking a neighbour to lend him some money for the collection.[6]

Whitefield's inter-confessional ministry in the Middle Colonies, can perhaps best be examined by looking at his relationship with the major ecclesiastical groups with whom he had dealings: the Presbyterians, the Quakers, the Anglicans, the German sects and denominations, and the Moravians.

1. Presbyterians.

Since the turn of the century, the Presbyterian Church in the Middle Colonies had been divided into two major parties: first, the original Scots-Irish, who emphasised the church government of Scots Presbyterianism and strict adherence to the Westminster Confession and second, the Puritans of Long Island, New York and New Jersey, who adopted a "Presbyterianised Congregationalism" and looked to New England for their model. While the Scots-Irish attempted rigidly to enforce subscription to the Westminster Confession, the New Englanders, led by Jonathan Dickinson of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, argued that the Bible alone was sufficient in determining all matters of crucial importance and were less concerned with dogmatic orthodoxy than with obtaining pastors who were regenerate and diligent. Despite a temporary compromise through the Adopting Act, 1729, disputes between the subscriptionists and antisubscriptionists continued up until Whitefield's arrival.

In the 1720s a third revivalist group emerged, centred around the family of William Tennent and known as the "Log College" men. In 1726 Tennent had taken up the pastorate of Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, where he built his "Log College". Originally intended simply to establish a native base for the training of Presbyterian ministers, it soon became

the symbol of the growing revival party under the leadership of his son, Gilbert. By 1736 this group numbered seven ministers with a nucleus of Gilbert, William Tennent Jr. and Samuel Blair, all educated by William Tennent Sr. and presiding over congregations in the Raritan Valley, New Jersey.

Gilbert Tennent, the *de facto* leader of the group, and soon to be only second to Whitefield among the leading revivalists, had studied at Yale, but was primarily educated by his father, and having been converted while crossing the Atlantic, had imbibed his father's Calvinism and his emphasis upon the inwardness of religion. Yet it was his contact with Theodorus Frelinghuysen, the Dutch Reformed minister and leader of pre-Awakening revivalism in the Middle Colonies, which was to transform Tennent into a powerful evangelist. Born in 1692, ordained in 1717, Frelinghuysen emigrated from Holland in 1720, and saw a strong revival break out under his ministry in the Raritan Valley. Tennent joined the Presbyterian ministry in 1725 and in 1726 opted to settle at New Brunswick, New Jersey, close to the heart of the Dutchman's activities, where he soon began to adopt his evangelistic methods, emphasising the necessity of an experiential conversion and employing his "searching method" of preaching.

In the 1730s the Log College men began to experience a series of revivals: at Freehold New Jersey in 1730-32 and at Hopewell and Maidenhead in 1735-38. These activities were frowned upon by the Scots-Irish majority in the Synod, who passed an act against itinerant preaching and decided to push through a proposal that all ministerial candidates who had not graduated from a European or New England College should be examined and certified by a committee of the Synod. This represented a clear attack upon the Log College and Gilbert

Tennent's newly-formed New Brunswick Presbytery. The New Brunswick group were therefore forced to continue their revival in open defiance of the Synod's wishes. In 1738-40 further controversy raged around New Brunswick's licensing of the young evangelist, John Rowland, and his active ministry at Hopewell and Maidenhead, where, being denied the use of the churches, he began preaching in barns to large and increasingly affected crowds.[7]

It was at this critical juncture that Whitefield arrived in the Middle Colonies. As in Scotland and New England, so in the Middle Colonies his success was to a large extent dependent upon the co-operation of like-minded Calvinist ministers; in this case Gilbert Tennent and the New Brunswick Presbyterians. Ten years Tennent's junior and as yet only beginning to grasp the complexities of Calvinist theology, Whitefield was glad to have the friendship of a more experienced minister and convinced Calvinist. Historians of the Middle Colonies have frequently attributed to the Tennents the main role in determining Whitefield's Calvinism. Still young and suggestible, and shunned by the majority of his fellow Anglican clergymen, Whitefield gratefully embraced the friendship of fellow revivalists whose Calvinism was much firmer and whose homiletics were much "rougher" than his own. As Dietmar Rothermund has put it succintly:

> "Whitefield came to Philadelphia as an Anglican, a Methodist, interested in a revival of religion and not very much concerned about theology; he left Philadelphia as a sound Calvinist and faithful adherent to Gilbert Tennent's theology."[8]

Yet, as we have seen, Whitefield had already begun to move towards the Calvinist camp in the summer of 1739, several months prior to his arrival in America. But if the Tennents did not actually introduce

Whitefield to the Calvinist system, they certainly added clarity and sharpness to his hitherto rather hazy grasp of Reformed theology. From the time of his meeting with the Log College Presbyterians in November 1739, the "Arminian" tendencies in his preaching, observable in his earlier published writings, largely disappeared.

Whitefield also found the Tennents firm allies in his conflict with the Church of England. The father, William Tennent, was himself an ex-Anglican priest and seems to have opposed the Church with all the fervency of a convert to "Dissent". Significantly, until Whitefield met Tennent on November 10th, his first few days in the Middle Colonies had been noticeably free from clashes with fellow Anglicans. But on the following day, clearly spurred on by his new Presbyterian ally, he reportedly bore his testimony "against the unchristian principles and practices of our clergy", who were leading their parishioners astray.[9] Forced to share his New Brunswick meeting house with local Anglicans, Gilbert Tennent had his own reasons for embracing the ministry of the "Dissenter Priest". Ecclesiastical barriers were lowered if not removed by the spectacle of a gowned priest promoting spiritual awakening in the company of a Presbyterian minister. Reporting on the results of a two-hour sermon, Whitefield wrote, "It is impossible to tell with what Pleasure the Children of God heard these Truths confirmed by a Minister of the Church of England, which for so many Years have been preach'd to them by their own Pastor, Mr. Tennent...our Lord's dear Disciples were ready to leap for Joy."[10] If Tennent sharpened Whitefield's critical view of his own Anglican colleagues in the cloth, paradoxically his own brand of churchmanship, particularly his "catholic spirit", seems to have relaxed the rigid denominationalism

of his Presbyterian friend. Certainly, Whitefield's inter-confessional approach aided the New Brunswick Presbyterians in temporarily spanning the sectarian and denominational divide and attracting hearers from groups such as the Quakers, who had hitherto remained aloof from the revival.

Whitefield's preaching style also underwent a change under the influence of Gilbert Tennent's homiletics. During their first trip to New York, Whitefield had been deeply impressed with Tennent's "searching" preaching. He wrote in his journal:

> "I never before heard such a searching sermon. He convinced me more and more that we can preach the Gospel of Christ no further than we have experienced the power of it in our hearts. Being convicted of sin, by God's Holy Spirit, at his first conversion, he has learned experimentally to dissect the heart of a natural man."[11].

This "searching method" had been adopted by Tennent from Frelinghuysen. The Dutch evangelist demanded a shattering experience of regeneration, beginning with an agonizing "conviction" of one's total depravity, leading to self-abhorrence and a total dependence upon and yearning for the righteousness of Christ. To achieve these ends he developed certain revivalistic techniques, preaching alarm and the need for self-examination, and using his "searching method", through which he attacked the comforting assumptions which lulled men into thinking they were saved.[12]. It was an imitation of this style which Whitefield encountered in Tennent, and he recognised it as an element lacking in his own preaching up to that point. In a letter to James Hutton in England, he now stressed the need for people to have had a true conviction of sin before they could truly trust in God's sovereign grace:

> "It is for preaching in this manner that I like Messrs. Tennents. They wound deep before they heal. They know that there is no promise made but to him that believeth; and therefore they are careful not to comfort over much those that are convicted. I

> fear I have been too incautious in this repect, and have often given comfort too soon. The Lord pardon me for what is past, and teach me more rightly to divide the word of truth for the future."[13].

The *Boston Weekly News-Letter* reported in 1740 that when Whitefield visited New York "a roughness was noticed by his hearers which was said to have been lately acquired";[14]. no doubt partly on account of his adoption of Tennent's "preaching of terrors".

The co-operation between the two men was mutually beneficial. As an exotic stranger to the Middle Colonies, Whitefield needed a local revivalist like Tennent to introduce him to the ripest fields for spiritual harvest. Tennent gladly complied, and beginning in late November, led the Englishman to practically every congregation in New York and New Jersey that had given a receptive ear to the preaching of new birth.[15].

For Tennent, the potential benefit of his alliance with the young evangelist must have been obvious from the outset. Whitefield's proposed tour of northern New Jersey and New York City included visits to the flocks of the New England or formerly antisubscriptionist party, who, while themselves proponents of an experiential form of Christianity, had recently sided against the revivalism of the New Brunswick group. As recently as October 1739 their unofficial leader, Jonathan Dickinson, had delivered a sermon to the New York Presbytery summarising their objections to the current revival.[16]. With the revival party thus hopelessly outnumbered on the Synod through a temporary alliance between subscriptionists and antisusbcriptionists, the answer for Tennent and his allies seemed to be to woo the antisubscriptionists to the revival by persuading them of the spiritual utility of revivals for the Presbyterian community.

In Whitefield Tennent had an ally of considerable dynamism who could only increase the popular appeal of the revival cause among the laity, and might at the same time sway the antisubscriptionists to join with him.

But Whitefield was able to help the Tennents on a wider front. The Anglican clergyman spread the revival message far beyond the immediate confines of either the New Brunswick Presbytery or the Presbyterian Church. As a member of the Church of England he was untrammelled by the Synod's itinerancy act, while his evident "catholic spirit" attracted lay people of different theological and ecclesiogical persuasions. Moreover, his growing international reputation and brilliant oratory transformed the hitherto localised awakenings into a wider colonial phenomenon.

From his first meeting with William Tennent in Philadelphia, Whitefield's contacts with the New Brunswick Presbyterians steadily increased. On November 13th, he met Gilbert Tennent and travelled with him to New York, where he preached in the meeting houses of the New England Presbyterians, Ebenezer Pemberton and Jonathan Dickinson in Elizabethtown. On November 20th he preached in Tennent's meeting house at New Brunswick where he was introduced by Tennent to several leading revivalists: to Frelinghuysen, to the Scots Presbyterian John Cross and to James Campbell, Presbyterian minister at Newbern, Pennsylvania. On the 21st Whitefield preached from a wagon to 1500 at Maidenhead "at Mr. Tennent's request", where he was introduced to the controversial John Rowland. Moving on to Neshaminy, where he was due to preach "by appointment", he arrived late to find that William Tennent had already begun to preach to the crowd of 3000. Tennent soon stopped, stepped aside for Whitefield, who preached,

followed by a short word of exhortation from Gilbert. They then went to together to William Tennent's house where they enjoyed "sweet communion" and "spent the evening in concerting measures for promoting our Lord's kingdom." They parted company on November 23rd, Whitefield returning to Philadelphia.[17]

In the cosmopolitan and socially highly mobile city of Philadelphia Whitefield enjoyed his greatest success. By the Revolution in 1776, its prosperity and rapidly growing population made it the second largest city in the British Empire. Moreover, in this "city of brotherly love", the religious diversity of the Middle Colonies was at its greatest, and the universality of Whitefield's appeal strongest. Here, with a strong Quaker community, a growing Anglican presence, and with different groups of pietists in nearby Germantown, the awakening was shorn of the Presbyterian overtones of the campaign in New York and the country, where denominationalism was more in evidence. The Philadelphia revival set off by Whitefield's visit in November 1739 reached its peak during his second tour of the Middle Colonies. He arrived in the city on April 15th, 1740: in five days as many as 15,000 people were attending his preaching on Society Hill and by the time he returned from a week excursion's to New York, the city was in a frenzy.[18] Departing on May 11th, Whitefield left Gilbert Tennent and Presbyterian allies to fan the growing flames of the Philadelphia Awakening. There was a sudden transformation of religious life in the city; demand for Whitefield's sermons and for revival literature soared.[19] The interdenominational character of the revival was symbolised when, in the summer of 1740, Whitefield's supporters built a building for the use of "orthodox experimental ministers of whatever persuasion". By the time of

Whitefield's return in November it lacked only a roof. On November 9th, he preached in the "New Building" to a full house of several thousands, testimony to the progress that had been made under the ministry of the Tennents.[20].

In New York and the other major Middle Colonies cities, the harvest of Whitefield's preaching was altogether more meagre. Whitefield expressed disappointment at his visit to New York in November 1739, where he met with staunch opposition from the Established Church of England, though he was told of a number who had been affected by his visit.[21]. This grew under the careful guidance of Pemberton and the New England party and Whitefield made return visits in the spring and autumn of 1740, but by his standards the results were moderate. On the former occasion he was again welcomed by William Tennent and became acquainted with James Davenport of Long Island (soon to achieve notoriety for his wild enthusiasm in New England), but there was little evidence of revival; on the latter visit, he again preached in Pemberton's meetinghouse, the first two days apparently "without success", and although on the third evening he reported a "great melting" in the congregation, he left the city shortly afterwards.[22].

In Elizabethtown and Newark, the two other places within the Presbytery of New York where there were notable revivals, Whitefield was not the architect. At Elizabethtown, Whitefield's first visit in November 1739, like his visit to New York, helped persuade the New England party under Dickinson to move one step closer to supporting the revival cause. Dickinson was particularly impressed with the

evangelist's preaching style; he described his November 1739 sermon as "excellent":

> "the Method of his [Whitefield's] Address [was] the most affecting that...[he, Dickinson] had ever known. Almost every Body admired; and Multitudes were affected with that Sermon".[23]

But if Whitefield's first visit inspired, his second in the spring of 1740, made a less favourable impression. The point of dispute seems to have been Whitefield's evangelical view of assurance as essential to saving faith. With a background in New England Puritanism, Dickinson displayed a more cautious view and in May, 1740, immediately following the evangelist's visit, preached a sermon on the *Witness of the Spirit* in which he both allied himself with the revival, but also cautioned against enthusiastic errors. He clearly stated his belief in perceptible assurance; "the influences of the Spirit of God upon our Souls are in themselves *sensible* or *perceptible* Operations". But, and here lay the crux of the matter, he insisted that there were doubtless many who felt such divine influences in their Souls, who - either through sense of indwelling sin, or some physical weaknesses - remained in a "most uncomfortable Suspence" about their spiritual state. In conclusion, Dickinson launched an attack upon those who taught that assurance was essential to saving faith:

> "Whoever therefore teach such Doctrine, that every Converted Person must necessarily know that he is converted, do *offend against the Generation of God's People*, so contrary to the Constant Doctrine of the most eminent Protestant Divines from the Reformation to this Day, and contrary to the blessed Oracles of Truth."[24]

That this attack was partly directed against Whitefield is clear from a private letter which Dickinson wrote to Thomas Foxcroft, minister of the Old South, Boston, on May 24th, 1740, in which he expressed his concern at Whitefield's "making Assurance to be essentially necessary to a justifying Faith; and his openly declaring for a Spirit of

Discerning in experienced Christians, whereby they can know how are true Converts; and who are close associates." Whitefield was soon to moderate his views, but at this stage it clearly caused Dickinson and many other birth-right Calvinists, considerable concern. Despite such reservations, he still admired Whitefield's "indefatigible and even inimitable Industry and laboriousness in his Endeavours to save poor perishing Sinners from eternal Destruction". Dickinson himself continued to labour for a revival in his town, which eventually broke out in June, 1740.[25]

Perhaps, the most dramatic revival took place among the rural congregations at Fags Manor in S.E. Pennsylvania. Samuel Blair first preached there in November 1739 and by March 1740 there was a growing revival. Whitefield preached at Faggs Manor for the first time on May 15th to a congregation of 12,000. He described the event in his *Journal:*

> "Most were drowned in tears. The Word was sharper than a two-edged sword. The bitter cries and groans were enough to pierce the hardest heart. Some of the people were pale as death; others were wringing their hands; others lying on the ground; others sinking into the arms of friends; and most lifting up their eyes to Heaven and crying to God for mercy."[26]

The effects of Whitefield's ministry was a widespread Middle Colonial Awakening. In 1739, his month-long visit had spurred Gilbert Tennent and the Log College men to greater efforts, fanned an awakening in New Jersey and fired a big revival in Philadelphia, which spread to the surrounding countryside, enabling the New Brunswick revivalists to set the rural areas of Pennsylvania ablaze during the winter. He returned in both the spring (April 13th to May 15th) and Fall (October 30th to December 1st) 1740 with great follow-up success.

Historians have differed in their assessment of his role in this Middle Colonial Revival. Traditionally, Whitefield has been seen as the central figure, and the Awakening as part of a wider transatlantic evangelical revival. Maxson is a typical representative of this view. He sees the revivals in America, not in isolation, but as part of "an intercolonial evangelical movement," linked to "the Methodist revival in the Empire", and part of "the world-wide evangelical revival."[27] In contrast, the recent research of American historians has tended to focus upon the local aspects of revival, examining its unique features in different regions and among different denominational or sectarian groupings. In his study of the Awakening in the Middle Colonies, M. E. Lodge emphasises the role of the New Brunswick Presbyterian revivalists, at least fifteen in number, of whom Gilbert Tennent was but the most famous:

> "Every revival in the Middle Colonies outside of Philadelphia and the bounds of the Presbytery of New York was clearly dominated by the New Brunswick Presbyterians, who merely used Whitefield's two tours of 1740 to fan the religious fervour to new heights".[28]

Certainly Whitefield was heavily dependent upon his Presbyterian allies. His combined tours lasted a mere three months, whereas the whole revival comprised two years of widespread popular outbursts. Moreover, wherever he travelled he worked closely with the Presbyterian revivalists; only in Philadelphia did he actually initiate the revival and carry it to its peak - and even here the New Brunswick group did the bulk of the preaching. In New York, where the Presbytery was largely ineffectual there was little success. Yet if Whitefield was not the architect, he was certainly the catalyst, transforming the localised nature of the earlier awakenings into a general Revival. Moreover, according to one historian of the Presbyterian movement, Whitefield's arrival in 1739-40 saved the day

for Gilbert Tennent and New Brunswick Presbyterians by turning the tide of both lay and clerical support heavily in their favour:

> "For the Log College men Whitefield had turned the battle in a critical hour. Not only had the evangelist spread the localised revival through the synod, but he had definitely won the large and influential New York Presbytery, led by Dickinson, to the revival cause."[29].

Old Side Presbyterian opposition to the Revival was slow to emerge. The spark which lit the fire of a controversy, that raged within the denomination in America for years to come was Gilbert Tennent's sermon on *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry.* Preached on March 8th, 1740, at Nottingham, Pennsylvania, it accused ministerial opponents of revivalism of being unregenerate Pharisees, and therefore unfit to minister life to others. Both Tennent and Frelinghuysen had made previous attacks upon lifeless pastors, and George Whitefield had already made scorching denunciations of unregenerate Anglican and Dissenting ministers; but Tennent's full-scale tirade on this theme was something of a landmark. He advised his hearers to choose only converted ministers to supply their pulpits and declared that it was lawful for them to leave their "carnal" teachers to hear the pure Word from godly ministers.[30]. This provocative incitement to mutiny led to a revolt among the Presbyterian congregations which was to split asunder both New Side (as the revivalists were known) and Old Side (as the Presbyterian anti-revivalists were called) congregations. According to his biographer, one reason for Tennent's bold decision to rest his fate in the hands of the laity, was the knowledge of Whitefield's imminent return to the Middle Colonies om the spring of 1740.[31].

In his first visit, Whitefield had received very little opposition from Old Side Presbyterians. In Dickinson's meeting house,

in November 1739, he had attacked both ministers and people who rested upon a "bare speculative knowledge of the doctrines of grace," and failed to experience the power of them in their hearts. But now in April 1740 similar attacks were interpreted in the light of Tennent's Nottingham sermon. In his second sermon at Elizabeth Town in the spring of 1740 he noted the presence of ten "Dissenting" and two Anglican ministers and consequently:

> "dealt very plainly with the Presbyterian clergy, many of whom, I am persuaded, preach the doctrines of grace to others, without being converted themselves."[32]

Such attacks and his increasing identification with the Log College men, provoked opposition from Old Side ministers. Francis Alison, for example, tried to engage him in a public debate concerning assurance, following his sermon at Faggs Manor. Alison objected to Whitefield's claim that those who lacked an assurance of their salvation were in a "damnable condition". Whitefield denied that he had ever stated his position so boldly, but maintained that all true Christians should seek for "a full assurance of faith".[33] However, pamphlet and press opposition to the evangelist was still very sparse, so thin, indeed, that in June 1740, a rumour circulated in Philadelphia that Whitefield had engaged all the printers not to publish anything against him. Until the autumn of 1740, only one-fifth of the articles on Whitefield in Philadelphia's *Pennsylvania Gazette and the American Weekly Mercury* included criticisms of his work.[34]

All this changed with the appearance in September 1740 of a pamphlet entitled *The Querists*. Although it purported to be the work of a group of Presbyterian laymen, it was probably penned by David Evans of the New Castle Presbytery. This tract, as its title implied,

aimed to point out obscure or confused phrases in Whitefield's published works and demanded their clarification. The author focused mainly upon Whitefield's early writings, and not surprisingly found evidence of "Arminianism" and "Quakerism" as well as general doctrinal inconsistency, at one point accusing him of propagating "Calvinism and Quakerism mixt together". Only towards the end did it criticise Whitefield for his attacks on the clergy, for his extempore preaching and his view that Christ's body was often divided on issues which were "purely indifferent".[35] The second pamphlet, written in reply to Whitefield's defence, and published before the meeting of the 1741 Synod, turned into an almost hysterical attack, accusing Whitefield of seeking to set up a new Papacy by using the Roman artifice of priestcraft.[36]

In his reply to the first tract, Whitefield thanked the Querists for their corrections, but emphasised how different his theological upbringing had been to that of the majority of American birth-right Calvinists:

> "The Lord's dealing with me was somewhat out of the common. I can say, to the Honour of rich free distinguishing Grace, that I received the Spirit of Adoption before I conversed with one Man, or read a singly Book, on the Doctrine of *Free Justification by the Imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ.* - No Wonder then, that I was not so clear in some Points at my first setting out in the Ministry. - our Lord was pleased to enlighten me by degrees."[37]

His own experience had led him to a deep appreciation of the "doctrines of grace" but also led him to be more sympathetic towards those, who like himself were not reared as Calvinists. In his Journal for November 1740 he used the example of a Captain H....l, once a great reprobate, and compulsive swearer, but now "by God's grace..a Christian", as evidence of God's electing love and proof against the

notion of free-will in salvation. But, he continued, perhaps with the *Querists* in mind:

> "I would be tender on this point, and leave persons to be taught it of God...Let a man go to the grammar school of faith and repentance, before he goes to the university of election and predestination. A bare head-knowledge of sound words availeth nothing. I am quite tired of Christless talkers. From such may I ever turn away. Amen."[38].

The gap between Whitefield's moderate, experiential Calvinism and the 'strict' often abstract and metaphysical Calvinism of the Old Side Presbtyerians is clearly revealed.

Like other observers of the Revival, some Old Side opponents recognised links between the Awakening in the Middle Colonies and elsewhere. One writer traced the movement of this wandering spirit of pietistic enthusiasm, which, after troubling Germany and England, had now found its way to America.[39]. So sensitive were the New Sides to this wide condemnation of the Revival, that in the Synod of 1741 Samuel Blair sought to enter a formal complaint against its supposed author, Thomas Evans of New Castle Presbytery.[40].

