The Preaching of George Whitehead During the Great Awakening in America.

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THE PREACHING OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD

DURING THE

GREAT AWAKENING IN AMERICA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by

Eugene Edmond White
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ABSTRACT

For thirty-four years George Whitefield followed the Biblical dictum: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Traveling by horseback, by schooner, and even by rowboat, he sought converts in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Holland, Bermuda, and Colonial America. The out-of-doors was often his chapel; and a mound, tree stump, horse's back, or hogshead, served well as his pulpit. In his itinerating, Whitefield averaged about forty hours of preaching each week and eventually delivered 18,000 sermons to some ten million auditors. An analysis of Whitefield's oratory during his entire evangelical career from 1737 to 1770 would make a valuable contribution to the history of American and English public address. However, a doctoral study based upon such an extended and intensive career would necessarily result in a superficial survey. Hence it seemed advisable to restrict this work to one of the significant periods of his preaching in order that a definitive analysis might be made. Whitefield's preaching during the Great Awakening in America was selected as the field of concentration for the following reasons: (1) According to historians the Great Awakening constituted the first great social movement in American history. (2) Authorities have characterized Whitefield's preaching as the most important single contributing factor to the outbreak of the revival. (3) No definitive study of Whitefield's preaching during this period has been undertaken. (4) Abundant primary materials concerning Whitefield and the Great Awakening are available in American
archives.

The procedure of investigation used was the customary historical and rhetorical method. The following libraries were visited to obtain primary materials: American Antiquarian Society, Harvard University, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston Athenaeum, Boston Public Library, New York Public Library, and The Library of Congress. Additional materials were obtained by microfilm from The John Carter Brown Library of Brown University, Yale University Library, and the Southern Methodist University Library. Colonial newspapers, magazines, journals, letters, pamphlets and books constituted the primary source of materials.

According to historians, the eruption of religious excesses in 1739 and 1740 throughout Colonial America was precipitated chiefly by Whitefield. His success with the populace was "unparalleled in American pulpit history," although he offended certain of the conservative elements, especially the ecclesiastical authorities. His sermons were directed chiefly at the uneducated people, who constituted the great bulk of his listeners. Such persons had no desire to hear church doctrine stated logically and applied soberly to their problems. They craved drama and excitement; they yearned for entertainment and stimulation. He capitalized upon their desires by presenting sermons almost entirely lacking in logical proof but rich in sensationalism, vivid imagery, and dramatic qualities. He dramatized Biblical narratives, making of them fascinating stories which contained suspense, conflict, and climaxes. He personified characters from both Old and New Testaments, even going to the extreme of "interpreting" the emotions of Christ when he hung upon the cross.
Whitefield appealed to his listeners' desire for increased self-status by proclaiming that the rich were as deeply mired in "original sin" as the poorest and most illiterate frontiersmen in the audience. He sneered at the feebleness of human reasoning and declared that the only valid knowledge was the divine will. He placed himself upon the same level with his listeners and talked to them as one friend to another. He spoke of "our sins," "our God," "your troubles," and "my faith in you." Numerous rhetorical questions gave his sermons the aspect of a two-way discussion.

At times Whitefield posed as a divine emissary sent by God to bring sinners "home to Christ." He frequently offered to meet his hearers at Judgment Day, when he should intercede for them with God. He promised that believers should sit on the right hand of God and should talk with the prophets and apostles for all eternity. However, with grim visage and ringing voice he threatened sinners with hell's fires, and "lakes of brimstone." He vowed he should appear against them before God and help condemn them to hell forever.

The main source of power in Whitefield's delivery lay in his ability to lose himself completely in his emotions that he was able to stir up similar emotions in his audiences. Frequently in the midst of his sermons he would reach a state of near-hysteria, and would believe that the Holy Ghost had entered into his soul and was giving him utterance. It was chiefly during these emotional climaxes that the audiences were "melted-down" into tears. Contemporaries reported that his deep, powerful voice possessed music and pathos. The sweeps and turns of his voice were "a charming song" that fascinated and led many to experience what
they believed to be the "Presence of God." Whitefield customarily possessed dynamic bodily animation upon the platform. His movements were graceful, powerful, and at times violent. Some conservative persons found his actions "repulsive," but the great share of his listeners were captured by the magnetism of his presence.