Before leaving America, Whitefield recommended the Tennents and their party to his hearers in the Middle Colonies, and enlisted Gilbert Tennent's help in continuing the revival in New England. Following a winter tour of Massachusetts and Connecticut in the winter of 1740-41, Tennent became recognised as the leader of the inter-colonial revival, in the absence of Whitefield. By June 1741, exhausted by his arduous labours in New England, Tennent began to reconsider his own ministry and the state of the Revival as a whole. On 12th February, 1742, he wrote a letter to Jonathan Dickinson, soon to be published, in which he condemned the practices of the Moravians,

the enthusiasm of James Davenport, and other excesses of the revival, including the denunciation of "unconverted" ministers.[41]

The Old Lights seized upon this seeming volte-face to launch an attack upon the Revival. The most effective criticism was John Hancock's anonymous pamphlet *The Examiner, or Gilbert against Tennent* which compared passages from Tennent's Nottingham sermon of March 1740 with his April 1742 sermons in an attempt to show that his own teaching during the revival differed little from that of the Moravians.[42] With Tennent under fire, moderate New Sides eagerly responded to the rallying cry of the New England leader Jonathan Dickinson. Dickinson, who had been in the background during the 1740 Revival, published in August 1742, *A Display of God's Special Grace*, in which, much like Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Connecticut, he sought to distinguish between true religion and the enthusiasm that often accompanied it, stressing the role of experience, but warning against too great a reliance upon emotions and insisting that holiness was the surest sign of justification. In June 1743, the preface to a reprint of the *Display* was signed by Tennent and five other ministers.[43] This doctrinal alliance was soon matched by an institutional one in which the New York Presbytery and the New Sides met jointly in August 1743 and was confirmed by a formal union of the two groups in 1745.

Tennent's change of direction, particularly his clash with Moravian Brethren, was to have a direct effect on his relationship with Whitefield. As a firm Calvinist, Tennent insisted on the normality of preparatory convictions, a violent conversion and continuing doubts and struggles after conversion. The Moravians with their emotional Christocentric emphasis, thought that preparatory

convictions were an illusion; that conversion came through passive waiting until sinners received a sudden assurance of sonship and knowledge that they would henceforth possess power over sin. These doctrinal differences were soon to affect the the internal politics of the New Building in Philadelphia. The church was originally intended to be open to clergy of every experimental sort, but Whitefield had restricted access to Calvinist revivalists along, by formulating a confessional statement to which all trustees and ministers connected with the New Building had to subscribe.[44] Nine of the articles in this summary of Whitefield's theology were unobjectionable, but the tenth clause read as follows:

> "10. We do also give our Assent and Consent to the 9th. 10th. 11th. 12th. 13th. and 17th. Articles of the Church of England as explained by the Calvinists in their literal and grammatical sense without any Equivocation, whatsoever, we mention therein particular because they are a summary of the foregoing Articles. We believe all that are sound in the Faith agree in these, whatever Points they may differ in."[45]

By subscribing to this statement, a trustee or minister declared his support of a strict Calvinist interpretation of original sin, free will, justification, good works before and after justification, predestination and election. This was perfectly acceptable to the New Side Presbyterians, but it excluded Moravian leaders from participating in the New Building's ministry.

Had the trustees been staunch Calvinists themselves, no problem might have arisen over Whitefield's articles. But such was not the case. Many of the trustees had been attracted to the Awakening because of its emphasis upon spiritual rebirth and interdenominational cooperation. Understandably, they soon began to view the subscription requirement as antithetical to the spirit that prompted the New Building's construction. Five of the trustees, the influential New

York merchant, Thomas Noble, John Stephen Benezet, a Philadelphia merchant, and a Quaker friend of Whitefield, Charles Brockden, a recorder of deeds for the Philadelphia Company, Edward Evans, a cordwainer and James Read, a gentleman of unknown occupation, became increasingly enamoured of the Unitas Fratrum's ecumenical approach and opposed to the New Building's ten articles. During the early months of the New Building's existence, its pulpit was filled exclusively by Calvinist Awakeners. These revivalists strongly opposed the introduction of Moravian leaders into the church, yet they realised that the balance of power on the trustee board was shifting against them. By June 1742, Whitefield was back in England and William Seward was dead. This left only seven trustees available to vote on pulpit supplies, and of these, only two, Hazard and Eastburn, remained convinced that the New Building should remain under Calvinist control.

Fearful that the board might later alter the articles so that Moravian preachers could be introduced, Gilbert Tennent and his allies among the trustees began to attack the Moravians with even greater severity than before. However, by July 1742 the trustees had voted five to two in favour of allowing the Moravian leader Böhler to conduct services in the Building, which was only prevented by Hazard's refusal to surrender the only key.

As conflict increased, Gilbert Tennent discovered to his dismay that George Whitefield was not fully behind the Calvinists. Whitefield never supported those trustees who wanted Moravians to preach in the New Building, but he also rejected Tennent's bigoted view of the Unitas Fratrum. Immediately following his discussions with Zinzendorf in New Brunswick, in November 1741, Gilbert Tennent had penned several letters describing the various errors of Moravian

doctrine. One of these reports had been sent to Whitefield in England. Whitefield chose to show Tennent's criticisms to a local Moravian leader, August Spangenberg, who explained how Zinzendorf had been misinterpreted. Whitefield relayed Spangenberg's comments along with his own views to Tennent, admitting that though he did not agree with most of the peculiar views of the Unitas Fratum he could not see why this disagreement should hinder cooperation with them: "do not you and I preach up and profess a Cath[olic] Spirit?" he asked. Whitefield was convinced that the Moravians were the "Children of God" and their ultimate purpose was the "glory of God and the good of souls". He chided his colonial friend with being too confined by his Presbyterian principles. As for himself, Whitefield declared that he would continue to bring "people to Jesus Christ and then let them join with such Congregations as they upon due urging judge to be nearest the Mind of Jesus Christ."

When Tennent answered Whitefield's letter in June 1742, he expressed his deep disappointment of his colleague's views:

> "Your high opinion of the Moravians and attempts to join with them Shocks me Exceedingly...You never did anything in all your Life of such dreadful Tendency to the Church of God as your favouring that Sect of Enthusiastical Hereticks."

He pleaded with Whitefield to end his unreasonable and dangerous encouragement of the Moravian sect.[46] In August, the colonial papers were circulating reports that Whitefield had actually become a Moravian, a rumour based on an extract of Zinzendorf's writings, in which he described Whitefield as a "Son of our Church."[47]

Whitefield was of course no Moravian, and he was sufficiently concerned by Tennent's report to write to the trustees of the New Building, advising them not to alter the Articles in order to allow

the Brethren to preach there. It was better, he argued, that those of different doctrinal positions should preach in different places, but continue in "sweet amiable Christian fellowship", as was the case in London. He continued:

> "You know my Dear Brethren that house was built for me and other experiental Calvinistical preachers - And now to alter the Articles on such an account is too much like the people turning Calvin out of Geneva, though in a few years after they were glad of their Calvin again."[48]

Nonetheless, on Whitefield's return to Philadelphia in the latter part of 1745 he seems to have sided initially with the Moravians. Evidence from Whitefield's own letters is sparse, but from a letter by Jonathan Dickinson to his Boston correspondent Thomas Foxcroft we at least have the Presbyterian account of the event, based on information from Gilbert Tennent. A vote had been taken by the trustees on "whether the Articles they had sign'd should stand good; and the House be still appropriated to the original Design expressed in those articles." Whitefield and the majority of the trustees answered in the negative and he therefore demanded the keys of the building. Dickinson commented:

> "You'll easily imagine what a Damp it was to us all, to find Mr. Whitefield desert Mr. Tennent and his other darling Friends; and to keep constant Company with the Moravians; and to vote on the Moravians Side, in a Manner that none of us know how to reconcile to moral Honesty."[49]

There is little actual evidence that Whitefield had deliberately broken with the Tennents, although there were obvious differences between them concerning the extent to which a "catholic spirit" could be exhibited to those of different doctrinal beliefs. When rumours of Whitefield's supposed shift of allegiance had reached his ministerial friends in Boston in the spring of 1746, he was keen to

reassure Thomas Prince that he had been misinformed and that he had "not joined with the Moravians against Mr. Tennent". All that he would say concerning the incident was that he had acted as he believed Prince himself would have done in the circumstances and that he would let his friend have details of it "at a proper season."[50].

Whitefield returned to Philadelphia in May 1746 clearly determined to allay the fears of his Presbyterian friends. Dickinson, writing from Elizabeth Town, to Foxcroft on August 25, 1746, reported how:

> "Mr. Whitefield at his late coming to Phila. has thoroughly remov'd the jealousies that were generally entertain'd of his joining with the Moravians. He has lately been here and rendered himself more acceptable both here and at New York to all Men in general than in any of his former Visits. Both in his preaching and Conversation he is full and plain in declaring against the Moravians Doctrines."[51].

It is significant that Whitefield, clearer now in his Calvinism than six years ago, and generally less prone to the "enthusiasm" of his youth, endeared himself to Dickinson and the "New England" Presbyterians. It also seems clear that he had successfully reassured Gilbert Tennent of his orthodoxy. In an important letter from Philadelphia, addressed May 21st, 1746, he wrote:

> "Blessed be God jealousies and suspicions begin to vanish quite away and Mr. Tennent and we are very friendly. There seems to be no danger of a Disunion. We have spoken very freely to each other and He is revising the sermons that I have corrected for the press."[52].

The alliance between Whitefield and Tennent was secured through the latter's preface to Whitefield's *Five Sermons*, published in Philadelphia, 1746. Tennent's sentiments are revealing of the new understanding reached between the two, as well as a testimony to the orthodoxy of Whitefield's Calvinism by this date. The Presbyterian

recommended the sermons to the world as "well adapted to correct the Errors of the present Day, as well as to promote vital and practical Godliness." Referring to Whitefield's visit to the city in 1746, Tennent wrote concerning both the evangelist's preaching and private conversation:

> "I find, to my great Satisfaction, that he is clear and sound in the great Doctrines of Religion, and preaches exactly agreeable to the Church of England, and our Westminster Confessions of Faith, between which there is the sweetest Harmony.
>
> It was likewise peculiarly agreeable to me, to hear the aforesaid Gentleman openly and boldly declare in his publick Discourses, against that detestable and dangerous Error of the Antinomians, viz. That Persons are actually justified before Faith."

Not only had Whitefield preached against Antinomianism but he also declared "against that perilous *ignis fatuus*, Enthusiasm, (particularly in his last agreeable Visit) with equal Zeal; the Quintessence of which, as I conceive, consists in following Impulses of our own Fancy, as a Rule of Conduct, without the written Word, while the Sober Use of Reason is rejected; this, the Reverend Mr. Whitefield has expressly opposed and declar'd against." This reveals how far both men had stepped back from the extremes of 1740. According to Tennent, Whitefield was now an orthodox Calvinist, preaching "the great Doctrines of the Reformed Churches, viz Original Sin, Justification by Faith alone, Man's Impotency to do Spiritual Good, Regeneration, Sanctification, and Assurance." As for the "exceptionable, unguarded Expressions" in some of his earlier writings, Tennent offered this excuse:

> "Is this to be wonder'd at , considering his young Years, strong Passions, Education in Arminian Principles, and the continued Hurry of his Labours in Preaching, Writing Letters, and Discoursing with People in the Places where he travell'd having withal but little Time for Study and Reflection?"[53].

Whitefield's relationship with Gilbert Tennent was one of the most influential friendships in the career of the inter-confessional evangelist. In 1739-40 the young and impressionable clergyman allowed the Presbyterian's rougher homiletic style and firmer Calvinism finally to wean him away from any "Quaker" or "Arminian" tendencies in his theology, preparing him for his ready acceptance among the Puritan community in New England in the autumn of 1740. In 1745-46, Tennent's turning away from his earlier enthusiasm, together with his public clashes with the Moravians, also influenced the course of Whitefield's future mission. Although after 1746 he continued to hold fellowship with non-Calvinists - whether evangelical "Arminians" such as the Wesleys in England, or the Middle Colonies Lutheran Pietist, Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg - after this date he became far more an exclusively Calvinist evangelist. The combined effect of his siding with the Tennents against the Brethren in Philadelphia, the news of the Moravian secession from the London Tabernacle in 1745-46, and the barrage of criticism levelled at against him in New England, as the alleged author of the separations that followed the excesses of James Davenport: all these events drove him further into the hands of orthodox Calvinist ministers on both sides of the Atlantic, and encouraged a much greater caution with regard to impressions and impulses, leading, in 1748, to a public retraction of some of his youthful errors.[54]

2. The Quakers.

By 1700 the Quakers were the greatest single religious group in the Middle Colonies, dominating the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Delaware and possessing influence in New York. In addition to their numerical superiority, they enjoyed political leadership and economic prosperity, nowhere more so than in Philadelphia. Yet, as Whitefield noted on his arrival in the city, such affluence had had an adverse effect on the spiritual vitality of the community. Gone was the proselytizing activism and "enthusiasm" of the founding fathers and in its place was a "quietism", accompanied by signs of spiritual lassitude. It is significant that in 1737, two years prior to Whitefield's arrival in Pennsylvania, children of Friends were given birthright membership without the usual testimony of a change of heart. Yet, despite a spiritual decline, despite fears of the growing power of the Church of England, and the challenge to their hegemony posed by the immigration of large numbers of Scots-Irish Presbyterians, by 1740 the Quakers were still very powerful in terms of numbers and influence. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting comprised about 25,000 souls.[55].

On arrival in Philadelphia in November 1739, Whitefield immediately made contact with the city's Quakers, attending their meetings and exhorting small numbers at every opportunity. On 4th November he attended a Quaker meeting in the evening, where he found himself in general sympathy with the speaker, though expressing his longing for the Friends to talk "of an outward as well as an inward Christ". The following evening was spent "most agreeably with 2 Quakers", and on the 6th he was invited to a Quaker funeral, where he ended up giving a short exhortation at the graveside.[56]. Initially,

many Quakers, especially the young, attended his preaching. Some were no doubt impressed with the fervency of his preaching style: James Pemberton, from a leading Quaker family, wrote in 1739 that while George Whitefield was preaching in the city, "some of our curious youth of rash judgment, who look at words more than substance, are very constant in attendance and much pleased."[57] Others saw him as a means of reviving the spirit of their forefathers: one S.P.G. missionary wrote with some alarm to the Bishop of London of how: "All our Quakers flock to hear him, and one of their preacher[s] say[s] that there never appeared so Powerfull a Preacher since the Days of George Fox."[58]

Many Quakers who remained aloof from the revival itself nonetheless appreciated Whitefield's attacks upon the Church of England. In Philadelphia in 1739-40 the Quakers with their sectarian German allies were locked in a political battle with William Allen's Anglican-Presbyterian alliance for control of the Assembly. The spectacle of Whitefield publicly disputing with the city's Anglican leaders was clearly a pleasing one. One Friend reported, "last First Day morning before Church time he preached a sermon on faith in opposition to good works..And at church (so called) their parson Commings (sic.) preached up works in opposition to Whitefield, and in the evening Whitefield again preached in opposition to him; So that those of the black robe sometimes display their different opinions."[59]

Richard Hockley, a Philadelphia merchant, provides a good example of the ebb and flow of Quaker support for the evangelist. Hockley was not impressed when he first encountered Whitefield in February, 1740, on a business trip to Charleston, South Carolina. By

June, 1740, however, his opinion had altered, having observed the "surprising change", in the habits, conversation and hearts of the Philadelphians "since that shining light the Revd Mr Whitefield has been amongst 'em...[I] must own...I never heard of or saw his fellow". In September, Hockley admitted that Whitefield's doctrine of experiencing the Spirit was true, and that assurance or "that most blessed Witness within us" was most desirable. Two months later he defended Whitefield and the new birth, noting that the evangelist was being vilified as Christ had been. By June 1741, however, he confessed the difficulties he had with the evangelist's doctrine of election and by 1742 he moved into opposition, worried by the incompatibility of Whitefield's overt Calvinism with Quaker principles, especially since the revivalist had "gott into the Scheme of Reprobation".[60]

Despite his "catholic spirit", Whitefield's Calvinism was undoubtedly one of the main reasons why so few Quakers ended up siding permanently with his revivalism. By the Spring of 1740 he had noted how:

> "Some few bigotted self-righteous Quakers also, now begin to spit out a little of the Venom of the Serpent: they cannot bear the doctrine of original Sin, or of imputed righteousness, as the cause of our acceptance with God. One calls original sin, "original nonsense"; and several have been to me under the apprehension of being thrust out for owning and confessing what I take to be the truth as it is in Jesus."[61].

This open testimony against the Friends' "erroneous tenets" drove many of them away, but Seward was careful to point out that the revivalists still had some supporters, including Stephen Benezet, a merchant who was to become one of the trustees of the New Building.[62]. Whitefield was confident that he would soon count a number of Friends

among his permanent adherents, writing in his Journals: "many of the Quakers have been convinced of the righteousness of Jesus Christ..."[63] Yet, if Whitefield's somewhat indefinite theology might pass Quaker scrutiny, the doctrine of his allies the Tennents remained unacceptable. James Logan, one of Philadelphia's most distinguished citizens, summarised nicely the Quaker judgement on his ministry:

> "It must be confessed his [Whitefield's] preaching has a good effect in reclaiming many dissolute people, but from his countenancing so much the most hot-headed predestinarians, and those of them principally, who had been accounted by the more sober as little better than madmen, he and they have actually driven divers into despair and gone into perfect madness."[64]

Both the Friends and the leading revivalists were agreed that the essence of religion was an inward experience rather than an outward acquiescence in religious creeds and forms. In the seventeenth century they would have been more closely in agreement upon the nature of that inward experience, for George Fox saw the new birth in more dramatic fashion than his successors, but eighteenth century Quakers generally failed to discern their founders's teachings in the evangelism of the day, because of their adoption of Quietism. They now decried all conceptions of inward renewal as a dramatic process, especially when accompanied by physical effects, as contrary to the true workings of the Spirit, whose operations were peaceful and accomplished in an atmosphere of "stillness". Quaker leaders such as John Smith of Burlington, rooted in Quietism, used the concept of "enthusiasm" to attack the revival.[65]

The Quakers were remarkably successful in distancing themselves from Whitefield and his allies. Only a handful of friends abandoned the sect during the Great Awakening; between 1739-43, the Philadelphia

Monthly Meeting censored only five persons for "joining with other societies in their way of worship".[66] The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 June, 1741, mentioned eight adult Quakers who had been baptised in by Gilbert Tennent in addition to the three baptised when George Whitefield was last there, implying that such an occurrence was rare.[67]

3. The Anglicans.

Both the revivalism and internal division that affected Presbyterianism were notably absent among the region's Anglicans. Like the Quakers, the Church successfully weathered the storms of the Awakening. The Church in the Middle Colonies, as in New England, was in the minority. In 1750, in the combined provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania there were only fifty-seven Anglican Churches compared to forty-seven Baptist, two Congregationalist and 142 Presbyterian congregations, not to mention the numerous groups of Quakers and German sects.[68] Except in New York, the Church lacked both the legal and political benefits of Establishment, and its own structure of authority was relatively weak. The highest church officials, the commissaries, were appointed by the Bishop of London to "supervise" particular regions of the colonial church, but did not have the authority to ordain, to revoke licenses, or to appoint to livings. Yet, despite its obvious weaknesses, the Church in the early eighteenth century enjoyed both numerical growth and political influence in the Middle Colonies. Backed by Imperial authority, the colonial Church was widely feared by Dissenters as a potential threat to their religious and political freedom. The S.P.G., under the

aggressive leadership of Bishop Gibson, sent out missionaries to the Dissenter-dominated Northern colonies in an attempt to win converts and assert Anglican authority.[69]

In Philadelphia, such policies had borne some fruit. George Keith, the Quaker, had led his followers into the Church in the 1690s and by 1718 a distinctly Anglican political party had been established in Philadelphia. This was matched by the significant numerical growth of Christ Church, the city's main Church, from a congregation of fifty to seven hundred. Whitefield arrived in early November, 1739 and was initially well-received by the Governor John Penn and the Anglican leaders, Commissary Archibald Cummings and Richard Peters, Land Secretary and an Anglican minister. The Commissary offered his pulpit at Christ Church, and during his first few days Whitefield generally confined his public ministrations to that building. But in this "Dissenter"-dominated city, he came under increasing pressure to to break out from the narrow confines of the Church. In his *Journal* he noted the contrast with England

> "The inhabitants were very solicitous for me to preach in another place besides the church; for it is quite different here from what it is in England. There, the generality of people think a sermon cannot be preached well without; here, they do not like it so well if delivered within the church walls. Lord, grant that I may become all things to all men that I may gain some; and preach the Gospel in every place and in every manner, as well as to every creature."

He needed little encouragement to continue his open air ministry. Starting at the Court House steps where he preached to 6-8,000, he moved into the fields where he preached his farewell sermon to upwards of 10,000, since the Church, although spacious, was "not large enough to contain a fourth part of the people."[70] Not only did he begin to minister in an un-Anglican fashion, but both inside the Church and in

the open-air he began to attack the clergy. Cummings recalled how he accused Anglican priests in general of:

> "Hypocrisy and false Doctrine; of subscribing without their Articles, in order to get into Preferment; and that once possessed of their Churches, they locked the Doors and put the keys into their Pockets."[71]

Nonetheless, the first sign of open opposition in the city did not appear until after he had been actively opposed by Commissary Vesey and the Church authorities in New York. On his return to Philadelphia, Peters stood up after one of Whitefield's sermons and publicly attempted to refute the doctrine of "imputed righteousness", after which Whitefield gave a short rejoinder. In the afternoon, Whitefield preached on "The Lord our Righteousness", defending this doctrine before a packed congregation.[72]

Yet Cummings did not openly oppose the evangelist until his return in April 1740. Having already decided that Whitefield was an enthusiast, Cummings now refused to lend him his pulpit, allegedly because of his disrespectful *Answer* to the Bishop's *Pastoral Letter* and his public statement "that Archbishop Tillotson knew no more of Christianity than Mahomet".[73] Having denied Whitefield his pulpit, Cummings proceeded to preach against him on the subject *Faith absolutely necessary, but not sufficient to Salvation without good works*, citing the example of Bishop Bull's *Harmonia Apostolica* and defending Bishop Gibson from Whitefield's charge of being a "Doctrinal Papist". He accused Whitefield of unseemly public disputation, for controverting a sermon of his own, on the same text, before 15,000 people on Society Hill, and vilifying church dignitaries and innocent clergymen as "Simon Maguses..Sorcerers, Emissaries of the Devil."[74]

Cumming's opposition to Whitefield was to have a serious effect on the congregation at Christ Church, for by July 1740 some of his people had joined the Dissenters, while more threatened to follow and several others had refused to contribute to his salary. In a revealing letter to the Bishop of London on August 29, 1740, when Whitefield prepared to return to England, Cummings wrote:

> "Care will be taken, I hope, when he appears yt for ye future he will not be allowed to fight agt our Church under her own colours. His stature as a Clergyman enables him to do ye greatest Mischief...He could not do much hurt in Maryland and Virginia, where the Church is established, but in these parts where 'tis discouraged, he plays his Game successfully by railing agt ye Clergy and their doctrines. He had persuaded several here to leave the Church and to repair to dissenting Meetings; for which reason by them he is looked upon and caressed as an Oracle, and prayed for by name, yt he may to on conquering."[75]

Nothing could more clearly illustrate Whitefield's role as "Dissenter Priest", more effective in the pluralistic religious situation of Pennsylvania than in Virginia and Maryland, where Anglicanism was dominant. As for Christ Church, its return to tranquillity and conformity was interrupted by Cummings' death in April 1741, followed by the attempt of the equally controversial Richard Peters to succeed him. The congregation was still uneasy in 1742, but by the end of 1743, Cummings' successor, Robert Jenney, reported that the church was at last peaceful and orderly.[76]

In New York, where the Church was legally established, Whitefield was not able seriously to threaten the Anglican position. Here the Church enjoyed the immunity supplied by the Test Act and Ministry Act which established it in Richmond, Westchester and Queens Counties. In the city itself, Trinity Church was fully established and consequently possessed the power to shut Whitefield out in much the same manner as had the Church in England. Commissary Vesey refused his pulpit,

while the use of the Town Hall was also denied. This forced Whitefield to preach in the "confined" Presbyterian meeting of Ebenezer Pemberton and in the open air.[77] Vesey's opposition was significant because it marked Whitefield's first public clash with a major colonial church leader, and was a signal for others to follow suit.

In Lewes Town, the minister, William Beckett, having let Whitefield preach, subsequently opposed his doctrine, but at the expense of incurring much lay hostility. By Easter 1741, however, Becket was pleased to report that support for the revival was waning.[78] In New Castle, Pennsylvania, Whitefield's two visits reduced George Ross's flocks by half, but his attack on the revered Tillotson, coupled with the aggressive Calvinism of his Presbyterian followers, drove most back into the fold, although a few were still infected by 1740.[79] At Oxford, the number of communicants fell from thirty to fifteen. Over a year later, the minister, Alexander Howie, was still exasperated by the "giddiness", although church membership had recovered to twenty-five.[80]

In New Jersey, Churchmen were similarly opposed to his ministry. Two out of the five missionaries barred him from their pulpits. Skinner of Perth Amboy, for example, angrily refused the evangelist permission in 1740, and spent much of the following months travelling around to prevent "Enthusiasm" from gaining a foothold. In 1743 he was pleased to report a promising congregation in New Brunswick, the very home of the New Side Presbyterian revival.[81]

The ability of the Church of England to ride out the storm of revivalism was in part due to the unity and tactfulness of its

ministers and to the peculiar circumstances of the Middle Colonies. Anglican pastors generally waited until the peak of the crisis was over, then quietly visited their infected sheep and dissuaded them from the abandoning the fold. Whitefield's warm attacks upon the popular works of Archbishop Tillotson also played into their hands, but above all, the clerical counterattack was assisted by the Calvinism of Whitefield's Presbyterian successors.

For the Great Awakening among the English-speakers of the Middle Colonies was essentially a Calvinist revival. George Whitefield, as the only Anglican evangelist in the team, might have held the awakened Church people to his standard, given time and more clerical support, but he was in the Middle Colonies for only a brief three months. For all their fervour, the Tennent party lacked much of Whitefield's universal appeal. They were hindered in this situation by the vehemence of their revivalism. The source of their tremendous power in their own church was their adaption of revivalist Calvinism to the religious situation in the Middle Colonies: their success among the Reformed churches, could not easily be repeated among those raised in a different doctrinal system. Many of those attracted to the Anglican Whitefield were soon repelled by his Presbyterian allies.

Returning to the region in 1745-46, when the "enthusiasm" of the Awakening had died down, Whitefield noted that the Anglicans in Philadelphia were "generally more and more reconciled" and that the Governor and his wife were "very civil".[82] But, at the same time, hostile articles (not necessarily by Anglicans) appeared in the *American Weekly Mercury*, accusing Whitefield of being a Dissenter who had "omitted and openly broke the Ceremonies of the Church by

praying extempore, and changing the Order of Words to those of his own Fancy."[83].

By 1763, during his sixth visit to America, there was a more notable change of attitude among the Philadelphia clergy. Not only was the Awakening largely a thing of the past, but in the intervening years Whitefield had moderated his early censoriousness. For the first time since 1740 Whitefield was allowed to preach in the Philadelphia's Anglican pulpit, a move which caused clergymen in the provinces considerable dismay. The Rev. Hugh McNeill, wrote to the S.P.G. from nearby Oxford, Pennsylvania, how:

> "Mr. Whitefield's coming lately among us, and meeting with a most cordial Reception from the Episcopal Clergy of Philadelphia has thrown the Clergy and Laity in the County into a very great Consternation."

He claimed that the unanimity among the clergy in the first twenty-three years in opposing Whitefield had "prevented his hurting the Church, (a few individuals excepted)", and held up the example of the divisions among the Dissenters who had countenanced his ministrations as a clear warning to the Church not to follow suit. The safety of the Church had been endangered by the action of the Philadelphia clergy who had:

> "received him with open arms, and still continue to follow him from the church, to the Meeting houses, and from thence to the Church again, with a greater degree of Respect, (I really believe) than if his Grace of Canterbury was to condescend to pay them a visit."

In particular, he complained that a Mr. Duchee, one of the assistant ministers at Christ Church, along with a Swedish minister, a Mr. Wrangle, were very active in espousing the evangelist's cause and had set up private meetings in which only the converted were to be admitted. Although at the time of writing, McNeill could report that

most of the prominent clergy seemed agreed in opposing Whitefield, among the laity disputes ran "very high...some blaming the missionaries for not joining him, whilst others condemn the Clergy in Town, for introducing him in to the Churches or suffering him to have any footing among us."[84]

These divisions affected the congregation of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Bradbury Chandler, missionary at Elizabeth Town. In the winter of 1763/4, having refused Whitefield his pulpit, being the first clergyman at the time to have done so, and acting in a contrary fashion to the Philadelphia clergy, he met with strong opposition from within his own congregation. By the summer he was able to report that the tumult had "gradually subsided", with only two or three people of "no Consequence" having left the Church to join the Dissenters.[85] A year later, however, he felt it necessary to write to the S.P.G. defending himself for having refused Whitefield his pulpit and for having criticised the Philadelphia clergy. But he still maintained that their decision to admit Whitefield had been "ill-judged", for he was only a Dissenter in disguise, using his Anglican credentials to pros elytize within the Church:

> "all Mr. Whitefield's Bitterness and Rage against the Church would have availed little, had he been able only to attack it openly and from without. But what gives him an Opportunity of really hurting ye Church, is his pretended Friendship for her, his wearing ye Garb of her Children, his frequently quoting *our excellent Liturgy*, Articles, Homily etc, with solemn Declarations of his Esteem and Admiration."[86]

In his final visit, in 1770, Whitefield was again received in all the Philadelphia churches. From New York the Rev. Samuel Auchmity wrote disapprovingly to inform the S.P.G. of the situation, using the affair as an example of the need for colonial bishops. The demand from the laity to hear Whitefield was too strong for weak-minded

ministers to resist: there was (he thought) a crying need for the authority of a colonial episcopate to put down such pressure from below. Though the Revd. Dr. Smith had opposed Whitefield's acceptance (as he had done in 1764-5), the Rector, Mr Peters, "being old and infirm...was obliged to give way, to the Importunities and dayly Applications of the Majority of his Congregation." Auchmity concluded:

> "This ill-judged, and ill-timed Submission must plainly show the necessity of having Superiors appointed over us; and that it is no longer prudent, that every Clergyman of the Church of England should do as he pleases."[87]

4. The Germans and the Moravians.

Foremost among the immigrants in the early eighteenth century were Germans, an estimated 100,000 of whom arrived in the first three decades. The main denominations, the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, were initially less effective than the Mennonite, Amish, Schwenkfelder (followers of Luther's ex-disciple, Casper Schwenkfeld) and Dunker sects, who were unhindered by the problems of providing a trained and paid ministry, and had greater success in establishing themselves among frontier communities. The keenest revivalists were the Dunkers, so-named on account of their stand for baptismal immersion. Fleeing from official harrassment, they made their mark, particularly in Pennsylvania. From 1720 onwards, under the leadership of Peter Becker and Conrad Beissel, sporadic revivals broke out amongst their peoplein German Town and Conestoga Valley in Pennsylvania. Despite the number of conversions, the Dunkers' pronounced individualism and the eccentricity of leaders prevented them from reaping the full benefit of their evangelism, and it was left to the well-organised Moravians to gather in the harvest in the 1740s.[88]

Whitefield first arrived in Germantown, near Philadelphia, on November 27th. The prospect of evangelising in this strongly pietistic environment clearly appealed to his inter-confessional outlook. In his Journal he wrote of:

> "no less than fifteen denominations of Christians in German Town, and yet all agree in one thing, that is, to hold Jesus Christ as their Head, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth."

He preached once with some success and before leaving the Philadelphia area was gratified to learn that the Germans were translating his Journals for publication.[89] In the spring of 1740 he wrote to Thomas Noble, expressing his warmth and admiration for many of the Germans who were in America, and urging the necessity of a "catholic spirit" towards them:

> "Most of them, I believe, are Lutheran. But where there is the image of my dear Master, there are my affections drawn. This is the catholic spirit you breathe after: the Lord, I am persuaded, will give it to your soul."[90]

It was natural for Whitefield, with his connections with the Brethren at Fetter Lane in London, to turn to the Moravians to help carry on the work among these German-speakers. The Moravians had first arrived in the Middle Colonies in 1736, committed to the contemporary pietist idea of reforming the church through *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*. But unlike other German pietists, whose *ecclesiolae* remained almost exclusively Lutheran, Zinzendorf sent his Moravian missionaries into all parts of the Western world, to seek converts and become a *diaspora*, a leaven, among denominations, not a separate church. Between 1736-39 the Brethren gained converts from among German sects, particularly the Schwenkfelders and the Dunkers, and keenly embraced the Awakening which broke out among the Germans under Whitefield's preaching in late 1739.[91]

Evidence of early co-operation between Whitefield and the Moravians is plentiful. He first wrote to Zinzendorf suggesting that he send missionaries to Pennsylvania, and then generously lent his sloop *Savannah* to Peter Böhler to transport the Georgia Moravians to Pennsylvania in the spring of 1740. The fruits of this accord were evident in his spring tour. Böhler requested that he preach at the farm of Christopher Weigner, a Schwenkfelder sympathetic to the Moravians; after his sermon, Whitefield reported how Böhler "preached to his countrymen in Dutch [Deutsch]". On the same day they travelled to the nearby homestead of Henry Antes, an unordained Reformed preacher, at this stage friendly with the Moravians, where both the Englishman and German preached to 3000 hearers (a remarkable gathering for the wilderness).[92] With William Seward's help, Whitefield at this time decided to purchase 5000 acres at the Forks of the Delaware, which he named "Nazareth", as a site for a negro school and promptly hired Böhler and the Moravians to erect the school buildings.

Unfortunately the alliance between Whitefield and the Moravians soon ended in acrimony. In the autumn of 1740 Whitefield fell out with a Moravian missionary in Georgia, John Hagen, over a number of doctrinal issues, and finding in November that Böhler was of the same mind, ordered the Moravians to leave the land immediately. With the death of William Seward in October, Whitefield's plans for a negro school likewise collapsed and, to ease his financial difficulties he sold Nazareth to the Moravians.[93] In a long but illuminating letter, written in November 1740, Whitefield listed his theological disagreements with the Brethren: he objected to their denial of election, reprobation and final assurance, and accused them of sinless

perfection and of denying the eternity of hell torments (the latter information supplied him by Gilbert Tennent).[94]

Whitefield's break with the German revival was now complete. Although he had preached at Germantown in the spring with such success that a Thursday lecture was immediately set up under four ministers, he conspicuously refrained from preaching there again in the autumn tour.[95] However, during his stay in England, 1741-44 he continued to maintain fellowship with the Brethren in London[96] and his reluctance openly to side with the Tennents over the issue of the New Building is testimony of the continued warmth between them. In his letter to the trustees he wrote: "the Moravians in some things greatly err notwithstanding I love them in Bowels of Jesus Christ".[97] Even after his reconciliation with Tennent in 1746, and his clear preaching against Moravian doctrinal errors and practices, he still warmly recognised them as fellow children of God. He wrote expressing relief that Noble, now deceased, had not left him anything in his will, "because that wd have encreased jealousies about my being a Moravian when as God knows *I am a staunch Calvinist tho' I cannot help loving yt people because I believe they love Jesus in sincerity.*"[98] (my italics). This perhaps best summarises Whitefield's attitude towards the Brethren and the whole conflict over the Articles of the New Building. He never wavered in his Calvinism but his "catholic spirit" was such that he was prepared to embrace the Moravians as fellow Christians, despite their very different doctrines and principles. Fellow Calvinists like Tennent were not prepared to extend their charity so far, and frequently misunderstood Whitefield's sympathy for the Brethren as an indication that he was about to join them.

The Moravian proselytes continued to grow in number, and their presence in the Middle Colonies over the next few years was to wreak havoc amongst the Lutheran and Reformed Churches; both Muhlenberg and Boehm, respectively, were faced with an uphill struggle to keep their congregations intact. By the end of the 1740s the Moravian revival among the Germans had collapsed, but had left the Lutheran and Reformed churches in a wreck.[99].

Whitefield's relationship with Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, leader of the German Lutherans in the Middle Colonies, is testimony to his continuing willingness to work with non-Calvinistic pietists. The evidence from Muhlenberg's Journals for the 1760s is one of frequent and warm friendship and mutual co-operation between the two. On one occasion when they met, in September 1763, Whitefield spoke highly of two of the leading Pietists, Ziegenhagen and Francke. As for Whitefield's preaching, Muhlenberg heard a sermon in May 1765, which he described as "powerful, gripping, practical". As late as 1770 Whitefield preached in Muhlenberg's church to a crowded auditory and then took occasion once more to honour Francke, who had so greatly influenced his own career.[100].

The Middle Colonies, with its complex denominational map and with many of its spiritual roots in continental pietism, proved fertile soil for Whitefield's simple message of the New Birth. As in England, New England and Scotland, so in the Middle Colonies, Whitefield acted as a catalyst for a widespread Revival, partly bringing together and revitalising the different strands of the localised awakenings of the 1720s and 1730s - under Frelinghuysen, the Tennents and the Dunkers - and partly, as in the case of Philadelphia, iniating a powerful fresh concern for spiritual renewal. Yet, with his strong relationship

with the Presbyterian Tennents and his clearer adoption of distinctly Calvinist tenets in 1740. came a subsequent limiting of his influence among non-Calvinist groups like the Quakers and the Moravians, a division made all the clearer in 1746. But, such was the breadth of his "catholic spirit", that, in later years, he gained greater acceptance by some of his Anglican brethren - who had been unitedly hostile in 1740 - and, to the last, maintained a warm friendship with leading Lutheran Pietists.

CHAPTER EIGHT: MIDDLE COLONIES - FOOTNOTES.

1. See Martin E. Lodge, "The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 1720-1750" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1964), pp. 26-87 (hereafter Lodge, "Great Awakening").

2. See *New York Gazette*, 703, April 30/May 7, 1739. Also *American Weekly Mercury*, 943, Jan. 17/Jan. 24, 1738; 1022, July 26/Aug. 2, 1739; 1023, Aug. 2/Aug 9, 1739; 1032, Oct. 4/Oct 11, 1739.

3. Lodge, "Great Awakening", pp. 176-177.

4. See W. H. Kenney, "Dissenter Priest," op. cit, pp. 75-93.

5. Harry S. Stout, "Religion, Communications, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," *WMQ*, 34 (1977), pp. 520, 526-527.

6. *LGW*, 1, pp. 374-376.

7. For the background to Presbyterianism in the Middle Colonies see Charles H. Maxson, *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies* (1920; reprint., Gloucester, Mass., 1958), pp. 21-39; L. J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (1949; reprint., N. Yk., 1970), pp. 15-85.

8. D. Rothermund, *The Layman's Progress* (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 24.

9. *GWJ*, p. 345.

10. George Whitefield, *A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal During the Time He was Detained in England, by the Embargo* (Philadelphia, 1740), 2, pp. 137-138.

11. *GWJ*, pp. 347-348.

12. Lodge, "Great Awakening", pp. 105-123. For the influence of Frelinghuysen on G. Tennent see ibid., pp. 124-146; also J. Tanis, *Dutch Calvinistic Pietism in the Middle Colonies: A Study of the Life and Theology of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen* (The Hague, 1967).

13. *GWL*, p. 191.

14. *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, June 5, 1740.

15. Milton, J. Coalter, *Gilbert Tennent, Son of Thunder* (Westport, Conn., 1986), p. 60.

16. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

17. *GWJ*, pp. 347-355.

18. Ibid., pp. 407-409.

19. *GW*, 1, p. 492.

20. *GWJ*, p. 489. For the Philadelphia revival see Lodge, "Great Awakening," pp. 181-185.

21. *GWJ*, pp. 349-351, 388.

22. Ibid., pp. 415-417, 484-485.

23. MS. letter, J. Dickinson to T. Foxcroft, Elizabeth Town, May 27, 1740, Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence, Princeton University.

24. J. Dickinson, *Witness of the Spirit* (Boston, 1740), p. 21-23.

25. MS. letter, J. Dickinson to T. Foxcroft, May 27, 1740, loc. cit.

26. *GWJ*, p. 425.

27. Maxson, *The Great Awakening*, pp. 1-10.

28. Lodge, "Great Awakening", p. 188.

29. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition*, p. 87.

30. Gilbert Tennent, The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry (Philadelphia, 1740).

31. Coalter, *Son of Thunder*, p. 67.

32. *GWJ*, pp. 351, 414.

33. Ibid., p. 426; see also Coalter, *Son of Thunder*, p. 67.

34. See Coalter, op. cit., p. 186, fn. 69.

35. *"The Querists"*, in *An Extract of Sundry Passages Taken out of Mr. Whitefield's Printed Sermons, Journals and Letters* (Philadelphia, 1740; reprinted, London, 1741), pp. v, 23, 24-28.

36. *A Short Reply to Mr. Whitefield's letter...to the Querists* (Philadelphia, 1741). See Lodge, "Great Awakening," p. 212.

37. George Whitefield, "A Letter from the Rev. Mr. Whitefield...in answer to certain Scruples lately proposed in proper Queries raised on each Remark", in *An Extract of Sundry Passages* (London, 1741), pp. 38-39.

38. *GWJ*, pp. 490-491.

39. *The General Magazine* (Feb. 1741), p. 121.

40. Ibid., pp. 272-276.

41. Gilbert Tennent to J. Dickinson, Feb. 12, 1742, first appeared publicly in *Boston Weekly News-letter* and was reprinted in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Aug. 12, 1742, and *Weekly Mercury*, Aug. 5-12, 1742.

42. [J. Hancock], *The Examiner, Or Gilbert against Tennent* (Philadelphia, [1743]).

43. [J. Dickinson], *A Display of God's Special Grace* (Boston, 1742; reprint., Philadelphia, 1743).

44. Rothermund, *The Layman's Progress*, p. 29.

45. Ibid., p. 146.

46. Coalter, *Son of Thunder*, pp. 110-111.

47. *SCG*, 440, Aug. 20/Aug 30, 1742. See also *GWL*, p. 441.

48. Copy of Whitefield to Trustees of New Building, Sept. 19, 1742, Whitefield Correspondence, R. 13. A. 17 b. 15, Unitats Archiv, Herrnhut.

49. MS. letter, J. Dickinson to T. Foxcroft, Elizabeth Town, Jan. 21, 1745/6, Foxcroft Correspondence.

50. "Newly Discovered Letters of George Whitefield, 1745-1746", p. 80.

51. MS. letter, Dickinson to Foxcroft, Aug. 25, 1746, Foxcroft Correspondence.

52. "Newly Discovered Letters...1745-1746", p. 166.

53. G. Whitefield, *Five Sermons* (Philadelphia, 1746), pp. iii-xi.

54. *GWW*, 2, p. 144.

55. Lodge, "Great Awakening," pp. 15-18; see Frederick B. Tolles, *Quakers and Atlantic Culture* (N. Yk., 1966), pp. 91-95.

56. *GWJ*, pp. 341-342.

57. F. B. Tolles, "Quietism versus Enthusiasm", *Pa. Magazine of History*, LXIX (1945), p. 31.

58. Alexander Howie to Bishop of London, Oct. 19, 1739, Fulham Palace MSS., Archives of Bishop of London, Fulham Palace Transcripts, Library of Congress.

59. John Smith to John Wardell, Aug. 23, 1740 in "MS. Diary of John Smith," Library Company of Philadelphia.

60. Richard Hockley to [____], Charleston, Feb. 3, 1739(40); Hockley to John Watson letters Philadelphia, Sept. 10, 1740, Nov. 29, 1740, June 15, 1741, Feb. 22, 1742 in "MS. Letter-Book of Richard Hockley, 1737-1742", Haverford College Library, Haverford, Pennsylvania.

61. *GWL*, p. 168.

62. William Seward, *Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia, and from Philadelphia to England*, (London, 1740), p. 11, April 22, 1740.

63. *GWJ*, p. 422.

64. Lodge, "Great Awakening," p. 225.

65. See ibid., p. 224.

66. Ibid., p. 225.

67. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 11, 1741.

68. E. S. Gaustad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (N. Yk., 1962), p. 167.

69. C. Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre* (N. Yk., 1962), p. 57.

70. *GWJ*, pp. 341-343, 359.

71. A. Cummings, *Faith absolutely necessary, but not sufficient to Salvation without good works* (Philadelphia, 1740), p. iv.

72. *GWJ*, p. 356.

73. Ibid., p. 407.

74. Cummings, op. cit., pp. vi-vii, xi-xii.

75. Archibald Cummings to Bishop of London, Philadelphia, Aug. 29, 1740, Fulham Palace Transcripts.

76. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 2, pp. 234-235.

77. *GWJ*, pp. 349-50.

78. Lodge, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

79. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 2, pp. 204-205.

80. Ibid., pp. 207-208, 222..

81. Nelson R. Burr, *The Anglican Church in New Jersey* (1954), pp. 80-81.

82. "Newly Discovered Letters...1745-1746", p. 182.

83. *American Weekly Mercury*, 1360, Jan. 21/Jan. 29, 1745/6.

84. S.P.G. Papers, B. 21 (Pennsylvania) 119, Oct. 7, 1763, Rhodes House Library, Oxford..

85. Loc. cit., B. 24, (New Jersey) 84, Elizabeth Town, July 5, 1764.

86. Loc. cit., B. 24, (New Jersey) 81, July 5, 1765.

87. Loc. cit., B. 2, (N. Yk.) New York, June 8, 1770.

88. For background to German sects and Dunker revivalism see Lodge, "Great Awakening," pp. 18-25, 91-104.

89. *GWJ*, pp. 357-358.

90. *GWL*, pp. 164-165.

91. See Lodge, op. cit., pp. 235-237.

92. *GWJ*, p. 412; Lodge, op. cit., p. 238.

93. John R. Weinlich, "The Whitefield Tract", *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society*, 23, 2 (1979), pp. 51-74.

94. MS. letter, Whitefield to J. Hutton, Nov. 29, 1740, in George Whitefield Letters, A3/105-6, Moravian Church House, London.

95. Lodge, op. cit., p. 239.

96. For evidence for Whitefield and the Moravians in England, 1741-1744, see D. Benham, *Memoirs of James Hutton* (1856), pp. 75, 81-82, 109.

97. Whitefield to the trustees of the new Building, Sept 19, 1742. See also Whitefield to Pyrlaeus, Gallisheels, Sept 19, 1742; Whitefield to Revd. Mr. Blair, Edin., Oct. 4, 1742. Copies of Whitefield Correspondence, R 13. A. 17. b. 15, Unitats Archiv, Herrnhut.

98. "Newly Discovered Letters...1745-1746", p. 166.

99. Lodge, op. cit., pp. 241-257.

100. *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, 3 vols., (Philadelphia, 1942-1958), 1, p. 674, Sept 24, 1763; 2, p. 230, May 7, 1765; 2, p. 441, May 27, 1770.

CHAPTER NINE - WHITEFIELD IN NEW ENGLAND.

In the autumn of 1740 Whitefield arrived in New England to launch himself on what has been claimed as "the greatest single evangelistic tour in New England's history."[1] Certainly for the twenty-six year old evangelist it marked the zenith of a remarkable preaching career, which had already been instrumental in stirring up religious life in parts of England and Wales and setting areas of the Southern and Middle Colonies ablaze with revival.

Whitefield's success was unparalleled. In an astonishing forty-five day tour of key towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut, he delivered over 175 sermons to thousands of hearers, besides very frequent private exhortations. By the time he had finished, most adult inhabitants had probably heard him preach at least once and the excitement he aroused was intense. Over the next two to three years in the "Great Awakening" that followed an estimated 20,000 - 50,000 new members were added to the churches, dozens of new separatist churches were formed, and under the inspiration of Jonathan Edwards a new theological interpretation of revival was forged which was to shape evangelical thought for generations to come.

What were the reasons for Whitefield's huge success? Some were environmental: there were factors unique to New England, which made it particularly susceptible to a large-scale religious awakening, but it is unlikely that so much would have been achieved without the person of Whitefield, who through his itinerancy, his bold extempore

preaching, his Jeremiads against the corruptions of the Church of England was again the catalyst for revival.