There can be little doubt that the preaching of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening made him one of the most important figures in the history of modern religion. His importance lies first, in bringing a new zeal for religion to the great masses in America; second, in introducing a new era of fiery emotional preaching in place of the dull, logical pulpit style then prevalent; third, in stimulating waves of emotional fervor which swept Colonial America, and which in turn motivated the rapid development of the Methodist, Baptist, and other evangelical denominations; and fourth, in helping to develop the democratic sentiment by creating the first important social movement common to all the American colonies.
PART I

AN EVANGELIST IN THE MAKING: BACKGROUNDS OF THE SPEAKER

Chapter I. Young Whitefield's Spiritual Quest
Chapter II. Whitefield's Becoming an Itinerant Preacher
Chapter III. Whitefield's Visit to Georgia
Chapter IV. Whitefield's Preaching in the Fields of England
For thirty-four years George Whitefield followed the Biblical dictum: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Traveling by horseback, by schooner, and even by rowboat, he sought converts in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Bermuda and Colonial America. The out-of-doors was often his chapel; and a mound, tree stump, horse's back, or hogshead, served well as his pulpit. In his itinerant wanderings, Whitefield averaged about forty hours of preaching each week and eventually delivered eighteen thousand sermons to some ten million auditors. Churches could not contain his followers. Twenty, thirty, perhaps even fifty thousand spectators would gather in the fields, drawn by the emotional compulsion of his speaking.

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1This is the number of sermons usually attributed to Whitefield by historians. The evangelist's cenotaph in the Old South Church of Newburyport, Massachusetts, records this number also.

2Edwin N. Hardy, George Whitefield, The Matchless Soul Winner (New York: American Tract Society, 1938), 255. On several occasions Whitefield stated that he had preached to more than ten million persons during his ministry.

3Practically every primary and secondary source reference to the size of Whitefield's audiences mentions crowds of twenty or thirty thousand. Benjamin Franklin estimates that Whitefield's powerful voice could reach thirty thousand auditors in the open air. (The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin & Selections From His Writings (New York: Random House Inc., 1944), 121, 122. Hereafter referred to as the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.) In his journals Whitefield claims to have addressed crowds of eighty thousand.
An analysis of Whitefield's entire evangelistic career from 1737 to 1770 would make a valuable contribution to the history of American and English public address. However, a doctoral study of such an extended and intensive career would necessarily result in a superficial survey. Hence it seemed advisable to restrict this work to one of the significant periods of his preaching, in order that a definitive analysis might be made. Whitefield's preaching in America during the Great Awakening was selected as the field of concentration for the following reasons: (1) According to historians the Great Awakening constituted the first great social movement in American history. (2) Authorities have characterized Whitefield's preaching as the most important single contributing factor to the outbreak of the revival. (3) No definitive study of Whitefield's preaching during this period has been undertaken; furthermore, the entire period of the Great Awakening has been largely neglected by historians and rhetoricians. (4) Abundant primary materials concerning Whitefield and the Great Awakening are available in American archives.

Although Edward Cheyney characterized Whitefield as "the greatest popular preacher England ever had," it was probably during the Great Awakening in America that this "Man of God" attained his greatest triumphs. The colonial mind, especially in New England, long bored by formalized, logical sermons read by austere ministers, was ready for a new experience in religion. The Great Awakening, with its "hypnotic

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1Edward P. Cheyney, A Short History of England (New York: Ginn and Co., 1927), 554. The "Great Awakening" refers to the wave of religious emotionalism which swept the Colonies (especially New England and the Middle Colonies) in the fall of 1739 and in the early years of the 1740's.

suggestion, its lurid terrorism, its outcries and hysterical posse-
sions, awaited only the fervent exhortation of this young evangelist
from across the Atlantic. The eruption of religious excesses through-
out colonial America in 1739 and 1740 was precipitated chiefly by
Whitefield. His success with the populace was "unparalleled in
American pulpit history."