While the outbreak of the Great Awakening of 1740-42 was sudden, there were long-term structural weaknesses in the fabric of the New England Congregational Establishment to which the new revivalism addressed itself. Puritanism, first established in New England in the 1620s and 1630s by those who chose to flee from what they held to be a temporizing and adulterated Church of England, was by definition a movement intent on purging the national church of those elements which impeded a thorough-going Protestantism; its zeal for purification encompassed not only doctrine and liturgy but local church membership. The Massachusetts Cambridge Platform of 1648 encapsulated this principle: the visible church should be made up of "Saints by calling", ordination was to be performed by the elders of the church, ministers were to be ordained to a local church and not to the ministry at large and, finally, a testimony of religious experience was required of all full church members, who could vote in church affairs and take part in the Lord's Supper. This strict congregational view prevailed in the Massachusetts Bay area, while in Connecticut the "moderate Presbyterians" controlled the religious establishment, setting up a system of Presbyterianised Congregationalism that achieved official endorsement in the Saybrook Platform of 1708. The Platform effectively gave the authority of "minister making" into the hands of clerical consociations; it operated in large areas of Connecticut, although it was seen by many as a serious erosion of ecclesiastical principle.

A more serious threat to the "New England Way" lay in the perceived decline in piety among the second and third generations. Under the covenant theology of their forefathers, the offspring of full church members were baptised as a sign that, as children of Christian parents, they had a acquired a share in the covenant of grace. Once they too had been "savingly converted" they became full church members, and were permitted the other seal of the covenant, the Lord's Supper. The difficulty arose when the baptised children of believers failed to undergo the necessary conversion experience, and then later came to present *their* children for baptism. This issue was not directly tackled until in 1662 the Massachusetts Synod set out a compromise solution, known as the Halfway Covenant. By this, unconverted and baptised children of believers were to be regarded as halfway members, and were allowed to present their children for baptism, provided that they themselves were "not scandalous in life" and would "own the covenant" into which they were born. While this was intended to preserve the distinction between "visible saints" and the wider community, in effect it opened the door for those who had no "birthright" claim to present their children for baptism, as long as they were upright and prepared publicly to declare their acceptance of covenant obligations. Though the Halfway Covenant was soon accepted by most of the congregational churches in New England, it tended to exacerbate rather than solve the problem of declining piety since it led to the creation of a large number of members who remained content to enjoy their halfway status rather than seek conversion.[2]

It was left to Solomon Stoddard, pastor of Northampton, Massachusetts, to solve the problem of declining church membership,

and to remove the remaining obstacle in the way of the halfway members, by opening the Lord's Supper to all adult members of the community who were not scandalous in life. Stoddardeanism, as it came to be known, was soon accepted by most of the churches along the Connecticut Valley, and seemed to be divinely validated, since Stoddard himself experienced five "harvests" in 1679, 1683, 1696, 1712 and 1718, during which large numbers were added to his congregation. These harvests, however, seem mainly to have attracted those keen to avail themselves of the newly opened means of grace, and to have resulted in few actual conversions, despite the undeniable conversionist emphasis of Stoddard's own preaching. By asserting that no one can know who is truly a saint, and that a church must accept a man on the basis of his outward acceptance of the creed and his willingness to avail himself of the institutionalised means of grace, Stoddard further undermined the old Puritan ideal of a pure church consisting only of those who had a professed experience of regeneration.[3] Thus the situation on the eve of the Awakening was that the churches contained large numbers of unconverted members, who, while orthodox in their outward profession and "not scandalous in life", had no personal experience of the regeneration which their churches still proposed as normative and the true avenue to salvation. It was on these men and women that Whitefield's message of the New Birth had a particularly dramatic effect.

New Englanders received a fore taste of the Whitefieldite Awakening in a revival which broke out at Northampton in 1734-35, under the ministry of Solomon Stoddard's grandson and successor at Northampton, Jonathan Edwards. Alarmed at the incipient growth of "works-righteousness" or "Arminian" preaching in the sermons of many

of his colleagues, Edwards had begun in 1734 to preach a series of discourses emphasising the Westminster doctrines of God's sovereignty, man's total depravity and salvation through faith in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. As a result, in a period of six months Edwards noted that over 300 people had been "savingly converted". The revival spread to the neighbouring towns of the Connecticut Valley, but ended before reaching the Massachusetts Bay area, and by 1737, three years before Whitefield's arrival in New England, the Northampton Revival was "very much at a stop." Yet, although the Great Awakening broke out considerably later, and in a different area the two revivals were not totally unconnected. Through the medium of Edwards' *Faithful Narrative* of the event, New Englanders were acquainted with a revivalistic Calvinism, which had resulted in a dramatic form of conversion experience, hitherto unknown, even among their Puritan forefathers; a three-fold process which began with "conviction" of sin, led to a despairing of salvation, and concluded with the joy of sins forgiven.[4].

News of the revival was received with particular interest by a group of evangelical pastors in Boston. For decades before the Awakening, like other Congregational ministers around them, they had been preaching "Jeremiad" sermons lamenting the decline of vital piety in New England and warning of God's judgment upon a covenant-breaking people. In contrast to the sermons conventional in many New England pulpits, this group, following the lead of Cotton Mather, began to advocate a return to a warm pietism in which conversion and the affective side of religion were emphasized. Significantly, six of them, Thomas Foxcroft of the First Church, Benjamin Colman and William Cooper of Brattle Street, Joseph Sewall and Thomas Prince of

Old South and John Webb of the New North were later firm friends of Whitefield and active supporters of the Great Awakening. They eagerly seized on reports of the Northampton Revival to promote concern for a similar Awakening in Boston. Colman, Boston's senior and most respected pastor, was particularly assiduous in preparing Edwards's reports for publication in both England and America; the Boston edition of the *Faithful Narrative* (1738) was prefaced by his colleagues, Sewall, Prince, Webb and Cooper, all of whom hoped that the further dissemination of the *Narrative* might "by the divine blessing, still promote the conversion of souls, and quicken God's children to labour after the clearer evidences of their adoption."[5] By this date, however, it was already apparent that there was to be no Boston equivalent of the work in Northampton, and Colman and his associates began to look elsewhere for other likely sources of inspiration. In 1738, news reached New England of a young Anglican clergyman, George Whitefield whose labours in England and Georgia, had begun to capture the colonial imagination.

Whitefield's astonishing success in 1740 was partly due to the advance publicity he received from Colman and his fellow pastors. As Harry Stout has shown, some of this was deliberately promoted by Whitefield and Seward,[6] although much of it was simply a consequence of his unusual success in England, Wales and the Southern and Middle Colonies. The New England press first reported on his activities as early as December 1737,[7] remained quiet during his first ministry trip to Georgia in 1738, but eagerly published reports of his open-air preaching in Bristol and London in 1739, allegedly to crowds of up to 50,000 and 60,000.[8] With Whitefield back in America in the autumn

of 1739, the publicity campaign seems to have been deliberately stepped up. The Boston papers reprinted self-promoting extracts of the evangelist's success in the Middle Colonies, produced either by Whitefield himself or his travelling companion William Seward, and transmitted along an effective intercolonial newspaper network, organi ed from Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin. The readers of the *New England Weekly Journal*, for example, were treated thus to an account of his preaching twice a day in New York:

> "with great Eloquence and Zeal. The Church of England shut their Doors against him...so that he was obliged to take up with the Meeting House, which is much too small for the incredible Multitude that follow him - His Doctrine is strictly Calvinian, his Exhortations are very solemn and affecting, his Delivery very beautiful; and I hope He may be a Means of promoting the Interests of vital Religion among us."[9].

Through public reports such as these, New Englanders began to form a composite picture of Whitefield as a great evangelist, an orthodox Calvinist and an Anglican "Jeremiah", who denounced the shortcomings of his own Church with a vehemence which the old Puritans might have applauded.

If the public were kept well-informed through the newspapers, many others gained a more intimate acquaintance with the evangelist through his published sermons and journals. Benjamin Colman was one who gained his first impression of Whitefield through reading the latter's *Journal to Gibraltar*.[10]. Upon his arrival in the American colonies, Whitefield sent copies of his works to Colman and other leading ministers, such as Jonathan Edwards. So successful was this advance publicity that the antirevivalist, Timothy Cutler, an Anglican minister in Boston, complained in early 1740 that Whitefield's "Journals, Sermons, and Pamphlets are reprinted and eagerly bought

here", adding that "the enthusiastic Notions [were] very much kindled...and propagated by his Writings, dispersed everywhere."[11].

Several prominent ministers gained additional information from their Dissenting colleagues in London. Colman, for example, received a letter from an English Dissenting minister, Richard Pearsall of Warminster, dated April 25, 1739, which gave more details of Whitefield's ministry; telling of his powerful preaching of Reformed doctrine to large open air audiences and of his clashes with fellow Anglicans. In November, on news of Whitefield's arrival in America, Colman ensured that the letter was published both in the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* and the *New England Weekly Journal*.[12]. One of Colman's colleagues, Thomas Foxcroft, writing to Isaac Watts in January 1739/40, asking him his opinion of Whitefield, admitted that he himself was:

> "pleased very highly with the prospect of his visiting Boston the next summer. I observe he has scarce any enemies among us, but those of his communion."[13].

Another "Dissenting" supporter of Whitefield, was the Congregational minister of Charleston, South Carolina, an old Harvard man. His sermon on *The Character, Preaching, etc of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield* was printed in Boston and prefaced by Benjamin Colman and William Cooper, who affirmed their support for his testimony as "a Gentleman of good Sense and strict Veracity; and also free from *Enthusiastic Impressions*, unless serious Religion and experimental Piety are so called, as we have melancholy Occasion to observe they are." With glowing praise they described Whitefield as "the Wonder of the Age", a second Martin Luther, raised up by Providence to revive "primitive Christianity, and the Power of Godliness..in the Reforming Churches." Encouraging the prayers of

the faithful on his behalf, the two ministers announced their anticipation that his "proposed coming to us, may be with as full a Blessing of the Gospel of Christ as other places have experienc'd and much more abundant, by the Will and Grace of God."[14].

"The Great Awakener".

Whitefield arrived at Newport, Rhode Island on 14th September, and began a barnstorming campaign of New England. He moved quickly north to Boston, the region's metropolis, to find the town prepared for his coming. For the next three weeks he preached in Boston and surrounding towns along the Massachusetts seaboard to large and excited assemblies, delivering a farewell sermon to an estimated 23,000 gathered on Boston Common. From Boston he went West, preaching in Sudbury, Marlborough, Worcester, Leicester, Cold Spring, Hadley, until he reached Northampton, where he fanned a dramatic new work of God out of the dying embers of the 1734-35 revival. Leaving Northampton on October 20th, he moved South along the Connecticut River Valley, preached at New Haven College (Yale), before departing for New York, leaving New England in a feverish state of revival.[15].

His achievements were astonishing. Thousands were newly added to the churches and countless others were spiritually revived. Whole groups of ministers now imitated the evangelistic techniques of the "Great Awakener". More immediately, Whitefield secured the services of the fiery Middle Colonies evangelist, Gilbert Tennent, recommending him to the New England pastorate as a "solid, judicious, and zealous minister of the *Lord Jesus Christ*", who would "blow up the flame lately kindled there".[16]. Tennent's follow-up winter campaign of

December 13th to March 2nd, 1741 was if anything more dramatic than Whitefield's, adding thousands more to the churches. Hot on his footsteps were a group of native-born itinerants - men such as Eleazar Wheelock, Benjamin Pomeroy, Nathaniel Rogers, James Davenport and Andrew Croswell - many of whom were themselves pastors, but who left their home parishes in order further to promote the Whitefieldite revival.

By 1741-42, however, the revival had not only begun to run out of steam, but had encountered serious trouble through the "enthusiasm" of both preachers and converts. This was typified by the controversy surrounding James Davenport. Recently pastor of Southold, Long Island, Davenport was inspired by Whitefield's example, accompanied the great evangelist on his tour of the Middle Colonies in late 1740, and by 1741-42 had begun to achieve notoriety for his part in the New England Awakening. He began to denounce unconverted ministers by name, and in the spring of 1743 instituted a Puritanical *auto da fe* at New London, instructing his followers to burn not only wigs and fine clothes, but the works of respectable authors such as Increase Mather, Benjamin Colman, Joseph Sewall and Jonathan Parsons. The fact that shortly afterwards the unstable Davenport began to come to his senses, repenting of his errors, did little to restore the credibility of the revival.

On Whitefield's return to New England in 1744, a storm had been brewing for a couple of years, which broke over the head of the one deemed the original author of such "enthusiasm". Whitefield was attacked by the growing number of "Old Light" opponents of the revival, who saw him as the source not only of the itinerating activities of Davenport and his like but as responsible for the

numerous separations from the Established churches. Whitefield deliberately left Boston in 1745, choosing to spend the best part of the next three years of his campaign in the Middle and the Southern Colonies, where opposition was less intense.

By the time of his later visits in 1754, 1763, and 1770, however, much of the storm had died down, and the evangelicalism of the Awakening was by now widely institutionalised. Consequently the "great itinerant" was received with something of the respectability of an elder statesman, a role he played with considerable *panache*, preaching sermons against the external Catholic threat, upholding New England's liberties against Imperial incursions and raising large sums of money for local charities. He died, fittingly, in Massachusetts in 1770, widely mourned by both friends and enemies, in a place where thirty years earlier he had initiated the greatest revival in colonial history.

1. The Anglican Church in New England.

The position of the Church in New England, as in the Middle Colonies, was an anomalous one. In many ways Anglicanism was a beleaguered island in a Congregationalist sea. As late as 1735, less than four per cent of New Englanders were attached to "dissenting" (Anglican, Baptist and Quaker) congregations, and on the eve of the Awakening there were only 2000 Anglicans. Yet despite its undoubted minority position, New England Anglicanism possessed certain inherent strengths which it could turn to its advantage. As the established religion in England, the heart of the Empire, it could always rely on the backing of the Imperial government to promote its interests in the colonies. From 1702, under the auspices of the S.P.G., Anglican missionaries and congregations in New England had expanded in number, steadily but impressively. Under the energetic Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson, directives were issued to promote Anglicanism in the dissenter-dominated Northern colonies.[17] In the 1720s the Congregational establishment shuddered as the Church's policy bore fruit and several Connecticut clergymen, led by the Rector of Yale, Timothy Cutler, joined the Anglican ranks. In 1727 local Anglican and Imperial pressure resulted in both Connecticut and Massachusetts relaxing their ecclesiastical laws to relieve Anglicans from having to pay for the building of Congregational meeting-houses.[18]

It was in this context of Anglican-Congregationalist tension, that many New Englanders perceived Whitefield's mission in 1740. As Gerald Goodwin has recently suggested, by his doctrine and conduct, the young cleric appeared to support Nonconformity "against every article in the Anglican critique of dissent." The Colonial Church

had insisted that church order and unity under episcopal government were important goals; Whitefield not only ignored denominational differences, but openly encouraged religious diversity. Colonial Anglicans had stressed the importance of the sacraments and the Church's liturgy; Whitefield urged the necessity of the experience of the New Birth and seemed almost to ignore the Book of Common Prayer. Against the Anglican consensus that the 39 Articles need not necessarily to be interpreted in a Calvinistic sense, Whitefield claimed that they certainly were, and that the majority of the clergy had abandoned their intended interpretation. While Churchmen charged that extemporaneous preaching and prayer reeked of enthusiasm and Nonconformity, Whitefield adopted both those practices.[19.]

In his recent study, W. H. Kenney has cast Whitefield in the role of the "Dissenter Priest of the Great Awakening", a charismatic leader, who deliberately exploited Anglican-Dissenter tensions in the colonies, and precipitated a revival as a result.[20.] This is simplistic. In Whitefield's priorities, revivalism was of far more import than his anti-Anglicanism; the latter was the result of the former and not vice versa. It was because the Anglican Church opposed his message of the New Birth and his desire to preach the gospel to all, that he felt constrained to deliver his testimony against her clergy. He himself did not deliberately seek to exploit these tensions: he had after all been engaged in a running battle against the Anglican authorities in England, Wales and the other colonies for the past two years, and his affection for the New England churches stemmed not from political pugnacity but from sympathy with their Calvinist doctrine. However, for Anglicans in particular, Whitefield's presence appeared part of a sinister plot to destroy

their infant congregations and the awakening itself was seen as the product of Dissenting hatred against the Church.

Leading New England Anglicans were partly preconditioned in their response by news of the evangelist's activities in the eighteen months prior to his arrival. The press had seized on reports of his clashes with the Anglican authorities in England,[21] a conflict which was brought to the doorstep of New England with his arrival in the Middle Colonies in 1739.[22] Yet despite pejorative reports of his activities elsewhere, New England Anglicans were still keen to determine their own response to Whitefield. Commissary Price of Boston, for instance, wrote in a fairly mild fashion to the Bishop of London, on May 9th, 1740, that:

> "Mr. Whitefield, who is the occasion of much debate and enquiry among us, is expected here next fall. I should be glad to receive your Lordship's directions for my behaviour towards him."[23]

Whether Price received any such directions before Whitefield's arrival is unknown. But the evidence suggests that both at Newport Rhode, Island and at Boston, the clergy were at least prepared to meet Whitefield in person; at Boston they received him courteously and "with more civility than any of our own clergyman have done for a long while".[24]

More important than a negative Anglican view of Whitefield prior to his arrival in New England, was the clear gulf that existed between Whitefield and his fellow clergymen by the autumn of 1740. This gulf was nowhere more evident than in doctrine. Whereas Whitefield had first arrived in the Southern Colonies in 1738 with High Church quasi-mystical ideas of inward renewal, and had come to the Middle Colonies in 1739 with a rather immature grasp of Reformed

theology, by the time of his arrival in New England, he was a fully-fledged Calvinist. Over the previous ten months, contact with birth-right Calvinists, like the Tennents and Josiah Smith, public battles with leading Anglicans and private controversy with the Wesleys and Moravians, ensured that by the autumn of 1740 he was perhaps firmer in his Calvinism than at any other time in his career. At his meeting with Boston's Anglican clergymen on September 19th, 1740, Whitefield and his fellow clerics found that they disagreed profoundly on every major point of doctrine; the nature of regeneration, the indwelling of the Spirit, justification and perseverance. On the question of justification, for example, Commissary Price insisted that "Christ was to make up for the defects of our righteousness", a position which Whitefield, now quite clear in his Reformed view of imputed righteousness, dismissed totally. On the highly controversial issue of instantaneous conversion and baptismal regeneration, Whitefield enquired of the Commissary whether a child received the Holy Spirit at baptism: on receiving an affirmative answer, Whitefield then continued:

> "according to your own principles, regeneration is instantaneous, and since you will judge of the new birth by the fruits, pray watch that child, and see if it brings forth the fruits of the Spirit." I also said, "That if every child was really born again in baptism, then every baptised infant would be saved." "And so they are," said Dr. Cutler. "How do you prove that?" "Because the Rubric says "that all infants dying after baptism before they have committed actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."" I asked, "What text of Scripture there was to prove it?" "Here", said he, (holding a Prayer Book in his hand) "the Church says so."

There then followed a short and unsatisfactory discussion on predestination and final perseverance.

There was also sharp disagreement over Whitefield's "catholic spirit" towards non-Anglicans. The debate began with questions

concerning Whitefield's statement that Gilbert Tennent and his brethren *were "faithful* ministers of Jesus Christ" and that Presbyterian orders were valid. Whitefield insisted on the need for a catholic spirit among the denominations. He informed his clerical interrogators that at Savannah he had allowed a Baptist minister to share in the Anglican communion and he that he would do the same in return, since it was his conviction:

> "that it was best to preach the new birth, and the power of godliness, and not to insist so much on the form: for people would never be bought to one mind as to that; nor did Jesus Christ ever intend it."

Then followed a sharp discussion in which Whitefield argued for an "inward union of the souls of believers with Jesus Christ, and not of the outward Church", while Cutler pressed for the necessity of outward union, on Anglican terms.[25]

Whitefield was prepared to demonstrate his "catholic" principles by warm fellowship and ministerial co-operation with New England "dissenters". During his first stay at Newport, Rhode Island from September 14th, 1740, his relationship with the Anglican minister, the Rev. Honeyman, was partly soured by his obviously cordial association with the local "dissenting" minister, Clap. Whitefield claimed that many of the chief members of the Anglican congregation were very fearful lest he should preach in Clap's meeting-house, and gloried much in the way he had managed to lure Clap into an Anglican building. One of the reasons, it seems, why Honeyman gave into pressure by allowing Whitefield to preach in the Church, was to prevent him from preaching in the meeting house, which would have been even worse for Anglican morale.[26] From Newport he moved onto Bristol, this time preferring the meeting house to the Church building. Apparently, in

the absence of the Anglican minister, the Revd. Mr. Usher, Whitefield had been invited by the Church Wardens to preach in the church, but had "refused from a Preingagement by the Dissenters there, in whose Meeting House He Prayed, extempore, and Preached."[27].

At Boston, the division was made public. Arriving on the 18th September, he was eagerly awaited by both the Congregational ministers and Governor of the town, Jonathan Belcher. He then visited Commissary Price, who was at public worship, reading prayers, and who invited him home for a conference with the five other clergy of the town. The discussion following revealed the extent of disagreement on major areas of doctrine and practice. Whitefield concluded: "Finding how inconsistent they were, I took my leave, resolving they should not have an opportunity of denying me the use of their pulpits."[28]. Having turned down an invitation to dine with the Commissary on account of a prior engagement with the Congregational minister, Benjamin Colman, he then preached in Colman's meeting house, thus beginning his Boston ministry spectacularly under Dissenting auspices.

Whitefield's encounter with the Boston Anglicans was a fateful one, and had a considerable bearing on his subsequent ministry in New England. Since Boston was the capital of New England and Commissary Price, the Bishop of London's representative, was resident there, Anglicans throughout the province were likely to take their lead from the Boston clergy. Moreover, since half Whitefield's stay in the province was spent in Boston and its surroundings, his relationship with the Boston clergy was crucial. His disagreement with them on several major issues of doctrine and church government revealed the

full extent of the rift between Whitefield and the mid-eighteenth century Anglican Church.[29]

Following that meeting, Whitefield neither asked for the use of the Anglican pulpits nor did he attend public worship during the remainder of his three week stay in the town. This was contrary to his usual practice in New York and elsewhere in the colonies and was remarked upon by both Anglican and Congregationalists. Cutler noted how, after his initial visit, Whitefield never visited "our Persons or our Churches more, tho' He was in Town 3 Sundays where we had two successive Sacraments, and he was twice a hearer in Dissenting Congregations."[30] This reveals the extent of Whitefield's disaffection with the Church of England at this stage: after a year and a half of public conflicts with the Church on both sides of the Atlantic, it probably represented a nadir in his relations with his mother Church. The timing of this was particularly significant because it coincided with the outbreak of the Great Awakening, thus ensuring the united hostility of the Anglican Church to a movement led by a renegade clergyman and carried on primarily among Dissenters. Cutler, writing to the Bishop of London, reporting on Whitefield's ministry in Boston, noted how:

> "the General Expectations of Mr Whitefield were much raised by the large Encomiums the Dissenters bestowed on him...The Dissenters invited him here, and accordingly he lodged in Town at Dr. Colman's Brother's...he was in Dr. Colman's Pulpit, in his Gown, [which he wore constantly in Town],...Praying, extempore, and Preaching; commending the Faith and Purity of this Country, the Design and lives of Our Forefathers who settled it...He also reproached the Church universally from her Corruptions in the Faith and Deviation from her Articles..."[31]

Whitefield was thus perceived by Anglicans such as Cutler as a tool in the hands of their opponents, by freely holding fellowship with New England Dissenters and upholding the ideals of their Puritan

forefathers, while simultaneously castigating the present Church of England, for her falling away from the doctrines of the 39 Articles.

By the summer of 1741 reports began to reach London concerning the effects of Whitefield's ministry. From Salem the Revd. Brockwell, for one, wrote to the Bishop of London informing him that the Anglicans were "in great straits," Whitefield and Tennent having "considerably injured the Church."[32] Brockwell's greatest fear, however, was the news that both the Wesleys and Whitefield were expected back in New England in the autumn. The Wesleys he regarded as the more formidable enemies, "men of great capacities and fortify'd by a large fund of learning, whereof Whitefield is so destitute and therefore Victory over him is neither difficult nor glorious however he may boast in his lying and scandalous Journals."[33]

From Boston came equally uncomplimentary but less alarming reports. In January 1741/2 Cutler noted that while his congregation had been stirred up by Whitefield's itinerants, whereby "some are lost, and others hurt", in the long run numbers had probably increased.[34] In the same month Commissary Price wrote home with news that "whole attention is now taken up with" the effects of the new doctrines owned by Whitefield and accepted by his followers. This madness prevailed especially in the county towns, but also in Boston, although there the Church of England had escaped "beyond our expectation."[35]

Both Whitefield's mission and the Awakening in general continued to be seen in terms of Anglican-Congregational tensions by both sides. On 20th December, 1741, the Rev. Mr. Punderson of North Groton writing to the Bishop of London reported the view of one member, temporarily

caught up in the revival, that the New Lights were "extremely violent against the established Church." Punderson added; "both I and all under my care are declared by both teacher and people to be unconverted, and going straight to hell."[36] This attitude was confirmed by the Rev. S. Johnson, who wrote to the Secretary of the S.P.G. from Stratford, Connecticut, reporting how he had been attacked by a Dissenting minister "a great admirer of Mr. Whitefield" who was praised in his Journal. Apparently:

> "This zealous man gave out when Whitefield first appeared that their employing and encouraging that great Reformer would utterly destroy the Church root and branch; but now finding the event to be the intire reverse of his prediction, he is grown out of all patience with us."[37]

Whether or not it was strictly true that Mills' aim in supporting Whitefield was to destroy the Church of England, Whitefield's anti-Anglican attacks clearly played into the hands of dissenters, and Anglicans greatly feared his influence on account of this.

In general however, the Church seems not to have suffered severely from the effects of the Great Awakening. The united hostility of the clergy was probably sufficient to protect their congregations from what was regarded as "dissenting enthusiasm"; and throughout 1742-43 a new note of optimism began to fill the missionaries' reports. It now appeared not only that damage to the interests of the Church was limited, but that a reaction had set in against the "enthusiasm" of the Awakening which had brought penitents back to the Church as a bulwark of order and authority. From Newbury, for example, Mr. Plant was happy to report that most of his flock who had once attended the ministry of the itinerants were now "perfectly ashamed" of their actions and were reconciled to the Church.[38]

Missionaries began to report that as a result of Whitefield's "enthusiasm" and the actions of some of his more radical followers, the Church had also grown in standing in the eyes of many Nonconformists. On July 1st, 1742 The Rev. Mr. Caner of Fairfield wrote to the Secretary, that:

> "Enthusiasm has made no progress at Fairfield, and the effects of it at Stamford, Norwalk, Ridgefield etc, where it has a large spread, has been the means of reconciling many sober, considerate people to the communion of our Church."[39].

A year later the picture was the same: "Where the late spirit of enthusiasm has most abounded, the Church has received the largest accession."[40]. Many of those who had been reconciled to the Church of England were Old Light Congregationalists and Presbyterians, particularly disgusted at the disorder that surrounded the ministry of Davenport and the more extreme revivalists, who had sought refuge from the enthusiasm of the Awakening in the safety of the Church's harbour. One such group, now members of the Church in Northbury, wrote to the Secretary in May 1744. Educated as Independents and Presbyterians, they were loyal until they saw the books distributed by the Society's missionaries:

> "and Mr. Whitefield, passing through this land, condemning all but his adherents, and his followers and imitators, by their insufferable enthusiastick whims and extemporaneous jargon, brought in such a flood of confusion amongst us...whereupon, we fled to the Church of England for safety."[41].

News of Whitefield's return to New England in late 1744, however, still aroused some fear in the Anglican camp. But his new visit was to have less effect than previously. According to Cutler, although multitudes still flocked after him, this was "without that Fervency and Fury" as before. His relationship with the Anglican clergy was apparently as frosty as ever, but the internal divisions within the

Dissenters and the general reaction to the excesses of the Awakening considerably muted the threat to the Church of England.[42]

From Rhode Island, the Rev. James Honeyman of Newport, reported in June 1746 that his Church was in a "growing state" and while there were still dreams and illusions "Yet the enthusiastick Notions of Mr Whitefield have never been able to prevail in this place." The Church of England was increasing while

> "these Lights Old or New as they are called from their respective Founders George Fox or George Whitefield are vanishing to Obscurity; Whitefield indeed aping the Subtelty of the Fox but has not equally succeeded for the want of the Sophistry of a Pen [Penn] and Barclay to support Him in his Freaks and Fancies."[43]

While Honeyman twisted the contemporary usage of "Old" and "New" Lights to suit his purposes, his comparison of Whitefield to enthusiasts of former times, such as the Quaker George Fox, was typical of Anglican views which linked him to enthusiasts of former times.

In his later visits to New England, Whitefield continued to favour the Congregational churches and showed his clear support for New England in her struggle for liberty against the Imperial government. In April 1764, for example, he summoned the Congregational ministers of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to a private conference, informing them that his heart bled for America and that a "deep plot" was laid against her civil and religious liberties. On hearing news of the Stamp Act repeal, he cried "Gloria Deo", and was reported as being "overcome and sick with joy" at the news.[44] In his last letter, written on September 23, one week before his death, he wrote: "Poor New England is much to be pitied; Boston people most of all. How falsely misrepresented!"[45] It is interesting to speculate what role he would have played in the War of Independence, had he

lived that long. The evidence suggests that he would have continued to side with New England, given the constant affection that he had shown for her past and her people, and would have adopted a sharply different stance to that of the loyalist Wesleys.

His relations with the colonial Church remained as cool as his friendship with New England Puritanism was warm. When the Church of England began to make moves to introduce episcopacy to North America, Whitefield sarcastically labelled the S.P.G., the 'Society for the Propagation of Episcopacy.'[46]. An incident in the last few weeks of his life revealed that Whitefield's attitude towards the Anglican Church in New England had changed little. On September 4th, 1770, the Rev. Joshua Wingate Weeks of Marblehead in Massachusetts reported hearing Whitefield preach to a congregation, which, apart from himself, was comprised solely of "dissenters and their teachers":

> "he took it into his head to rail against Bishops and the Clergy of our Church without any regard to truth or good manners. I reproved him very sharply.. he asserted many things of Bishops in general and some of excellent characters in particular, which I knew to [be] absolute lies and he must have known them to be so too."[47].

Whitefield was as always "followed by a swarm of the same stamp". As a result, one of Week's congregation, Jayne, "who was always a great stickler for enthusiastic teachers and vagrant exhorters, has run into all the wild freaks and extravagant irregularities of raving enthusiasm." Jayne like Whitefield the "wild raving Methodist, says every thing but truth of our excellent Church."[48].

The same anti-Anglicanism was still prevalent, a year after Whitefield's death. The Rev. S. Peters of Hebron, Connecticut reported being "in the midst of such People as glory in doing mischief to the Church and me." One Dissenting teacher apparently

taught that the Church was "the Synagogue of Satan" and an entrance into hell, and that the only true religion in England was to be found among "the few followers of the late pious Whitefield etc."[49] To the Anglicans of New England, Whitefield remained to the very last, a "Dissenter Priest."

2. New England Congregationalists.

Understandably, Congregationalists were not displeased to see an Anglican clergyman praising New England piety while simultaneously attacking his own "corrupt" Anglican Establishment. Many ministers and secular leaders had been concerned at the threat of Anglicanism to the 'New England Way', and welcomed the mission of the "Dissenter Priest" accordingly. Governor Belcher of Massachusetts was in an awkward position. A loyal New England Puritan, but also royal governor, he was under pressure from the Bishop of London to ensure that the Church of England in Massachusetts enjoyed its full rights under the Act of Toleration: nonetheless Belcher welcomed Whitefield warmly on his arrival in Boston, attended his ministry, carried him in his own coach, and escorted him West on his departure.[50] Whitefield reciprocated. In a letter to the Bishop of Oxford, he took up some of Belcher's criticisms of the S.P.G. missionaries in New England:

> "there are less than twenty [missionaries] employed in preaching and teaching school in the Province of New England (where certainly the Gospel is preached with greater purity than at home) and but two settled Missionaries in all North Carolina...Does not this look too much like making a Party of Religion?".

Whitefield added that he hoped this account would carry more weight "coming from a Gentleman..of figure and good report."[51] It was thus clearly advantageous for Belcher to support the mission of this Anglican "Jeremiah". In the words of W. H. Kenney: "By his excoriating the Church of England, praising Puritan piety, and attacking the S.P.G. missionaries, Whitefield provided New England with a champion in its continuing battle with the old enemy."[52]

But to suggest, as Kenney has done, that this political conflict with Anglicanism was both the basis of Congregationalist support for

Whitefield, and also the main driving force behind the revival, is both to misunderstand the nature of Whitefield's mission and to underestimate the complexity of the Congregationalist reaction to the Awakening. Belcher's support for Whitefield seems at least partly to have been motivated by concern for his own conversion.[53] And for countless others, the issue of Whitefield's Anti-anglicanism would have been, at very most, a secondary one.

Moreover, an overly narrow focus upon Whitefield as "Dissenter Priest" obscures the very divergent Congregationalist perceptions of his personality and mission. The apparent show of united support for Whitefield in 1740 only temporarily obscured underlying tensions, which began to emerge in 1741-42, bringing into high relief the different strategies for religious reformation which had been canvassed before the revival broke out. In due course these divisions produced sharply contrasted parties within the Congregationalist camp. The reactions of these three main groups of New Lights, Old Lights and Separatists, and Whitefield's relationship with them, are the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

Whitefield's main supporters in 1740, and indeed in his subsequent visits to New England, were a group of evangelical pastors within the Congregationalist Church, who supported him and the Awakening but who, by 1743, had delivered their published *Testimony* against the excesses of his more radical followers.[54] Under the theological leadership of Jonathan Edwards, this group emphasised the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, a work carried out primarily through the "affections" of the heart. Whitefield's

relationship with this group of "New Lights" is particularly important in furthering our understanding of his role as inter-confessional evangelist and of his preference for close cooperation with men who, like the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, advocated religious revival within the existing church establishment, but not separation from it.

The Old Lights, or opponents of the Awakening, like their Old Side Presbyterian counterparts in the Middle Colonies or the Moderates in Scotland, opposed the revival as "enthusiastic" and "disorderly", believing that it overturned the sound basis of reason and church order. Yet if the Old Lights were in a sense rationalists, they were also, for the most part, staunch Calvinists. They did not deny the sovereignty of divine grace in regeneration, but believed that the Holy Spirit's work was primarily carried out through a person's "reason", rather than his "affections". Under the leadership of the Boston liberal, Charles Chauncy, they attacked Whitefield and blamed him for the "enthusiasm" of James Davenport.

In the eyes of the Old Lights, perhaps the worst consequence of the revival was the spate of separations which took place in the aftermath of the Awakening. The Separatists not only applauded the revival as of divine origin but, broadly speaking, were unconvinced that the Holy Spirit would continue where either the minister or large numbers of the congregation remained "unconverted". Returning to the Cambridge principle of a regenerate church membership, many Separates not only attacked the half-way covenant, but also infant baptism, often ending up in Separate Baptist or Baptist churches. Whitefield's relationship with this group was a difficult one. Unlike the Seceders in Scotland, the Separatists were not only in

favour of the Awakening, but were some of his most fervent supporters and converts. Although he never specifically encouraged separations, he was faced, on his return in 1744, with the awkward dilemna of having to balance the support of his New Light ministerial friends against that of his more radical followers, always under the watchful eye of critical Old Lights, keen to accuse him of encouraging schism.

a) New Lights.

New Lights were attracted by Whitefield's ministry for a number of reasons, which help explain his remarkable success in 1740. Perhaps foremost in the minds of New Light pastors was news of his remarkable evangelistic record. As a catalyst for revival elsewhere, both in England and the Middle Colonies, it was hoped that if he came to New England he would promote a similar work. Describing Whitefield's visit, Benjamin Colman remarked upon Whitefield's reception in Boston, "where most of ye Ministers of ye Town met him, and gave him a hearty welcome":

> "ye Fame of his extraordinary labours and travel thro' our Continent in America and of his great successes from place to place having rais'd in us a great Opinion of ye Divine Presence and Assistances with him, and a commom Desire to see and hear him."[55]

Not only would Whitefield's ministry stem the tide of declining piety, but it would act as a check on the growth of freedom of enquiry and "Arminian" principles, against which Edwards had warned in 1734-35. By the autumn of 1740 Whitefield's Calvinism was at least fairly orthodox and, with all the zeal of a new "convert", he defended the "doctrines of grace" in sermon upon sermon. In his desire to prove his orthodoxy, Whitefield revised and corrected some of his earlier

sermons as "too much favouring the Arminian Scheme which I utterly abhor". He continued:

> "I am of the same way of thinking as Calvin was; not because Calvin tho't so, for I never read a word Calvin wrote; but because I think his Scheme, as described by writers on that Side, is the only Scheme that agrees with the lively Oracles of God, and the Articles of the Church of England."[56]

The fact that Whitefield extended his attack to include the decadent and "Arminian" Church of England only strengthened his appeal.

Yet the essence of Whitefield's message in 1740 was not a point-by-point exposition of Calvinist dogma, but an insistence upon the necessity of experiential regeneration. This stress upon the "New Birth" was not entirely new but the strong emphasis upon perceptibly, indeed immediately, experiencing it was; as one observer, Jonathan Edwards' wife, Sarah, shrewdly noted Whitefield made "less of the doctrines than our American preachers do and aims more at affecting the heart."[57]

Not only was the content of Whitefield's message less doctrinal and more "affecting", but the method of speaking "extemporaneously", without notes was also considered a striking novelty. Whitefield himself sought to encourage other ministers to imitate him in this. In his New England *Journal* he wrote:

> "I think the ministers preaching almost universally by note, is a mark that they have, in a great measure, lost the old spirit of preaching. Though all are not condemned who use notes, yet it is a symptom of the decay of religion, when reading sermons becomes fashionable where *extempore* preaching did almost universally prevail."[58]

Although mistaken about the almost "universal" practice of the early Puritans, Whitefield was correct in observing the increasing influence of Anglican-style Tillotsonian reading of sermons from a prepared

script, more in the form of a literary essay aimed at informing the understanding than an affective homily directed at the heart.

New Lights were particularly impressed at the efficacy of this new preaching style. Sarah Edwards marvelled at Whitefield's brilliant oratory, at his "deep-toned yet clear and melodious voice", through which he was able to cast "a spell" over his audience "by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible." Such was the effect, she continued:

> "I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob."[58].

Other leading New Lights admired the evangelist's homiletic and pastoral techniques, particularly his brilliantly skilful 'application' of a text to different social categories in his audience. The Rev. Thomas Prince, co-pastor of the Old South in Boston, summarised:

> "He was a most importunate wooer of souls to come to Christ. He applied his exhortations to the elderly people, the middle-aged, the young, the Indians, and the 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 general. Multitudes were greatly affected, and many awakened by his lively ministry."[60].

Similar observations were made by that aged and respected minister, Benjamin Colman, who remarked how impressed he and fellow ministers in Boston and the surrounding towns were by both

> "the Doctrines preached and ye fervent manner wherein they were apply'd to souls; being with a command of love over the affections of the Audience wch none of us had ever before seen like universal."[61].

Yet Whitefield's acceptance by these men was never unqualified. Although they shared a common Calvinism and desire for revival, New

Lights, such as Prince, Colman and Jonathan Edwards, were of the birth-right Calvinist tradition, whose roots ran deep into the systematic theology of the Puritans; Whitefield was a neo-Calvinist, a Calvinist originally through experience, who, by the time of his arrival in New England in the autumn of 1740, had a relatively immature grasp of Calvinist doctrines. As his early correspondence with Benjamin Colman reveals, this was a gap that needed to be bridged. Initially Colman had been cautious. Having read Whitefield's sermon *On Justification* (written in 1738), he described him as "Young Divine", but was soon to be more satisfied of the evangelist's orthodoxy, in reading his *Answer* to the Bishop of London.[62] Throughout their correspondence Whitefield's attitude of humility, coupled with flattering recognition of his need for the guidance of older and wider mentors, helped endear him to a respected leader like Colman. Moreover, by the time of his arrival in New England, his recent adoption of Calvinist doctrine, combined with the success of his ministry elsewhere, was sufficient to overcome the suspicions of the Boston leaders.

During his stay in New England, however, despite the undoubted accomplishments of his pulpit ministry, Whitefield still let slip phrases which revealed his relative immaturity. The Rev. Thomas Prince, a firm admirer, nonetheless observed how:

> "Mr. Whitefield, now and then, dropped expressions that were not so guarded as we should expect from aged and long-studied ministers, yet I had satisfaction to observe his readiness to receive correction as soon as offered."[63]

Whitefield's humility again made up for a lack of theological expertise.

Other leading New Lights also felt uneasy at what they perceived to be Whitefield's over-emphasis upon "inward feelings" and being led by "impressions". In October 1740, for example, Jonathan Edwards warned him against the dangers of enthusiasm; advice which he took courteously though he seemed reluctant to talk on the subject.[64] Later, William Hobby, pastor of the First Church at Reading, one of Whitefield's most fervent supporters, defended him from the charge of enthusiasm levelled against him by Harvard College, in particular the allegation that he used dreams as the source of divine guidance. Hobby frankly admitted, however, that:

> "my Affection to Mr. W--d has not brib'd my Judgment, as to think him intirely free from all Appearance of Enthusiasm. Some Expressions of his savour too apparently of it: which, I believe, he will readily acknowledge."

Hobby attempted to mitigate these errors by pointing out that many great men of God had a "tincture of enthusiasm"; saints such as Flavel, Hammond and Matthew Henry, all of whom had dreams which they attributed to a divine source, yet had not been "branded as enthusiasts", for human weakness was often mixed in them with divine grace.[65] Though Whitefield might have indulged this foible, he had been careful never to advocate relying on impressions at the expense of the written Word of God. Writing at the time of Whitefield's second visit in 1744-45, Hobby stressed the increased maturity of the evangelist. He recalled how:

> "When lately preaching at the Rev. Sewall's, upon a Walk with God, as he then urged a strict Observance of God's providential Dealings, so I well remember,...he directed to the greatest Care in comparing God's Providence with his Word, without which we were in the greatest Danger."[66]

As for Whitefield's concern with 'inward feelings', was not this orthodox and Scriptural? If men and women felt the corruptions of

the fallen nature, why should they "not sensibly feel the Graces of the divine Nature?" The processes of regeneration were inevitably *sensible*. Expressing a conviction common among the New Lights, Hobby confessed: "For my own part, I would give an Half-penny for a Religion that could not be felt."[67]

Another New Light, Andrew Eliot, pastor of the New North, Boston, was less sympathetic. Writing in 1745, he admitted to an Old Light critic, Richard Salter, that Whitefield - in his preaching, writings and conduct, - had always bordered upon enthusiasm. Like many Old Lights, Salter was concerned at the unorthodoxy of Whitefield's account of his conversion. Eliot did not doubt the reality of Whitefield's conversion experience, but he admitted that his description of it was inadequate due to "his own Ignorance of the Doctrines of the Gospel and Unacquaintedness with experimental Writers, so that he did not know how to express the real Experience which he had upon his Soul". He regarded the charge that Whitefield was a "*rank Enthusiast*", as excessive, although he admitted that even the evangelist's best friends "don't pretend to vindicate him wholly from the charge of Enthusiasm". The description applied to the eccentric Davenport - one "tinctured with Enthusiasm" - was appropriate in some degree to Whitefield.[68]

Initially, however, Whitefield's position as a surpliced clergyman was a greater potential hindrance than any alleged enthusiasm. Part of the Congregationalist reserve in countenancing his ministrations was (as we have seen) undoubtedly overcome by his role as "Anglican Jeremiah" and his undeniably "catholic spirit" in his dealings with non-Anglicans. Benjamin Colman, who had written to the Bishop of London protesting at the presence of the S.P.G.

missionaries in New England, wrote in 1739 marvelling at how Whitefield and his fellow Methodist clergymen had been raised up to testify to the "right Articles of Faith upon which the Church reformed from Popery", even though they were men who could not "be suspected of Prejudice against her by Education, but indeed honour her Hierarchy and Liturgy". With this in mind, Colman had cautioned Whitefield concerning his use of Pemberton's meeting house in New York, since such "preaching in Conventicle" might be the thing used in judgement against him by his Anglican brethren, on his return to England. He also noted that the English Dissenters "have thought it prudent not to offer, or you to accept their Meeting Houses." Lest he sound discouraging, Colman assured him that the Provinces and Churches of New England would give him a "hearty Welcome", even offering him his Boston Meeting House.[69]

While the evangelist was in Boston, Colman reflected further on his attitude towards the Church of England. In particular he noted how, contrary to general expectations, Whitefield not only did not preach in the town's Anglican pulpits, but in contrast to his policy at New York and other colonial centres, chose not to attend Anglican public worship. Indeed Colman thought that he had:

> " never since, yt, if I hear of, been ever to worship at ye Chh. of England - I have said to him, it surprised me but I have not asked him ye Reason of his Charge; so I guess that ye Church Clergy have in their short Conversation with him express'd such an aversion and Alienation from ye Man, his Principles, Doctrines and Wayes, that as he never ask'd of 'em ye Liberty of Preaching in their Houses; so his Heart is come over entirely to our Churches and Worship; and in a particular manner he has been much affected and pleased with ye manner of ye administration of Baptism in our Churches."

This is important evidence not only concerning the extent of Whitefield's disaffection with the Church of England in late 1740, but

of the scarcely suppressed hopes of the Congregationalists that he might be won over to their camp. Excitedly, Colman warned the leaders of the London Dissenters of these developments, in order, he said, that on Whitefield's return home "you may ye better prepare your thots how to receive him, should he go further from ye Established Chh, or [they?] cast him out, wch I plainly see he expects, and I must own I do likewise." [70].

Far from being put off by Whitefield's Anglicanism, New Lights positively appreciated his "catholic spirit". William Hobby, for example, energetically defended the evangelist against Old Light critics of his "catholic spirit"; those "Bigots of a Party-Religion" who criticised Whitefield as being "in England...a Churchman, in Scotland a Kirkman, here...a Dissenter, and there an Anabaptist." Faith in Christ, not attachment to some form of church polity, was the ground of our acceptance with God. Hobby expressed gratitude that Whitefield did not seek to proselytize to his own sect but to promote the Church of Christ, the invisible body of true believers. [71].