Briefly he held the center of all stages and was crowned
with more laurels than any alien who had yet set foot on
American soil....As he proceeded from meetinghouse to
meetinghouse, his glory mounted higher and higher, until
those who followed him lost all sense of rational
discrimination. The story of his amazing pilgrimage...in
1740 reads like fictionalized biography of the Crusades,
not solid history of eighteenth century America.

Such comments by a modern biographer may appear to be distorted
exaggerations, yet the observations of contemporaries are replete with
testimonials as to the effectiveness of Whitefield's preaching. For
example, an unsigned letter printed in the Boston Evening Post portrayed
Whitefield's reception in New England in the following manner:

The Minds of People in this Part of the World, had
been greatly prepossest in Favour of Mr. Whitefield from
the Accounts transmitted of him, from time to time, as a
Wonder of Piety, a Man of God, so as no one was like him:
Accordingly when he came to Town...he was received as
though he had been an Angel of God; yea, a God come down
in the likeness of Man. He was strangely flocked after
by all Sorts of Persons, and much admired by the Vulgar,
both great and small. The Ministers had him in Veneration,
at least in Appearance, as much as the People; encouraged

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9Ibid., 176-177.
his Preaching, attended it themselves every Day in the Week, and mostly twice a Day. The grand Subject
of Conversation was Mr. Whitefield, and the whole Business
doing the Town to run, from Place to Place, to hear him
speak;...he soon insinuated himself still further into
the Affections of Multitudes, in so much that it became
dangerous to mention his Name without saying something
in commendation of him...He was indeed spoken of, as
the Angel flying through Heaven with the everlasting
Gospel, and such Honours sacrificed to him as were due
to no mean Man: Nay, to such a Height did this Spirit
rise, that all who did not express a very high Thought
of Mr. Whitefield, were lookt upon with an Evil Eye:
and as to those who declared their Dislike of what they
judged amiss of the Times, they were stigmatised as
Enemies of God and true Religion; yea, they were openly
represented both from the Pulpit and the Press, as in
danger of committing the Sin against the Holy Ghost, if
not actually guilty even of this unpardonable Sin.10

What manner of man was this "Pied Piper" whom men, during the Great
Awakening, followed into "orgies of temporary insanity?" What was the
source of his power over the minds and bodies of his hearers? Why were
his sermons attended by so much "swooning away and falling to the
Ground...bitter Shriekings and Screamings; Convulsion-like Tremblings
and Agitations, Strugglings and Tumblings?"11 A partial answer to these
queries may be discovered through a study of Whitefield's life prior to
the Great Awakening.

10 Boston Evening Post, October 29, 1744.

11 Charles Chauncy, Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion
in New England. A Treatise in Five Parts. I. Faithfully pointing
out the Things of a Bad and Dangerous Tendency, in the late, and
present, religious Appearance, in the Land. II. Representing the
Obligations which lie upon the Pastors of These Churches in particular,
and upon All in general, to use their Endeavours to suppress pre­
vailing Disorders; with the Great Danger of a Neglect in so important
a Matter. III. Opening, in many Instances, wherein the Discourager of
Irregularities have been Injuriously Treated. IV. Shewing what
ought to be Corrected, or Avoided, in testifying against the evil
Things of the present Day. V. Directing our Thot's, more positively,
to what may be judged the Best Expedients, to promote pure and undefiled
Religion in these Times. (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1743), 77. Here­
after referred to as Seasonable Thoughts.
CHAPTER I

YOUNG WHITEFIELD'S SPIRITUAL QUEST

George Whitefield, the youngest of seven children, was born December 27, 1714, at Bell Inn, Gloucester, England. His father, Thomas Whitefield, died two years later, leaving the mother to tend the children and to run the inn. According to his own testimony Whitefield was a problem child.