A further potential obstacle to Whitefield's reception in New England was his itinerancy. His whirlwind six-week tour was a striking novelty. The Massachusetts Cambridge Platform (1648) had refused to recognise itinerancy, and the emphasis upon a strictly local ministry was deeply embedded in the New England religious consciousness. Many still shared the opinion of Increase Mather when he declared that "to say that a Wandering Levite who has no Flock is a Pastor, is as good sense as to say, that he who has no Children is a Father." [72]. Yet, surprisingly, there was little direct New Light opposition to this practice until after Davenport's arrival in 1742. Thereafter, ministers maintained a fine balance between condemning the

misuse of itinerancy, both of lay preaching and the invasion of other men's parishes without their consent, while still leaving room to countenance the ministrations of respected and successful ministers like Whitefield and Tennent.[73]

New Lights had also been embarrassed at Whitefield' salty criticism of the low spiritual state of the Colleges of Harvard and Yale and his assertion that the majority of New England ministers were unconverted.[74] Hobby, himself a Harvard man, was one of the few who were prepared to defend Whitefield, and claimed that by the time he had left Harvard, the college was indeed "in Darkness"; shortly afterwards, a professor and a tutor had been ejected for immorality while another declared himself a stranger to any vital piety. While at the college, Hobby confessed to having no acquaintance with vital religion; instead, he wrote, "we dwelt much upon the Shell of Religion; but little regarded the Pearl of great Price." In his view Whitefield had done the college a service by making public the sorry state of affairs. Moreover, in its recent Testimony against Whitefield the College had failed to acknowledge the remarkable impression made upon the students as a result of Whitefield's preaching four years previously.[75]

Whitefield's remarks concerning the state of the New England ministry were defended along similar lines. If he had been somewhat mistaken in his assertion that the majority of ministers were unconverted, then it was due to the slanderous reports of his informers; if his information was correct, then Whitefield's action was both necessary and praiseworthy.[76]

The success of Whitefield's ministry in 1740, and indeed in later years, was to a considerable extent due to his warm reception by New Light ministers. In 1740, Colman, Cooper, Foxcroft and the other Boston New Lights had gone to considerable lengths to ensure that the metropolis was a "town prepared" for his coming. If Whitefield kept aloof from his fellow-Anglicans he was warmly received by these Congregational ministers who frequently accompanied him while preaching and were "often in private conversation with him," by which their "raised expectations" were "not only answere'd but exceeded".[77] Having done most to advertise Whitefield's coming and to support his ministry, it was these Congregationalist "New Lights" who duly reaped the fruit of Whitefield's abundant labours.

Indeed, Whitefield's itinerary reveals that half of his six-week tour of New England was spent in Boston and that the main sphere of his labours, apart from his meetings on Boston Common, were the pulpits of "New Light" clergymen such as Cooper, Prince, Sewall, Webb, and Foxcroft. Thus, on September 19th he preached at Brattle Street, home of Cooper and Colman; on the 20th at Sewall and Prince's Old South meeting; on the 21st at Thomas Foxcroft's First Church - shared with the "Old Light" opponent Charles Chauncy; on the 22nd at John Webb's New North meeting, where most of the 6000 congregation "wept for a considerable time", and then in the afternoon at Samuel Checkley's New South, where the crowded congregation panicked and several were killed; on the 23rd at the Old North - shared by the New Light Joshua Gee and the "Old Light" Samuel Mather; on the 25th at the First church; on the 27th at William Welstead's and Ellis Gray's New Brick, both neutrals; on the 28th at Colman's and Sewall's before going on a short tour to the surrounding areas. On his return he

again preached at Colman's on the 7th October; on the 8th he ministered at Webb's, both morning and evening to "very great auditories", where on both occasions "Jesus Christ manifested His glory" and "Many hearts were melted down"; on the 9th he gave a public lecture at Sewall's where he "spoke boldly against unconverted ministers" and there again on the 12th before heading for the west.[78].

The fruit was not slow in coming. As a result of the ministry of Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent, who succeeded him, by the spring of 1741 New England was experiencing an abundant harvest of souls. Although any attempt to estimate numbers of new concerts is fraught with difficulty, the *Boston Gazette* noted at the height of the revival a weekly average of between ten to twelve additions to the churches of the town. Much more numerous than "new births" was the revival of existing church members. Concern seems to have been greatest among young people, suggesting that many converts were formerly in the Half-Way Covenant. The chief beneficiaries of such increases were clearly the New Light pastors. In Boston, William Cooper remarked that in one week, when the revival was at its peak, more persons came to him in a state of spiritual concern than in the previous twenty-four years of ministry. John Webb at the New North saw the most spectacular increase, noting that 550 came to him in "Soul Troubles" in the space of just three months.[79]. Whitefield's ministry in Boston, as in Scotland, was primarily linked to these evangelical pastors who publicised his coming, welcomed him into their pulpits and reaped the fruits of his evangelism. This suggests that the majority of those either converted or stirred up by Whitefield went to meeting houses where they could guarantee receiving New Light instruction from the pulpits. Whitefield's reflections both in preaching and in his

published Journal, on the preponderance of 'unconverted' clergymen in New England, no doubt encouraged his converts to make a similar judgement.

Following his departure, the New Light pastors sought to continue the work. Whitefield had admonished his hearers for their slack attendance upon the weekly lectures; his words had the desired effect and after his departure the New Lights set up a new lecture at Brattle Street. Benjamin Colman preached the opening discourse on *Souls Flying to Christ*, during which he took pains to stress the essential identity of the teaching of the Boston pastors with that of the young spiritual hero who had descended into their midst:

> "We preach the same CHRIST, the same Doctrines of grace..and...Applications to Conscience...For though we are Elder Ministers and have been many Years before Him in the Service of Souls,..yet we are not unwilling or ashamed to come after Him, in the Battle of our LORD."[80]

After leaving Boston, Whitefield went west, eventually arriving at Northampton, home of another staunch "New Light", the famous Jonathan Edwards. Here, during his brief stay, Whitefield helped to ignite a dramatic new work of God out of the embers of the 1734-35 revival. In a letter to Thomas Prince of Boston, evidently intended for publication in his son's pro-revival newspaper, the *Christian History*, Edwards depicted "The State of Northampton" before and after Whitefield's stay. Whitefield arrived in October and preached four sermons. With clinical observation, Edwards recalled how:

> "The congregation was extraordinarily melted by every sermon; almost the whole assembly being in tears for a great part of sermon time. Mr. Whitefield's sermons were suitable to the circumstances of the town; containing just reproofs of our backslidings, and in a most and moving manner, making use of our great profession and great mercies as arguments with us to return to God, from who we departed...The revival at first appeared among the professors, and those that 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 as 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 revival of professors and awakenings of others."[81]

The revival at Northampton continued throughout 1741-42.

Leaving Northampton on October 20th, he moved South along the Connecticut River valley through Suffield, Windsor, Hartford, Wethersfield, Middletown, Wallingford and New Haven, where he was received by Mr. Pierpoint, Edwards' brother-in-law and preached at the College there. He then proceeded South and into the province of New York.

Perhaps the best contemporary account of the excitement aroused by Whitefield among the inhabitants of New England is provided by the *Spiritual Travels* of Nathan Cole, a Connecticut farmer who had first heard of Whitefield preaching at Philadelphia "like one of the old apostles, and many thousands flocking to hear him preach the Gospel" and had followed accounts of his progress through the colonies, longing to hear the man for himself. He continued to read reports of his arrival in Boston and of his preaching in Northampton, until one morning a messenger arrived with news that Whitefield was about to preach at nearby Middletown. In a flurry of excitement, Cole left his tools in the field where he was working, ran home to his wife, and the two of them mounted their horses and rode in desperate haste to Middletown. On the way they joined a steady stream of horses, whose riders all headed in the same direction. Finally arriving, Cole joined a multitude of 3 to 4000, all eagerly awaiting the preacher and recorded what he witnessed:

> "When I saw Mr. Whitefield come upon the scaffold, he looked almost angelical; a young, slim, slender youth, before some thousands of people with a bold undaunted countenance. And my hearing how God was with him everywhere as he came along, it solemnized my mind and put me in great trembling fear before he began to preach; for he looked as if he was clothed with authority from the Great God, and a sweet solemnity sat upon his brow, and my hearing him preach gave me a heart wound. By God's blessing, my old foundation was broken up, and I saw that my righteousness would not save me."[82]

Cole's experience was doubtless similar to that of countless others. His account highlights the dramatic effectiveness of Whitefield's itinerant ministry. As Harry Stout has recently suggested, in a region unaccustomed to his method, Whitefield's famous speaking tours" ushered in "an innovative style of communications that redifined the social context in which public address took place."[83] Traditionally, New England preaching had taken place within the context of a hierarchical society of face-to-face personal relationships in which the minister's authority rested, to a great extent, on his familiarity with his congregation. By virtue of his very unfamiliarity with his audiences, Whitefield and the itinerants who followed him were able to alter the manner of public address; his success depended on his ability to persuade his hearers to listen of their own free will. The novelty of such an approach not only struck farmers like Cole, but challenged many New England ministers to rethink. One non-plussed Connecticut pastor wrote:

> "What to think of the man and his Itinerant preachings I scarcely know. The things which I know not I pray god to teach me, wherein I am in error I pray God to discover it to me..."[84]

Behind Whitefield followed a number of evangelical pastors and lay exhorters who imitated his itinerant ministry. Hard on his footsteps came the Middle Colonies Presbyterian, Gilbert Tennent, whose services Whitefield had enlisted prior to his departure for England. With the full backing of Whitefield and his New Light

ministerial friends in Boston and elsewhere, Tennent came to New England and conducted an evangelistic campaign during the winter of 1740-41, almost as dramatic and successful as Whitefield's. Indigenous pastors soon engaged in similar campaigns. Eleazar Wheelock, pastor at Lebanon Creek and his brother-in-law Benjamin Pomeroy of Hebron, Connecticut, were both inspired to follow his example, and in the following couple of years engaged in an extensive itinerant ministry throughout New England. In Massachusetts, the most widely travelled itinerant was Daniel Rogers, a Harvard tutor, who had been awakened by Whitefield in 1740, had observed both his and Tennent's ministry first-hand, before embarking on his own two-month tour of New England, and was ordained as an evangelist at large in York, Maine in July 1742. Like so many others, Rogers imitated Whitefield's example of preaching extemporaneously, relishing the greater freedom for intensity of expression that it gave.[85] By such men Whitefield's novel example of itinerant evangelising became a primary means of spreading the revival to many parishes.

Most famous - or notorious - of all, however, was James Davenport, recently pastor of Southold, Long Island. Ordained in 1732, he accompanied Whitefield on his tour of the Middle Colonies in late 1740, and was inspired to imitate his example. By mid-1741 he had decided to extend the sphere of his ministry into Southern Connecticut, where he began holding emotionally-charged revival meetings and publicly denouncing individual ministers as unconverted. In June 1742, having ran foul of the colony's new laws against intinerant preaching, he was ordered home to Southold. Three weeks later turned up in Boston, where his activities earned him a meeting with the ministers of the town who published a "Declaration" against

his acting on impulses, judging ministers, singing in the streets, and encouraging private brethren to preach and pray in public. They further voted to refuse him their pulpits on the grounds that "his usefulness in the church is..obstructed by his being deeply tinctured with a spirit of enthusiasm." Unperturbed, the fiery Davenport turned upon the Boston New Lights themselves, attacking them as Jehoshaphats in Ahab's largely unregenerate army. Continuing his disorderly proceedings on Boston Common, he was arrested, tried and judged "'non compos mentis' and therefore..not guilty." Once again he was deported. Undaunted, he proceeded to New London on March 2, 1743, for his crowning act of fanaticism. Intent upon purifying his followers from wordliness and "unsafe" religious books, he embarked on his famous burning of both "worldly" adornments and the works of respected Congregational ministers. He and his followers then marched around the pyre shouting "Hallelujah!" and "Glory to God!" declaring that "as the smoke of those books ascended up in their presence, so the smoke of the torment of such of their authors as died in the same belief, was now ascending in hell." Shortly after this the unstable Davenport began to come to his senses, repenting his errors in his *Confessions and Retractions*.[86]

The moderate New Lights were quick to dissociate themselves from Davenport and the excesses that accompanied his ministry. As early as September 1741, following Davenport's first tour of Connecticut, Jonathan Edwards delivered his sermon on *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, which was a firm defence of the revival as a sovereign work of God, but at the same time contained cautions against enthusiasm and censoriousness. William Cooper's preface

expressed the sense of millenial excitement in the pro-revival camp.[87]

Yet within a year of Cooper's eulogy the full force of the revival had been spent. What had produced this sudden change? E. S. Gaustad has argued convincingly that the ebbing of the revival in 1742-3 was the result of a natural decline after the peak of excitement in 1741-2, because the region could not maintain so great a state of disequilibrium.[88] The negative effect of Davenport's fanaticism was no doubt a contributory cause in dampening the fervour of both ministers and people.[89]

As the revival petered out, New Lights were increasingly preoccupied with defending the work from the criticisms of the Old Lights, while at the same time warning the new converts against fanaticism. In March 1743 Jonathan Edwards issued his monumental work *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*. While its basic premise was that the revival was a work of God, in an alarmingly frank and long Section Four he displayed many of the faults of the awakening, in the full view of the rationalist Old Lights. Edwards' basic distinction between the Revival itself as a work of the Holy Spirit, and the excesses brought about by human error and the wiles of Satan, was supported by the majority of New Light ministers.[90] In July 1743 ministerial supporters of the revival gathered together in Boston and produced a pro-revival *Testimony*, signed by 68 ministers, with 43 others not in attendance, and intended a direct reply to the *Testimony* of the Old Light clergy of May 25, 1743. The revival was held up as essentially a work of God, and to be recognised as such; though at the same time it was allowed that

"Irregularities and Extravagancies" had accompanied the work in some places, in which Satan had sown his tares.[91].

In 1743 the New Lights launched a new revival magazine, the *Christian History*, under the editorship of Thomas Prince's son, Thomas Prince Jr.[92]. The *Christian History* represented the moderate New Light view of the revival. Whereas Chauncy and the Old Lights attempted to fasten the blame for the excesses of 1742-3 upon Whitefield, Prince and the New Lights made a careful distinction between the early revival under Whitefield and Tennent and the later errors introduced by Davenport. In fact such a distinction was vital because if their opponents had managed to discredit Whitefield, the main human instigator of the work, then they could attack the revival as a whole.

Whitefield's return to New England in October 1744, added fresh fuel to the dying embers of controversy. New Lights rushed to his defence as their opponents sought to blame him for the growing number of separations. The sympathetic *Boston Gazette* was keen to stress that Whitefield personally did not endorse schism and there was "not a Separation in all New-England in real Consequence" of his statements concerning an unconverted ministry. In Boston, for example, the separation had taken place "from Ministers that are owned to be pious Men, by the Separatists themselves."[93]. These New Light pastors, Colman, Prince, Sewall, Webb, Foxcroft and Gee, by then understandably concerned at the excesses of the revival and on the defensive from the Old Lights, were keen to urge on Whitefield the importance of moderation and the need to discourage such separations. In his

Unpublished Journal for 1744, Whitefield reported that on his arrival in Boston they described to him how the work had proceeded in a glorious fashion for two years before the imprudencies of some promoters had brought a "chill" over it:

> "They were apprehensive, I found too, that I would promote or encourage separations, and that some would have been encouraged to separate by my saying in my journal that I found the generality of Preachers preached an Unknown Christ, that the Colleges had darkness in them, even darkness that might be felt, and that speaking of the danger of an Unconverted Ministry, I said, How can a Dead man beget a living Child?
>
> But I told them that these words were not wrote to imply that it was absolutely impossible but that it was highly improbable that an Unconverted man should be made instrumental to beget souls to Christ.
>
> I said, I was sorry if anything I wrote had been a means of promoting separations for I was of no separating principles..
>
> We talked freely and friendly about several other things, by which their jealousies they had entertained concerning me seemed to be in a great measure ended, and Dr.Coleman invited me to preach next day at his Meeting house."[34].

Whitefield's relationship with the moderate New Lights in 1744 is here revealed with great clarity. The Boston pastors had been under considerable attack for their support of Whitefield and were clearly keen to ensure that he did not now countenance the separations and other "disorders" against which they themselves had testified.

Satisfied of Whitefield's essential moderation, the Boston New Lights freely offered him their pulpits. Once again Benjamin Colman was the first to do so, and Whitefield preached for him at Brattle Street on November 28th, 1744, and then ministered frequently in Dr. Sewall's meeting, at Foxcroft's evening lecture, at Mr. Gee's and Mr Webb's. He was confident that as a result of his preaching many people's fear that he would "encourage separations and countenance separations wore away apace."[35]. A sign of the warm friendship which existed between Whitefield and these Boston New Lights was Colman's

invitation to this episcopalian evangelist to assist in administering Holy Communion to his congregation, a step which incurred the wrath of the Old Lights.[96]

Although the centre of his operations was once again Boston, Whitefield travelled extensively along the coast, preaching in many towns which he had not had time to visit in 1740. Plymouth, Duxbury, Taunton, Redding, Topsfield, Marblehead, Manchester, Ipswich, Newbury, Durham and Portsmouth all had experience of his labours.[97] From the time of his arrival at York in October 1744, to his final departure from New England in the summer of 1745, Whitefield discovered instances of both ministers and people converted as a result of his former visit. In November 1744, he met a Mr. John Rodgers of Kittery "who tho' He has been in the ministry these 30 years, told me..he was not acquainted with real religion, till I was last in New England". He had aparently been struck by Whitefield's declaration while preaching at Hampton: "If I was to draw the picture of a natural man I must go to Hell for a picture to draw him by". At York, Whitefield had discoursed on the Prodigal Son, where he had razed Rodgers' "false foundation" and "led him to a Sin forgiving God". While he was preaching it seemed to Rodgers as if he "aimed particularly at him." Since then he had become a staunch defender of the Revival.[98] This clearly illustrates the effectiveness of Whitefield's capacity to convert ministers; Rodgers was one of twenty Massachusetts ministers converted by Whitefield during the course of his ministry. Other ministers were given new pastoral vision and success as a result of the awakening; Dr. Leonard of Plymouth, for example, while "reckoned a very good and pious Man

before" 1740, acknowledged that "He knew nothing as he ought to until after the late remarkable revival of religion."[99].

Although useful in encouraging the New Light pastors and strengthening the work of grace in converts, Whitefield's ministry in 1744-45 was very much conditioned by the fact that this was a post-revival era. Both he and his supporters had begun to adjust to the task of evangelising in a post-revival world. Foremost among those who aided the process of consolidation was Jonathan Edwards. Having already defended the revival in *Distinguishing Marks* and *Some Thoughts*, Edwards proceeded to write a more systematic work on the nature of evangelical religion entitled *Religious Affections*, which he published in 1746. His main contention was that "true religion consists, in great part, in holy affections." Regeneration was an emotional apprehension of beauty: a "sense of the heart", in kind "exceeding different" from any natural sensation, attended by a felt perception of beauty (or "excellence") "infinitely diverse from all other beauty". Being reborn led to a new inner harmony achieved through the discovery of a "divine excellency", wholly different from all other beauty. For two or more generations *Religious Affections* helped popularise the evangelical concept of the new birth and to place it on a formidably argued metaphysical yet empirical base.[100].

Whitefield left New England in the summer of 1745, and was not to return there until 1754. By that time many of the first generation New Lights including Benjamin Colman, William Cooper and John Webb had passed away. Nevertheless, on his return to Boston in October 1754, he wrote, in rather triumphal language, that his reception was "far superior to that of fourteen years ago".[101]. One example of

this is to be found in one of his letters dated, Boston, October 14. He wrote:

> "At Rhode Island, I preached five times. People convened immediately, and flocked to hear more eagerly than ever. The same scene opens at Boston. Thousands waited for, and thousands attended on the word preached...The polite are taken, and opposition falls. I preach at the Old and New North (churches). Mr. Pemberton and Dr. Sewal continue to pray for me."[102].

Clearly then, his old supporters Sewal and Ebenezer Pemberton, now minister at Boston, remained faithful, while a younger generation of ministers and people flocked to hear him. He enjoyed similar popularity at Portsmouth, Ipswich and Newbury and elsewhere in New England, but unlike in 1740 there is less evidence of a deep 'work' of the Spirit.[103].

With the Great Awakening now regarded as largely a past event and his early imprudencies in a good measure put behind him, a more sober Whitefield began to achieve a degree of respectability in New England. He acquired a reputation for local patriotism. In 1745 he had preached and prayed in support of Colonel Pepperell's Cape Breton expedition, with the result that "great numbers enlisted".[104]. On hearing news of a British victory, Whitefield delivered a thanksgiving sermon to a large congregation in Boston on the words of the psalmist, "By this I know that Thou favourest me, since Thou hast not permitted mine enemies to triumph over me."[105].

Following his visit in 1754 he was called upon in a different guise to enact this new role as an ecclesiastical statesman. In 1756 Eleazar Wheelock, Benjamin Pomeroy and Samuel Mosely wrote to Whitefield enlisting his support for Wheelock's scheme for a Charity School for the Indians. Their proposed plan was to educate the most promising Indian converts at the new school and then to send them back

as missionaries to their tribes. Whitefield was to act as their attorney, to petition the King "for the Incorporating and founding of the above proposed Charity School as for the procuring and obtaining such Donations, Privilegies and Immunities as shall be requisite and sufficient for the due regulating, governing, or supporting the same."[106]. Over the next fourteen years Wheelock and Whitefield were in regular correspondence, with Whitefield frequently acting in an advisory role, using his influence in England with men such as Lord Dartmouth, and raising large sums of money for the new project. The result was the founding of Dartmouth College, in New Hampshire.

In 1764, Whitefield returned once more to New England where he was received at Boston with the usual warmth of support. The affection was probably augmented by the sympathy he expressed for New England in the face of increasing hostilities with the mother country. W. H. Kenney has seen this conflict as opportunity for Whitefield to play out his role as "Dissenter Priest" in another guise.[107]. Certainly the politics of the middle-aged Whitefield began to diverge sharply from those of his Tory friends, the brothers Wesley, and some evidence suggests that - like English Nonconformists and many of their American counterparts - he subscribed to a conspiracy theory about the authoritarian nature of British intentions in the Colonies. In an interesting anecdote, Whitefield is said to have summoned the two Congregational ministers of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on April 2nd [1764], and privately expressed his fears thus:

> "My heart bleeds for America, O poor New-England there is a deep laid plot against both your civil and religious liberties, and they will be lost, your golden days at an end, you have nothing but trouble before you..my information comes from the best authority in Great Britain, I was allow'd to speak of the affair

> in general, but enjoin'd not to mention particulars, your liberties will be lost."[108]

Further evidence substantiates this picture. In November 1758, for example, he wrote to a Miss Prince to say that he was, longing to return to the colonies, and was "every day...thinking of America..that favourite land." On hearing news of the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, he was apparently overcome with joy.[109] Although Whitefield died in 1770 it is interesting to speculate whether he would not have taken the colonial side in the War of Independence, had he still been alive.

Whitefield paid his final visit to the American colonies in 1769-70, arriving in New England in August 1770. He preached at Newport and Providence, Rhode Island, before proceeding once more to Boston. The *Boston Weekly News Letter* reported how the "Rev'd Mr. Whitefield preaches in Town every Morning at 7 o'clock; at the Old South and New North Meeting Houses alternately, to very crowded Audiences."[110] In early September, he left Boston for Salem, Marblehead and Portsmouth, "having while here preached to very crowded Audiences, at some Times it is thought to have been between 5 and 6000 Souls."111. As in earlier years then, Whitefield preached in several of the major towns in the pulpits of sympathetic ministers, as a new generation of evangelicals replaced the likes of Colman, Prince and Cooper.

On September 30, 1770, news reached Boston via a "melancholy Messenger" from Newburyport, Massachusetts, that at about six o'clock that morning "the Reverend and renowned GEORGE WHITEFIELD, Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Countess of Huntingdon, etc. was by a sudden Mandate, summoned to the Bosom of his Saviour!" The *Weekly News-Letter* reprinted an article from the *Boston Gazette* which summarized

Whitefield's remarkable life and labours and concluded with the hope that "the rising generation, like their Ancestors, may catch something of that aetherial flame" which burnt within him.[112]

Clearly, one of the most significant aspects of his New England ministry was that many did catch something of Whitefield's spirit, and his influence on both ministers and people, was at least as significant, if not more so, than that of Jonathan Edwards in the formation of the new evangelical Calvinism which was to dominate the New England churches for many decades to come.[113]

Of the many funeral sermons on both sides of the Atlantic, Ebenezer Pemberton's, is a typical New Light view of Whitefield's ministry in New England. Entitled *Heaven the Residence of the Saints*, the sermon was "Occasioned by the sudden and much lamented Death of the Rev. GEORGE WHITEFIELD" and delivered at the Thursday lecture at Boston, on October 11, 1770. Having summarised Whitefield's early ministry in England, Pemberton noted how his influence could not be confined to the British Isles. He recalled how, in America, his listeners:

> "heard with Pleasure from a Divine of the Episcopal Communion, those great Doctrines of the Gospel which our venerable Ancestors brought with them from their native Country. With a Soul elevated above a fond Attachment to instituted *Forms* and *Ceremonies*, he inculcated that pure and unadulterated Religion, for the Preservation of which our Fathers banished themselves into an uncultivated Desert."[114]

Pemberton recognised that Whitefield's unique role as both a Calvinist evangelist and an Anglican clergyman heightened his appeal, at a time when the vast majority of his clerical brethren were hostile to New England's Puritan heritage.