I was so brutish as to hate Instruction, and used purposely to shun all Opportunities of receiving it. I can date some very early Acts of Uncleanness. I soon gave pregnant Proofs of an impudent Temper. Lying, filthy Talking, and foolish Jestings I was much addicted to. Sometimes I used

\[\text{Reference:} \begin{align*}
12 & \text{Very little is known concerning these children. Elizabeth, the one girl, was married twice, and lived at Bristol; Joseph died in infancy; Andrew was a merchant at Bristol; James was a ship captain. See John Gillies, Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield Compiled by the Rev. John Gillies (London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772), 2.}
13 & \text{Whitefield's genealogy has never been adequately traced. According to Gillies, Whitefield's great-grandfather was the Reverend Samuel Whitefield, rector of Rockampton. Samuel had five daughters, two of whom married clergymen, and two sons, one of whom was a minister, the other, Andrew, was a 'private gentleman.' Andrew had fourteen children, the eldest of whom was Thomas. George Whitefield was the youngest of Thomas Whitefield's offspring. Ibid.}
14 & \text{In the fall of 1739, while enroute to the Colonies for his second visit, Whitefield wrote an extended sketch of his life prior to entering the ministry. This was published the next year in two very similar editions: (1) A Short Account of God's Dealings with the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, A.B. Late of Pembroke-College, Oxford, from his Infancy to the Time of His entering into Holy Orders. Written by Himself, on Board the Elizabeth, bound from London to Philadelphia, and sent over by Him to be published for the Benefit of the Orphan-House in Georgia (London: Printed by W. Strahan, and sold by James Hatton, 1740). Hereafter referred to as A Short Account. (2) A Brief and General Account of the First Part of the Life of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, from his Birth, to his entering into Holy Orders. Written by himself (Boston: Printed and Sold by S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1740).}
\end{align*}\]
to Curse, if not Swear. Stealing from my Mother I thought no Theft at all, and used no scruple of taking Money out of her Pocket before she was up....

It would be endless to recount the Sins and Offences of my younger Days. They were more in Number than the Hairs of my Head. My Heart would fail me at the Remembrance of them, was I not assured that my Redeemer liveth, ever to make intercession for me....Whatever foreseen fitness for salvation others may talk of and glory in, I disclaim any such Thing; if I trace myself from my Cradle to my Manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned....

But such was the free Grace of God to me, that tho' Corruption worked so strongly in my Soul, and produced such early and bitter Fruits, yet I can recollect very early movings of the blessed Spirit upon my Heart....

Very likely Whitefield's perverse conception of his early childhood was due in part, at least, to a Calvinistic belief that God had chosen to rescue him from his youthful "damnable Sin," as a "Limb from the Fire." Luke Tyerman has expressed the opinion that Whitefield was probably a normal child, no better or worse than most Gloucester children of a similar environment. Despite his early "convictions of sin," Whitefield was an unusually religious boy. Once when some persons at the inn teased him, George ran to his room, threw himself upon the floor, and with many sobs read again and again the Psalm in which David repeats the words: "But in the name of the Lord will I destroy them." An important aspect in the early training of the future evangelist was his fondness for enacting the role of a clergyman in the secrecy of his room. He enjoyed especially to imitate the "Ministers reading Prayers,"