Concerning the manner of his preaching, Pemberton reflected, rather rhetorically, upon the evangelist's "expressive Countenance" and "melodious Voice". He was not merely an "accomplished Orator", however, but one who, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, was instrumental in the conversion of many. Of particular note was the fact that:

> "Those Doctrines which we had been instructed from our Infancy by our Faithful Pastors, seemed to acquire new Force, and were attended with uncommon Success, when delivered by him."[115]

Whitefield was an orthodox Calvinist, but one whose first acquaintance with the "doctrines of grace" had been experimental. Thus his preaching often acquired a life and power unusual among the birth-right Calvinists of New England.

Pemberton had cheerfully embraced Whitefield's "catholic spirit". He noted how during his last visit to New England he was well received, by men of the "first Distinction" in the Province. This was no doubt partly because of his unashamed admiration for New England and her Puritan heritage:

> "Upon every Occasion He expressed an uncommon Concern for our *Civil* as well as *Religious* Privileges, the dear-bought Purchase of our HEROIC ANCESTORS. With what Fervency did He pray that they might be transmitted entire to the most distant Posterity?"[116]

Furthermore, "with large Opportunities of accumulating Wealth, he never discovered the least Tincture of Avarice," but whatever he received from the kindness of his friends "he generously employed in Offices of Piety and Charity."[117] Pemberton reminded his hearers how Whitefield had frequently acknowledged the "imprudencies of unexperienced Youth," and "took care to prevent any bad Consequences that might flow from his unguarded Censures in the early Days of his Ministry." In conclusion:

"The longer he lived, the more he evidently increased in *Purity of Doctrine*, in *Humility*, *Meekness*, *Prudence*, *Patience*; and the other amiable Virtues of the *Christian Life*."[11a]

b) Old Lights.

Old Light opposition to Whitefield was somewhat slow in coming. In 1740, his popularity was so overwhelming, that Congregational criticism of his activities was subdued. The dissident *Boston Evening Post*, whose editor, Timothy Fleet, had a longstanding dislike of religious enthusiasm, was a relatively isolated voice in 1739-40.[119] But the publication in 1741 of Whitefield's New England *Journal* with its defamatory comments concerning the Colleges and Ministers of New England provided potential "Old Lights" with the ammunition they needed to launch an attack upon the revival. Further upset by the brashness of Tennent and the fanaticism of Davenport in 1741-42, they began to launch a full-scale counterattack. Chauncy had probably decided to oppose the revival as early as the summer of 1741, but launched his first public attack in 1742 in a sermon on *Enthusiasm*, aimed primarily at the unstable Davenport.[120] Having widened his campaign to include an assault on the revival as a whole, Chauncy then fired his heaviest artillery in *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England*, a direct response to Jonathan Edwards' *Some Thoughts*, published earlier in 1743.[121] The significance of this pamphlet was that it sought directly to link the excesses of Davenport and the lay exhorters to the ministry of Whitefield. Unlike their New Light colleagues, Chauncy and his supporters did not regard Davenport and his fellow itinerants as an unfortunate, fanatical fringe, but as evidence that the original revival under Whitefield and Tennent was itself "enthusiastic" and divisive. While the New Lights sought to separate Whitefield and the early revival of 1740-41 from its later "corruptions", Chauncy

went at great lengths to argue that Whitefield was himself the original source of all the disorders which afflicted the provinces.

Under Chauncy's leadership, the Boston Old Lights began to co-ordinate their activities. In May 1743 they managed to pass a resolution entitled *The Testimony of the Pastors of the Churches in the Province of Massachusetts Bay* condemning the revival *in toto*,[122] although only seventy of the possible 200 ministers had been present, and of those, only thirty-eight voted in favour. In neighbouring Connecticut a group of Old light critics succeeded in passing legislation forbidding itinerancy,[123] a move which was met with staunch opposition, and speeded the drawing up of two rival camps of Old and New Lights. Unsurprisingly, the Old Lights were joined by the faculties of Harvard and Yale, both of whom had been offended at Whitefield's criticisms and were increasingly concerned at the "disorderly" and "enthusiastic" activities of Davenport and the "unlearned" lay exhorters. Both published weighty Testimonies against Whitefield on his return to Boston in 1744-45, seeking to blame him as the source of the present disturbances.[124]

The Old Lights' critique of Whitefield and the revival was many-sided. They condemned novel evangelistic expedients such as itinerancy and lay preaching as invasions of the ministerial office; they despised the "enthusiasm" and narrowness and dogmatism of the Calvinism of both leaders and followers and they denounced the censoriousness which encouraged separations. Certain criticisms were unique to Whitefield: his Orphan House collections and his "catholic" spirit were subject to particular condemnation.

Top of Chauncy's list of grievous errors was itinerant preaching, for whose introduction Whitefield was personally culpable:

> "This had its rise (at least in these Parts) from Mr. WHITEFIELD; though I could never see, I own, upon what warrant, either from Scripture or Reason, he went about Preaching from one Province and Parish to another, where the Gospel was already preach'd and by Persons as well qualified for the Work, as he can pretend to be."[125]

In placing itinerancy at the head of his list, Chauncy identified the Old Lights' chief anxiety. The travelling preachers were seen as undermining the whole fabric of religious order by denigrating the ministry of settled pastors and encouraging their sheep to seek spiritual food elsewhere. In making such criticisms he could draw upon latent Congregational hostility to anything other than local ministry. He made much of Whitefield's long and frequent absences from his parish in Savannah, where his flock was left untended while its pastor cavorted around the parishes of other ministers "without the Knowledge, either of Pastors or People in most Places."[126] As its originator, Whitefield was to blame for the subsequent craze for itinerant preaching and exhorting which followed in his wake, spreading the fire of fanaticism wherever it went.

Whitefield sought to justify his itinerant ministry from such charges and similar criticisms made by the Harvard Professors. His wider call to itinerate was defended by reference to the general commission given by the Lord to his Apostles to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" in any town and country, whenever or wherever Providence should open a door, even "to the end of the world". Not only was itinerant preaching "certainly founded upon the word of God, but had been "agreeably approved of, and practised by many good men, with great and happy success both in

ancient and later times." Was not the Reformation begun and carried on by itinerant preaching? "Were not Knox, Welch, Wishart, and those holy men of GOD, several of the good old *puritans*, itinerant preachers?" Were not itinerants sent forth by the societies for propagating the gospel and promoting christian knowledge both in England, Scotland and Denmark? If this was not sufficient pedigree, Whitefield quoted Richard Baxter's support for itinerancy.[127]

Whitefield's homiletics were also criticised. The Harvard Professors in particular attacked his extempore preaching by pointing out how "*extempore* Preachers give us almost always the same Things in the applicatory Part of their Sermons, so that [it] is very little akin to their Text, which is just open'd in a cursory Manner, and then comes the same kind of Harangue which they have often used before, as an *Application*."[128] Whitefield and his fellow itinerants could get away with this since they were never in the same place for long. The settled minister whose task it was to impart solid doctrinal and pastoral instruction to his flock always appeared less exciting than the itinerant who preached for conversion. In his defence, Whitefield owned that his discourses were extempore in the sense that they were not written down and that he preached without notes, "but they are *not extempore*, if you think that I preach always without study and meditation." He added that this was not a "lazy manner of preaching" but that extempore preachers were usually "the most fervent, laborious preachers" and that it "costs them as much, if not more close solemn thought, as well as faith and confidence in GOD, as preaching by notes."[129]

Whitefield's doctrine as well as his evangelistic methods came under careful Old Light scrutiny. Often labelled "Arminians", Chauncy

and many of his colleagues still regarded themselves as Calvinists who emphasised the intellectualist tradition within Puritanism that stressed the work of grace upon the understanding rather than the "affections".[130] Chauncy, was described as "a Calvinist in his Judgement; though far from confining Christianity to the distinguishing Doctrines of Calvinism",[131] whereas his New Light opponents were represented as upholding a rigid adherence to Calvinist dogma. One opponent alleged that in his endeavouring to "draw People off from Arminianism" he had begun to bring them into "the leaven of Antinominism."[132] To make matters worse, Whitefield dropped a number of "unguarded phrases" as a result of lack of written preparation. On at least one occasion he was reported as saying that "God loves sinners as sinners", which, in the words of the Harvard Professors was "blasphemy" which proved Whitefield "to be stronger in the *Antinomian scheme*, than most of the professors of that heresy themselves." Whitefield excused this as a mere *lapsus linguae* and claimed that "the whole current" of his "preaching and writing was, and is directly contrary to such principles," and that he utterly detested "Antinomianism, both in principle and practice."[133]

A charge that stuck more easily than antinomianism was that of enthusiasm. In his controversial study of the Awakening and the Revolution, Alan Heimert has argued that the fundamental cleavage between opponents, whether in New England or the Middle Colonies, was not one of church polity or even doctrine but between "rationalists and evangelicals". With the onset of the Awakening a "reasonable" religion was no longer the exclusive preserve of colonial Anglicans. "The notion that Christianity is pre-eminently a rational religion

permeated the thinking of Old-Side Presbyterianism, the Old Lights of Connecticut, and the liberal clergy of the neighbourhood of Boston."[134] In Massachusetts, under the leadership of Chauncy, it developed into a partisan ideology, opposed to the "enthusiasm" of the revival and the seeming unreason of evangelical religion. Chauncy summarised his position in his attack on Davenport in 1742: true religion, he maintained, was "in its nature, a sober, calm, reasonable thing" whereas enthusiasm was "a kind of religious phrenzy."[135]

In his *Seasonable Thoughts* Chauncy developed his critique of enthusiasm and squarely placed the blame for its recent outbreak upon the shoulders of Whitefield. In particular, Chauncy criticised Whitefield's *Short Account* of his life, and transcribed passages form this and other published writings because he believed that "the Spirit discovered in them..has been of great Disservice in propagating the like fanciful Disposition in others". Whitefield spoke:

> "all along in his Journals, and Life, in the Language of the inspir'd Writers; and as tho' he design'd to lead his Readers into an Opinion of him as under the extraordinary Influence of the HOLY GHOST, in his whole Conduct."[136]

To be fair to Chauncy, it must be said that similar charges concerning Whitefield's reliance upon extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit were made by more sympathetic observers, most notably Isaac Watts and Jonathan Edwards. Moreover, he had hit upon a raw nerve in his suggestion that Whitefield's contagion might lead others to progress from a reliance upon "impressions" to arrive at full-blown claims to divine revelation; to Puritan New England memories of the fanaticism of the Hutchinsonians and Familists were still fresh.

The Harvard writers concurred with Chauncy's diagnosis of Whitefield's enthusiasm, pointing to instances in his *Journals* where he used dreams and impressions as the source of divine guidance.[137] To the charge that he sometimes "spoke as if he had communications directly from the Spirit of GOD", Whitefield replied that this was no crime and that he thought it was:

> "no new thing to the ministers and people in New-England, especially since such a remarkable revival of religion has been vouchsafed unto them. How are believers sealed: or how is the divine life begun and carried on, if there be no such thing as having divine communications directly from the Spirit of GOD?"[138]

The sharpest criticism of Whitefield's enthusiasm was reserved for his teaching concerning inward feelings. In his sermon on *the indwelling of the Spirit*, Whitefield had written that "To talk of having the Spirit of GOD without *feeling* of it, is really to deny the thing." To the Harvard tutors this passage contained "the true spirit of enthusiasm." Whitefield's reply was as follows:

> "But, Gentlemen, is not this in effect to deny the indwelling of the Spirit? For how is it possible that the believer can have a satisfaction, that he hath the assistance of the Spirit of GOD with him in so continued and regular a manner, that he may be said to dwell in him, and yet the believer have no feeling of it?"

In his defence he cited revered authorities: the 17th Article of the Church of England, Mr. Guthrie's *Trial of a saving Interest in CHRIST* and Richard Baxter in his *Gildas Silvianus*, who spoke of the danger of "ministers preaching an unknown and unfelt CHRIST." He called into the witness box a President of Harvard himself, Edward Holyoke, who in a sermon of May 28, 1741, had used the phrase, "Not but that the saints may *feel* this very sensibly, and it is a joy unspeakable and full of joy.[139]

This provoked a sharp personal response from Holyoke in a letter to Whitefield on February 20, 1744/45, in which the President clarified his position. The authors of the *Testimony*, he claimed were:

> "far from denying...the Operation of the Spirit of God upon the Soul, when he sheds abroad his love into it, which, no doubt, would be (as you say) to deny all such Operations; but only manifest a very great dislike to the Phrase which you seem very fond of, in that case, viz *Feeling the Spirit of God*, being several Times mention'd."

This phrase led to an emphasis on corporeal feelings which distorted the Spirit's true work in the soul. Holyoke emphasised that he had been speaking of the sensible feeling of joy, but not feeling the Spirit of God *himself*, and warned Whitefield to be more careful in the use of such phraseology.[140] Charles Chauncy would have heartily agreed.

To critics, one distinguishing mark of an enthusiast was censoriousness which arose from spiritual vanity. Whitefield's published writings, particularly his Journal, had hitherto caused more trouble than his preaching, and his experience in New England was no exception. In his New England *Journal*, published for all the world to read, were his defamatory comments remarks concerning the Colleges and Ministers of New England. The Colleges he described as in a deep darkness, "a darkness that could be felt."[141] He revealed to all his views of Harvard, during his first visit to Cambridge, on September 24, 1740. He had been well-received by the college authorities, and been instrumental in the awakening of several of its members, but the picture he painted of the College in his Journal, was not only uncomplimentary, but heavily patronising. It was, he wrote,

> "scarce as big as one of our least colleges at Oxford; and...not far superior to our Universities in piety. Discipline is at a low ebb. Bad books are become fashionable among the tutors and students. Tillotson and Clark are read, instead of Shephard, Stoddard and such-like evangelical writers."[142]

His report seems to have been based partly on misinformation, and critics were quick to run to the College's defence. In April 1741, the *Boston Gazette* contained "A reply to Whitefield's Criticism of Harvard," dismissing Whitefield's remarks concerning the teaching, discipline, and spiritual life of the College as "without foundation."[143] His demeaning account of New England's premier academic institution long rankled in the minds of his Old Light opponents.

More offensive still were Whitefield's comments on the state of the New England ministry. After preaching in Dr. Sewall's meeting in Boston in October 1740, he recorded in his Journal:

> "the generality of preachers talk of an unknown and unfelt Christ. The reason why congregations have been so dead is, because they had dead men preaching to them...How can dead men beget living children? It is true, indeed, that God may convert people by the devil, if He chooses; and so He may by unconverted ministers; but I believe, He seldom makes use of either of them for this purpose. No: he chooses vessels made meet by the operations of His Blessed Spirit."

This and other similar extracts [144] led to a torrent of criticism.

According to Charles Chauncy, Whitefield "seldom preach'd, but he had something or other, in his Sermon, against unconverted Ministers". His assertion that the New England ministry did not experimentally know Christ was all the more rash and uncharitable given his very short stay and brief acquaintance with only a small minority of local pastors. Admittedly, Whitefield's design was not to damage the interests of religion, but what more effectual method

could have been devised than to represent the body of the Clergy as "carnal and unconverted" and as unfit to be instruments in the conversion of others? What was the tendency of such conduct, but "to set People against their Ministers as not fit to preach to them, and in this Way, to sow among them the Seeds of Contention and Separation?"[145]. Whitefield was therefore the ultimate cause of the separations. From his correspondence with British friends, Chauncy was able to cite other instances of Whitefield's "uncharitable Judging", especially his notorious criticism of Archbishop Tillotson as having "no more true Christianity than MAHOMET." To dole out such anathemas against a distinguished leader of his own church showed to Chauncy "shocking boldness, in any meer Man, thus to place himself, as it were, in the Throne of CHRIST, and denounce the Anathemas of GOD against his Fellow-Christians." Cleverly, Chauncy attempted to divide the revival camp, by quoting both Increase Mather and Benjamin Colman in support of Tillotson. Again, on the *post hoc ergo prompter hoc* argument, Chauncy blamed Whitefield for unleashing errors that followed, linking him to Gilbert Tennent, who came with a "like uncharitable Spirit", and "a considerable Number of other Itinerants, who went forth in the Spirit of Bitterness, sowing the Seeds of Discord and Uncharitableness all over the Land." As ever, "the most remarkable Instance in this Kind" was the Rev. Mr. Davenport.[146].

But Chauncy also challenged Whitefield's thesis that unconverted Ministers were "incapable of being the Instruments of spiritual good to Men's Souls". He noted that Whitefield made no distinction between ministers in a private capacity as Christians, and as officers in the Church of Christ. Although, it was just as necessary for ministers as for people to be converted before they could enter the

Kingdom of God, their conversion was not essential to their public role as ministers. This was in line with the Stoddardean position held by many New England ministers, and similar also to that levelled by the Old Side Presbyterians in the Middle Colonies against Gilbert Tennent and the New Sides. Moreover, - and here Chauncy could have quoted Calvin - since it was impossible to know with certainty who was converted and who was not, visible holiness remained the only standard of judgement. If pastors displayed the outward marks or fruits of a holy life, then they were to be treated as the ministers of Christ and people could in Faith attend their Preaching, "hoping for a divine Blessing."[147].

Other Old Lights attacked Whitefield's "catholic spirit". One opponent seized on his practice of praying and administering the sacrament without regard to the rubrics of the Anglican liturgy, accusing him of disobedience to his ordination vows. The New Light Thomas Foxcroft jumped to Whitefield's defence, but his pamphlet [148]. merely served to bring other Old Lights into the fray. Theophilus Pickering, pastor of the Second Church in Ipswich, for example, reminded Whitefield that the New England churches only agreed with the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, but dissented firmly from others, which was the original reason why their forefathers had gone to America. The evangelist's supposed "Veneration for the Old Puritans, and...high Opinion of the first settlers of NEW-ENGLAND" was inconsistent with his status as an Anglican clergyman. How could he urge the present generation to "imitate the Piety of their fore-fathers" and praise New England's church Congregational Establishment as exceeding all other parts of the world, when he himself accepted

the Scriptural validity of the 39 Articles by Scripture and praised the"EXCELLENT LITURGY" of the Church?[149].

But perhaps the main reason why Whitefield was so widely criticised, was because he was seen the original instigator not only of the "Revival" but of all the subsequent disorders and separations that attended it. Consequently, in 1744-45 there were calls from leading Old Lights for New England's pastors to refuse Whitefield's entry into their pulpits. In January 1745, two ministerial associations issued a lengthy address to the New Light clergy in the Massachusetts Bay area, blaming them for Whitefield's "hasty Admission" into some of their pulpits. In a short appendix, ministers of the association of Cambridge and neighbouring towns collectively declared their intention not to allow Whitefield to preach in their pulpits.[150].

During Whitefield's stay in 1744-45 Old Light critics not only sought to prove that he was the original source of the disorders of the revival, particularly of the Separations, but that he continued to be a disruptive influence.

Far from being prepared to condemn separations, as the New Lights suggested, Whitefield continued to preach in separatist meetings, and enjoy their warm support. In February 1745, he was reported as having preached in the Separatist Meeting House at Newbury, on the advice of Mr. Webb, the New Light pastor of the New North; in March and June he preached in Separatist meetings at Exeter and Hull, respectively, in both places, against the express opposition

of the ministers in those towns. These instances were seized upon by Old Light critics.[151].

Whitefield was dismayed at the strength of the Old Light assault. The clerical opposition he saw as a "confederacy", among them "a few mistaken, misinformed good old men," who were "publishing halfpenny testimonials" against him.[152]. One of the reasons why he departed in mid-1745, not to return again during the rest of his American tour was undoubtedly the strength of ministerial hostility to his work.

When he returned to New England in 1754, the opposition had greatly subsided, no doubt partly because the awakening had itself lost momentum. His brief visit creates the impression that he had by now begun to achieve a measure of respectability as a familiar character, even a respectable ecclesiastical leader, an image increased during his last two visits.

In 1764 he returned to New England after a decade's absence. While he preached in the Middle Colonies, the Boston press published benign reports of Whitefield's philanthropy and charity sermons. The tone was now one of geniality, even reverence. In January the *Evening Post* contained a report of Whitefield preaching on Matthew 25: 38, 39, 40, and commented how "that truly Reverend Man delivered an excellent Discourse".[153]. He now attracted hearers from a wide denominational spectrum, with little or no objection from local pastors. In April the Boston papers reported on Whitefield preaching at Portsmouth, New England, to about 5000 Hearers, "the different Denominations of Christians uniting in attending his Lectures."[154]. After his departure from Boston, he received a letter from his host Mr. Smith, who wrote how "Your enemies are very few, and even they

seem to almost at peace with you."[155]. This general acceptance was enhanced by Whitefield's response to the Boston fire of 1760. He had raised several hundred pounds in England for its inhabitants, and in 1764, there was a unanimous decision of the freeholders and other inhabitants to give him a civic accolade "for his charitable Care and Pains".[156]. This was a nice reversal of situation in 1740, when Whitefield had been accused of ignoring the plight of the victims of the Charlestown fire, while collecting money for the orphans in Georgia.

In the 1760s even Yale and Harvard made their peace with Whitefield. On his departure from Boston to New York in 1764, he preached at the College of New Haven, once the stronghold of opponents like President Clap. Taking his leave, Whitefield was stopped by the President and informed that the students had been so stirred that they had gone into the chapel to pray, and implored him to come "and give them one more quarter of an hour's exhortation."[157]. At Harvard, Whitefield helped silence the old criticisms by acquiring books and money to replenish the library, recently destroyed by fire. In 1768, the President and Fellows of the College gave him their formal thanks, the list of signatures containing the names of President Holyoke and Nathaniel Appleton, two of his staunchest opposers a generation earlier.[158].

In 1770, on his final visit to New England, the atmosphere had mellowed still further. At Cambridge, Appleton once more invited Whitefield into his pulpit, a gesture which, as the papers pointed out, was very different from his action in 1743, when he had arraigned him publicly in a sermon before the assembled ministers of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.[159]. Other ministers seem to have been

engaged in a similar volte-face. The *Evening Post* for September 17, 1770, contained a letter "To the associated Pastors of the Church of this Town" (Boston) congratulating them on their warm reception of Whitefield and their "constant and unwearied attendance, particularly on his morning lectures". Several of their colleagues in the province, once hostile to Whitefield, now supported his ministry.[160]

Whitefield's death was the occasion for a penitential regret that the great man had once been so harshly treated. As a correspondent to the *Evening Post* wrote sadly on October 1st, 1770,

> "We are so grossly stupid in things of a religious nature, that we have need of the most powerful means to awaken us, and accordingly, God does often send among us, by his providence his zealous servants from distant places that both the uncommoness of the event and their zeal may serve to gain our attention."

By now the ministry of the "Great Awakener", once so strikingly novel and controversial, had become accepted as an integral part of New England history.[161]

c) Separatists.

If the conservative New Lights advocated a drastic revival of the American churches, and the Old Lights sought to retain what they conceived to be the status quo, the Separatists offered a third option: a total separation from the Established Church. Whitefield's relationship with the Separatists helps to give a fully rounded picture of his complex relationship with the American denominational world. As we have seen, the Old Lights saw him as the original cause of the separations, while the conservative New Lights regarded Davenport and not Whitefield as chiefly to blame. Many of the Separatists, however, regarded Whitefield with gratitude as their spiritual father. Before examining Whitefield's attitude to the separations, we need to consider the issues which precipitated the dramatic separation of hundreds of pious lay people from the Congregational churches in the aftermath of the awakening.[162]

The most obvious reasons for the disruption lay in questions relating to ecclesiology: namely the standard of a church's membership and the nature of its ecclesiastical constitution. The problem of "graceless communion" - the admission into church membership of those who could not testify to a personal experience of grace - was rooted in the compromise solutions of the "Halfway Covenant" and Stoddardeanism, described above. Though radical, in some respects, the separatists could also be seen as conservatives who sought to re-establish the pure congregational principle set out in the Cambridge Platform of 1648, that "visible saints" were "the only fit matter for a gospel church". For despite the urgent concern for a personal experience of regeneration communicated by Whitefield and his followers, the Great Awakening in itself did not lead to a

speedy abrogation of the Halfway Covenant. On the contrary, in churches which seemed to share most deeply in the Awakening, the Half-Way Covenant continued with unabated vigour after the revival ceased. Separation occurred in revivalistic as well as antirevivalistic churches: in fact it was in those very churches where the revival was strongest that separation most frequently appeared - the justification offered was that the church continued to sanction graceless communion.

The other ecclesiological issue concerned the existence of the ecclesiastical Saybrook Platform, which since 1708 had been in operation in large areas of Connecticut. It was bitterly opposed by many as a serious erosion of congregational principles and was the cause of many separations in Connecticut. In Massachusetts, where this Presbyterianised Congregationalism was not in existence, ecclesiogical disputes were noticeably much less frequent.

The second major area of separatist grievances over theological issues concerned the use of 'means' in conversion and the issue of divine sovereignty. Prior to the Great Awakening, particularly after the spread of Stoddardeanism, it was assumed that salvation was available through the diligent employment of the ordinary means of grace offered through the regular ministrations of the churches. With the onset of the Awakening, the emphasis upon sudden, sensible conversion meant that those who continued to emphasise the use of means came to be seen as dry "Arminians." Many radical New Lights became impatient with what they considered the lifeless homilies and rationalism of pastors, who emphasised intellectual enlightenment and good works rather than sovereign and irresistible grace. The alternative was to form separate congregations, in which

the pulpit could be open to receive the ministry of New Light itinerants, whether lay exhorters such as Isaac Backus and Elisha Paine, or respected ministers like Whitefield.

The third area concerned the practical issue of recognizing those who were converted, an issue related to the questions of assurance, the evidences of conversion and the attacks upon unconverted ministers. The New Lights' emphasis upon assurance went much further than that allowed for by the covenantal theology of their Puritan forefathers. Radical New Lights taught that assurance was the essence of saving faith and some even declared that doubting on the part of the Christian believer was sin. Along with assurance went the problem of 'discerning the spirits' -knowing who was saved - since a conversion experience was the basis for admission to the fellowship. Many of the more extreme New Lights soon grew impatient with Jonathan Edwards' insistence on demonstrated holiness as the evidence of conversion. In its stead the New Lights introduced a subjective standard for judging the state of others. This was sometimes known as the "key of knowledge", and was the ability to detect fellow Christians as those with whom they "held communion in the inward actings of their own souls". Not surprisingly perhaps, the regular clergy went to great lengths to oppose such a test. Nevertheless, it was used by Davenport and many of his separatist followers to judge others as unconverted, not least many who were ministers. Whitefield's role in attacking unconverted ministers has already been dealt with: it is sufficient to say that his statements both in preaching and his published Journals created the impression that he implicitly encouraged separation from the ungodly, while his caution to churches to enquire carefully into the religious experience of candidates for ordination was soon taken

by many as an invitation to question the state of their present minister. Davenport went a step further by identifying unconverted ministers by name, using the "key of knowledge". Significantly there were no open separations until Davenport began to make his judgements of individual ministers and exhort their hearers to withdraw from their ministry.[163] While Whitefield's ministry led to heart-searchings among ministers and people, Davenport's drove a wedge between the pastor and his flock.

A major issue was that of evangelistic innovations, most notably itinerancy and lay preaching. Many zealous laymen, untrammelled by a college education, began to preach or exhort extemporaneously and "feelingly" on the new birth. Like Paul Parke, pastor of the Preston Separate Church, they were not prepared "to Sit under the Stupid and Deceiving performances of unconverted ministers", but felt a call to take their message throughout New England "in the field: in barns: wigwams and private houses, and also in Meeting houses of all Denominations", relying upon "Spiritual Illuminations and Grace", rather than prepared notes, to guide them.[164] The clerical reflex to this invasion of the ministerial office was swift; lay preaching was condemned by the General Association of Connecticut in 1742. But ministerial opposition to lay preaching and itinerancy was not confined to Old Lights. New Light pastors also inveighed against the invasion of another minister's parish "without his Knowledge, and against his Consent";[165] opposition which was viewed by many radical New Light laity as restricting the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the long run, the determined attempts to coerce the New Lights to conform by the exercise of civil and ecclesiastical authority increased the number of separations. Significantly, in Connecticut,

where the control of churches was tighter and the relationship between church and state closer, tougher action against itinerants and individual churches, resulted in more schisms than in Massachusetts.

William G. McLoughlin has identified 125 separations between 1743-1755.[166] In the Boston area, an estimated 500 members withdrew from the mainline Congregational churches.[167] Unsurprisingly, since many regarded Whitefield as the originator of this process, his relationship with these groups was a very sensitive one. He had left New England in 1740, the Congregational churches seemingly united behind him: he returned in 1744 to find a splintered body, and his ministry at the centre of the controversy. His main allies, the New Light ministers in particular, were keen to impress upon him the danger of countenancing the actions of the Separatists. He evidently sought to heed to their advice. At Newbury for example, in February 1745, having failed to obtain the consent of the two congregational ministers of the town for the use of the pulpits, he received an invitation from the separatists to preach in their congregation. After consultation with Mr. Webb, minister of the New North, in Boston, Whitefield complied, but explained, apologetically, "I declared that I did not preach in the congregation as a separate people, but only for conveniency on account of the weather"; the heavy snow, he claimed, had made his preaching in the open air impractical.[168]

Whitefield's ministry in 1744-45 does seem to have been directed towards the discouragement of separations. In Providence, Rhode Island, for example, a small group of ten men and fifteen women were suspended from church communion in March 1744, on account of their disaffection with their minister John Cotton, who had given only

token support to the Revival. After remaining under censure for a year, Ezra Stiles reported that:

> "Five of the Separates wrote a letter of Mr Cotton May 25, 1745, desiring him to call a Council, by advice of Rev. Geo. Whitefield. Mr Whitefield had advised them - to take back their Admonition - return to the Lord's Table - Mr. Snow to leave off preaching - and call a Council to conciliate them."[169].

Although neither the church nor the separatists yielded to this advice, it is revealing of Whitefield's attitude. At the same time, he struggled to keep himself clear of any firm party alignment which might compromise his role as non-partisan evangelist. In his *History of New England*, the Separatist and Baptist leader, Isaac Backus, denied that Whitefield intended to supplant the standing ministers with new men, and noted how:

> "In August, 1745, I heard him preach at Lebanon, Windham, Norwich, Mohegan and New London; before which I had never seen [him]. He then spoke against separations; and *his plan evidently was, to labor for the conversion and edification of souls, and to leave the building and government to others.*"[170]. (my italics).

This represents a fair summary of Whitefield's role as evangelist rather than church builder.

However, while refusing actively to countenance the principle of separation, Whitefield had nevertheless inadvertently aroused considerable dissatisfaction with the standing ministry, and many future separatists owed their inspiration to his preaching in 1740. In Exeter, New Hampshire, the two Old Light pastors John Odlin and his son Woodbridge opposed the revival and disaffection appeared after Odlin refused to allow Whitefield to preach in his pulpit. Soon, the New Light party was charging that neither Odlin nor his son preached the gospel, and by July 7th, 1744 a Separatist Church was formed. Daniel Rogers, the Harvard tutor awakened by Whitefield, and ordained

as an itinerant at large, became pastor there in 1748.[171] Similarly, in Boston a number of aggrieved New Lights withdrew from every Congregational Church in the city to form the Eleventh Congregational Church with the New Light itinerant Andrew Croswell of Groton, Connecticut, friend of Whitefield, as their pastor in 1748. A major reason behind their secession was to provide a pulpit home for Whitefield and his like. The new church petitioned for a council to instal Croswell, and when it was convened, the church declared that part of the reason for their setting up a separate congregation was,

> "that we, being professed Friends of the present Reformation, might have a Pulpit open to receive Mr. Whitefield, and others whom we look upon to be the zealous and faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ, who are so commonly shut out of other Pulpits."[172]

After his installation Croswell wrote to the ministers of the Old South Church, who had opposed the whole proceeding, "You cannot expect much of the Presence of Christ in your Assemblies, while Mr. Whitefield and other godly Ministers, who occasionally come to Boston, are industriously kept out."[173]

Another New Light itinerant was Jonathan Parsons, pastor at Lyme, Connecticut 1731-45. Converted by Tennent's preaching, he became a convinced Calvinist and began zealously to preach in the neighbouring towns. In 1745, however, the anti-revival faction at Lyme secured his dismissal and upon the recommendation of Whitefield, who remained his close friend, he became pastor of a group of separatists who eventually constituted the First Presbyterian Church of that town.[174] Parsons was one of the "furious zealots" mentioned by the *Evening Post* as the first to greet Whitefield on his return to New England in 1744;[175] it was to be in Parsons' parsonage, that Whitefield died in 1770.

Whitefield's position with regard to the Congregational Church in New England was thus somewhat ambivalent. While from 1744 he officially discountenanced separations, he continued to enjoy warm fellowship with and occasionally preached to the Separatists, many of whom had either been converted or revived through his ministry in 1740 and shared his desire for a converted ministry and a zealous proclamation of the gospel of grace. Whitefield himself remained committed to his intention of reviving the existing churches and not creating new ones, but the effect of his ministry was often to encourage the latter. In New England it led to the spawning of many Separate Congregationalist Churches which saw Whitefield as their spiritual father. Many of these soon began to attack the paedobaptism which underpinned the Half-Way Covenant and ended up as Baptist Churches.

It is ironical that here, as in England, some of the greatest fruits of Whitefield's ministry went to the Baptists. Although he was a surpliced clergyman, who remained paedobaptist by conviction, many of his newly converted followers embraced his message of faith and repentance, but went on to challenge the paedobaptism of the existing churches. But such was his "catholic spirit" that he was able to continue in a warm fellowship with many of his Baptist followers; a fitting testimony to the priorities of the inter-confessional evangelist.

CHAPTER NINE: NEW ENGLAND - FOOTNOTES.

1. E. S. Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (N. Yk., 1957), p. 25.

2. For background material on New England see ibid., pp. 3-15; C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England* (Middletown, Conn., 1987), pp. 1-5.

3. For Stoddard see Goen, op. cit., p. 7; Gaustad, op. cit., p. 17; P. Miller, "Solomon Stoddard, 1643-1729," *Harvard Theological Review*, 34, pp. 227-230.

4. For information on the Northampton Revival and the *Faithful Narrative* see Goen, ed., *The Great Awakening*, introduction pp. 19-46, in vol. 4 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, gen. ed., John E. Smith (New Haven, 1972); Gaustad, op. cit., pp. 17-24.

5. See Goen, ed., *The Great Awakening*, pp. 140-141, "A preface to the Third Edition (Boston, 1738)". For the full text, J. Edwards *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of many Hundred Souls in Northampton..."* (London, 1737), see ibid., pp. 144-211.

6. For the Whitefield's effective use of the press see Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, pp. 114-118; Frank Lambert, "'Pedlar in Divinity': George Whitefield and the Great Awakening, 1737-1745", *Journal of American History* (December 1990), p. 814.

7. *The New England Weekly Journal*, 557, Dec. 20, 1737.

8. Ibid., 627, 634, 639, 640; *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, 1840, 1843.

9. *New England Weekly Journal*, 659, Dec. 4, 1739.

10. Benjamin Colman, *Three Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (Philadelphia, 1739), p. 2.

11. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 2, pp. 350-360.

12. *News-Letter*, 1860, Nov. 8/Nov. 15, 1739; *Weekly Journal*, 656, Nov. 13, 1739.

13. MS. letter, T. Foxcroft to Isaac Watts, Boston, Jan. 28, 1739/40, Thomas Foxcroft Letters, Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University.

14. Josiah Smith, *The Character Preaching etc*, (Boston, 1740; reprint. Glasgow, 1741) pp. i-vi.

15. *GWJ*, pp. 451-483.

16. Ibid., pp. 488-489; *GWL*, p. 221.

17. C. Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, p. 57.

18. Ibid., p. 68.

19. G. Goodwin, "The Anglican Reaction to the Great Awakening", op. cit., p. 356.

20. Kenney, "Dissenter Priest", op. cit., pp. 75-93.

21. *New England Weekly Journal*, 656, Nov. 13, 1741, included an article reprinted from the *Gentleman's Magazine* attacking Whitefield's English opponents, Henry Stebbing and Joseph Trapp.

22. The Boston papers reported on Whitefield's clashes with the Anglican missionary, Jonathan Arnold: see *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, 1862, 1863; *New England Weekly Journal*, 659, December 4, 1739.

23. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 3, (1873), "Massachusetts", p. 340.

24. *GWJ*, p. 459.

25. Ibid., pp. 457-459.

26. Ibid., pp. 452-456.

27. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 3, p. 346; *GWJ*, p. 456.

28. *GWJ*, p. 459.

29. For the Anglican view of this meeting see Cutler's letter to Bishop of London, Dec. 1740, Perry, *Historical Collections, 3*, p. 346.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., pp. 345-347.

32. Ibid., p. 356.

33. Ibid., pp. 356-357.

34. Ibid., p. 350.

35. Ibid., p. 352.

36. Francis L. Hawks and W. S. Perry, eds., *Documentary History of Episcopal Church - Connecticut* (1959), p. 177.

37. Ibid., p 197, Sept. 30, 1743.

38. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 3, p. 364, July 23, 1742.

39. Hawks and Perry, *Documentary History*, p. 180.

40. Ibid., p. 201, Nov. 30, 1743.

41. Ibid., p. 210.

42. S.P.G. Papers, B. 13, 89, Dec. 26., 1742, in Rhodes House Library.

43. Loc. cit., B. 14, 11-12.

44. Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, p. 244.

45. *GWW* 3, p. 426.

46. Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, p. 265.

47. S.P.G. Papers, B. 22, (Mass.), 254, Sept. 4, 1770.

48. Loc. cit., 255, Nov. 10, 1770.

49. Loc. cit., B. 23, (Conn.), 333, June 26, 1771.

50. The Belcher Papers, 2, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 7 (Boston, 1894) pp. 343, 373-74, 521.

51. Kenney, "Dissenter Priest," pp. 88-89.

52. Ibid., p. 89. The S.P.G. "represented British imperialism in ecclesiastical guise", Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, p. 57.

53. *GWJ*, pp. 470, 474, 475.

54. *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New-England...Occasion'd By the late happy Revival of Religion* (Boston, [1743]).

55. MS. letter, B. Colman to Rev. Messrs. Dr. Harris, Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse, London, Boston Oct. 3, 1740, Colman Papers in Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter MS. letter, Colman to English Dissenters).

56. See G. Whitefield, *Sermons on Various Important Subjects* (New ed. Boston, 1741), Preface, Dec. 26, 1740.

57. *LGW*, 1, pp. 428-429.

58. *GWJ*, p. 483.

59. Op. cit. *LGW*, 1, pp. 428-429.

60. Thomas Prince, Jr., ed., *Christian History...For the Year 1744* (Boston, 1745), 100, pp. 380-381.

61. MS. letter, Colman to English Dissenters, loc. cit.

62. *Three Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (Philadelphia, 1739), Letter 1, Colman to Whitefield, Boston, Dec. 3, 1739, pp. 2-3.

63. Prince, ed., *Christian History...1744*, p. 380.

64. See J. Tracy, *The Great Awakening* (Banner of Truth ed., 1976).

65. William Hobby, *An Enquiry into the Itinerancy, and the Conduct of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (Boston, 1745), pp. 16-17.

66. Ibid., p. 18.

67. Ibid.

68. MS. letter, Andrew Eliot to Richard Salter, Boston, April 15, 1745, Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 22, Historical Society of Pennyslvania, Philadelphia.

69. *Three Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*, Letter 1, pp. 3-7.

70. MS. letter, Colman to English Dissenters, loc. cit.

71. Hobby, *An Enquiry*, pp. 13-14.

72. Op. cit. Stout, "Religion, Communications," op. cit., p. 526.

73. See *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors* (Boston, 1743).

74. GWJ, pp. 462, 470, 482.

75. Hobby, *An Enquiry*, pp. 19-22.

76. Ibid., p. 23.

77. MS. letter, Colman to English Dissenters, loc. cit.

78. *GWJ*, pp. 457-474.

79. See Gaustad, *Great Awakening*, pp. 103-104.

80. Benjamin Colman, *Souls flying to Christ Jesus* (Boston, 1740).

81. Tracy, *The Great Awakening*, p. 193.

82. N. Cole, "The Spiritual Travels of Nathan Cole," *WMQ*, 3rd ser., 7 (1950), pp. 590-591.

83. Stout, "Religion, Communications," op. cit., p. 520.

84. H. S. Stout, *The New England Soul* (Oxford, 1986), p. 195.

85. See ibid., pp. 200-201.

86. See Tracy, *The Great Awakening*, pp. 230-255.

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120. Charles Chauncy, *Enthusiasm described and caution'd against* (Boston, 1742).

121. Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (Boston, 1743); Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (Boston, 1743). For the debate between Chauncy and Edwards see Gaustad, *The Great Awakening*, pp. 80-101; Stout, *New England Soul*, pp. 202-207.

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149. Theophilus Pickering, *Mr. Pickering's Letter to Mr. Whitefield* (Boston, 1745). p. 5.

150. *A Letter from Two Neighbouring Associations of Ministers in the Country, to the Associated Ministers of Boston and Charleston, relating to the Admission of Mr. Whitefield into their Pulpits* (Boston, 1745).

151. *Boston Evening Post*, Feb. 25, Mar. 25, July 1, 1745; for Whitefield's account of the Newbury and Exeter meetings see *GWJ*, pp. 549, 553-556.

152. *GWW*, 2, p. 76.

153. *Boston Evening Post*, Jan. 16, 1764.

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156. *Massachusetts Gazette*, 3132, March 1, 1764.

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159. *Boston Evening Post*, Aug. 30, 1770.

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162. For a fuller discussion of the reasons for separations see Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England*, (Middletown, Conn., 1987), pp. 36-67; W. G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833*, (Camb. Mass., 1971), 1, pp. 340-359. For a discussion of recent research, in particular the influence of regional studies, published since his work

first came out (New Haven, 1962) see Goen, op. cit., new introduction, pp. x-xvii.

163. Goen, op, cit., p. 52.

164. Stout, *New England Soul*, p. 209.

165. *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors in New-England* (Boston, 1743), p. 11.

166. W. G. McLouglin, op. cit., 1, pp. 345-357; see also Goen, op. cit., pp. 302-306.

167. Goen, op. cit., p. 97.

168. *GWJ*, p. 549.

169. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism*, p. 92.

170. Isaac Backus, *A History of New England*, ed., David Weston (Newton, Mass., 1871), 2, p. 77.

171. Goen, op. cit., p. 104.

172. Andrew Croswell, *A Narrative of the New-Gathered Congregational Church in Boston* (Boston, 1749), p. 13.

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174. Goen, op. cit., p. 11.

175. *Boston Evening Post*, Nov. 19, 1744.

"He Being Dead He Yet Speaketh."

Whitefield has always been recognised as a preacher of almost unparalleled success. Bishop Ryle commented sympathetically:

> "Whitefield wrote no book for the million, of world-wide fame, like *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*...He founded no religious denomination, which pinned its faith on his writings and carefully embalmed his best acts and words, like John Wesley...No! The great evangelist of the 18th century...lived for one thing only, and that was to preach Christ."[1]

Whether contemporaries or historians, many others have often agreed if sometimes in more qualified terms. One critic in 1743 described him as "in all respects inferior to Mr. Wesley, as to Conduct, Oeconomy, learning, natural Parts, and indeed in every thing", save in his spectacular talent for preaching, though even here his ability lay "more in the Sound than the Substance."[2] Nearly 250 years later his most recent biographer has portrayed him as primarily a "Divine Dramatist", living his life for public performance, and using the pulpit to fulfil boyhood theatrical ambitions, once repressed but now redirected in a religious guise.[3]

But simply recognising Whitefield only as one of Christianity's most brilliant orators, fails to depict the breadth of his achievements or the long-term influence of his ministry. While Wesley ended up creating a denomination on which he stamped his "evangelical Arminianism", Whitefield, a Calvinist, in his lifetime influenced a more varied and international audience. In broad terms, he, more than any single individual, was responsible for the transition in the Anglophone world from the Puritanism of the seventeenth century to the evangelicalism of the mid and late eighteenth century, and beyond. In some way this was perhaps more a change of style than of

substance. Imitating his example, many ministers began adopting a looser, more experiential, less scholastic form of Calvinism, less concerned with dogma and directed rather at bringing the sinner to faith and repentance. Although still maintaining a predestinarian creed, in the Whitefield era moderate Calvinists of all persuasions tended to emphasise the urgent task of reaching the elect through aggressive, missionary preaching, whether at home or abroad. This involved an adoption of new Whitefieldian evangelistic techniques, particularly itinerant field-preaching. In addition, like Whitefield the new breed of evangelical tended to adopt a "catholic spirit" and to show less concern for differences of church polity and liturgy. It was not that these issues entirely ceased to matter, but that henceforth they were no longer seen as such a barrier to co-operation with like-minded ministers of different persuasions. The great pan-evangelical enterprises on both sides of the Atlantic - the Bible Societies, tract societies and the like - owe much to Whitefield.

Yet his ministry had strong centrifugal as well as centripetal tendencies. If he helped unite transatlantic evangelicals, he also widened the gap between them and their "rationalist" opponents, opening up existing cracks within the old puritan world. As a result of the Whitefieldian revivals there was a clear realignment of forces, in New England between the "New Lights" and "Old Lights", in the Middle Colonies between Presbyterian "New Sides" and "Old Sides", and in Scotland between Evangelicals and Moderates. He was also partly responsible for splits within the evangelical camp itself: in Scotland between the Secederes and the Kirk Evangelicals, and in New England between the Separatists and those who chose to remain within the Congregational Establishment. His adoption of a predestinarian

theology also ensured a parting of ways between his Calvinist allies and his fellow revivalists the Wesleys and the Moravians. But his most consistent opponents were his fellow Anglicans, who feared him as a "Dissenter Priest" who was actively promoting a return to the enthusiasm of the mid-seventeenth century, and seemed to be threatening the stability of the Hanoverian Establishment.

In England, the greatest beneficiaries of Whitefield's ministry were the Nonconformists. Through the drift into Dissent of the Calvinistic Methodist societies, and the conversion or inspiration of large numbers of Dissenting pastors, Whitefield helped transform Nonconformity into an evangelical, missionary-minded body whose influence reached to the far corners of the globe. In Scotland, his long-term contribution is harder to assess, partly because the Revival at Cambuslang was firmly located in the year 1742 and does not seem to have had the enduring impact of the less dramatic but longer lasting Revival in England. It was probably in America, and particularly in New England, that his impact was greatest. Here, his autumn tour of 1740 resulted in thousands being added to the existing churches, while many others joined the new Separatist or Separate-Baptist churches. Although he lacked Wesley's theological precision and organisational genius, his actual influence on the late eighteenth century religious constituency was as great and possibly greater. His conversionist, moderate Calvinism, his genuine "catholic spirit", his unwillingness to settle in any one place, combined with a spectacular histrionic talent enabled him to assist in the re-shaping of the old puritan world of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and prepare it for the missionary challenges of the next hundred years.

Epilogue - Footnotes.

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