15 Whitefield, A Short Account, 9, 10.


17 Whitefield, A Short Account, 11.
and would often lift his small voice in the oral reading of the Scriptures. 18

When George was ten years old his mother married an impecunious iron-monger, Capel Longden. This proved to be an "unhappy Match," and made an "uncommon Impression" upon the little boy. At the age of twelve George was sent to the St. Mary De Crypt free grammar school in Gloucester. Although he never became conspicuous for his scholarship, he was soon recognized as a "boy orator." Whenever the town Corporation visited the school, George was chosen to deliver the welcoming speech. Likewise the histrionic talents of the future evangelist were soon perceived and encouraged. A light voice and curly hair won for George leading feminine roles in the school plays which were performed before the Corporation. During Whitefield's attendance at the grammar school he was very fond of reading The Spectator and popular plays; he would often "play hookey" from school for several days at a time in order to practice acting the different parts. In future years Whitefield was to regard this interest in drama as having a "natural Tendency to debauch the Mind, to raise ill Passions, and to stuff the Memory with Things as contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as light to Darkness, Heaven to Hell." 19 Nevertheless, it is probable that at the grammar school there was developed in the boy's mind a sense of the dramatic element which later helped to make him one of the world's greatest evangelists. As an adult, Whitefield realized that "particular

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 13.
Thanks* were due his school master for "the great pains he took" in teaching him how to speak and write correctly.20

After three years of grammar school, George left his books to assist his mother in the care of the now dilapidated inn. Whitefield later wrote: "I began to assist her occasionally in the public-House, till at length I put on my blue Apron and my snuffers, washed Mops, cleaned Rooms, and, in one Word, became professed and common Drawer for nigh a Year and a Half."21 After a short time Mrs. Whitefield retired from the inn and turned the business over to one of George's older married brothers. Without her guidance, tending the bar and serving as a scullery maid depressed the hyper-sensitive boy. He began to feel compulsions to raise himself from his "degrading" environment. Turning to the Bible for inspiration, he would retire to his room after supper and read of the wandering apostles until his last candle flickered out. During these evenings he wrote out several sermons, and spent much time in "Self-Examination."

Mental conflicts and incompatibility with his sister-in-law finally drove Whitefield to flee from the Inn. He later believed that this was the unfolding of God's predetermined plan of forcing him "out of the public Business, and calling" him "from drawing Wine for Drunkards, to draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation for the Refreshment of his spiritual Israel."22 Finding refuge at a brother's home in Bristol, George turned more definitely toward religious meditation.

20Ibid. Little is known of Whitefield's formal training at the grammar school, except that he studied Latin and the "Classicks."

21Ibid., 14.

22Ibid., 15.
Bible study and church going engrossed the lad. Before long he believed he was experiencing "great Foretastes" of Divine love and "great Hungerings and thirstings after the blessed Sacrament." One sermon, especially, at St. John's church filled him with "unspeakable Raptures." 23

After two months in Bristol Whitefield returned to Gloucester and received permission from his mother to live at her house and to sleep upon the floor. It was perhaps inevitable that a reaction should soon set in from the heightened emotional experiences in Bristol. Slipping into his previous despondency, Whitefield returned to reading plays to his sister and friends, and to "sauntering from Place to Place." The adverse influence of his youthful acquaintances led him into what he later termed an "abominable secret Sin, the dismal Effects of which I have felt, and groaned under ever since." 24

Later that year George re-entered the grammar school in order to prepare himself for Oxford, should he be able to secure a Servitor's position there. At first he associated with a group of irreverent youths and soon attained "a great Proficiency in the School of the Devil." Before long, however, he began to grow more serious, and soon thought he felt God "working powerfully and convincingly upon" his "Soul." He partook of the Holy Sacrament on Christmas day just before his seventeenth birthday. Early the next year he began going to public worship twice a day, and spent his evenings in praying and reading religious texts. At school he exhorted his friends to give more heed

23 Ibid., 16.
24 Ibid., 17.
to religious matters and succeeded in making "some Reformation amongst" them. About this time he had the first of his "spiritual Dreams." He dreamed that he was to visit God upon Mount Sinai, but was afraid to meet him. This dream made a "great Impression" upon the youth, causing him to grow steadily more serious and devout.25

Whitefield's Religious Trials at Oxford. In 1732 sympathetic friends secured for him admission to Pembroke College at Oxford University and a servitorship there. Whitefield's first year at Oxford must have been an ordeal. The duties of a servitor were reminiscent of those entailed in tending the bar at the Inn. Moreover, his practice of praying and singing Psalms five times every day, and of fasting every Friday, isolated him from the rest of the students as being a "singular, odd Fellow." He quit reading plays, refused to study his text-books, and devoted himself increasingly to reading religious treatises.26 From reading these works Whitefield derived the beginnings of his conception of the "new-birth." Concerning Henry Scougal's The Life of God in the Soul of Man, Whitefield wrote:

"tho' I had fasted, watched, and prayed, and received the Sacrament so long, yet I never knew what true Religion was, till God sent me that excellent Treatise...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

25Ibid., 18-23.

26The titles of some of these works are: The Life of God in the Soul of Man; Serious Call to a Devout Life; The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners; Christian Defence against the Fears of Death; The Spiritual Combat; Christian Perfection; Call to the Unconverted; The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment.
Duties of the Closet, and now and then reaching out their Hands to give Alms to their poor Neighbors. 'Alas! thought I, 'if this be not Religion, what is?' God soon shewed me. For in reading a few lines further, that 'true Religion was a 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."

During the ensuing years the conviction that man must be "born again in Christ" to attain salvation crystallized still further in Whitefield's thinking, until by the time of the Great Awakening it formed the main tenet of his preaching.

Near the end of the academic year he became acquainted with Charles Wesley. Through Wesley he became a member of the Holy Club, a small religious group which had been founded at Oxford three years before. The members were branded as "Methodists," by the students because of their methodical manner of living. The Holy Club is of historic importance because it proved to be the wellspring of the Methodist faith. Although Whitefield entered into the asceticism of the members and profited by the friendship of the Wesley brothers, he became increasingly bothered with physical and psychological trials.

27Whitefield, A Short Account, 28.


29John Wesley at this time possessed a Master of Arts degree, was an ordained priest of the Church of England, and a Fellow of Lincoln College at Oxford. Charles Wesley had a Bachelor of Arts degree and was a college tutor. In October, 1735, the Wesleys and two other Methodists embarked for Georgia as missionaries. This left the Holy Club chiefly under the direction of Whitefield.
threw dirt at him; his tutor threatened to expel him for neglecting his studies; his relatives became alarmed at the extreme religious character of his letters and demanded that he give up his religious activities. His memory began to fail him; he fancied himself "locked up in Iron Armour." As he later wrote:

At this Time Satan used to terrify me much, and threatened to punish me if I discovered his Wiles. It being my Duty, as Servitor, in my Turn to knock at the gentlemen's Rooms by ten at Night, to see who were in their Rooms, I thought the Devil would appear to me every Stair I went up.—And he so troubled me when I lay down to Rest, that for some Weeks I scarce slept above three Hours at a Time.

God only knows how many Nights I have lain upon my Bed, groaning under the weight I felt, and bidding Satan depart from me in the Name of Jesus. Whole Days and Weeks have I spent in lying prostrate on the Ground, and begging for Freedom from those proud hellish Thoughts that used to crowd in upon, and distract my Soul. 30

He ate but sparingly and only the "worse sort of food"; he wore faded woolen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes; he refused to speak for hours at a time; he neglected his studies completely, even the one he enjoyed most—the writing and delivering of a "composition" on recitation day each Saturday. During this period Whitefield began to acquire valuable training in practical public speaking by preaching and reading the Scriptures to the prisoners at the local jail and to the poor people in their homes.

As time passed Whitefield's mental torment became so severe that his tutor feared he was "really Mad." Even the sober advice of Charles Wesley could not moderate his excesses. During the Lent season he ate almost nothing but coarse bread and sage tea. He often walked out in the cold mornings without gloves until his hands were "frozen black."

30Whitefield, A Short Account, 37, 38.
Perhaps he fancied himself in the role of a self-abnegating apostle; it is certain he thought that by mistreating his body he would "increase in the Spirit."  

Finally in the spring of 1735 the neurotic youth collapsed and for several months he was confined to his room, barely able to pray. His "spiritual Trials" continued to torture him severely, but finally after seven weeks he secured considerable relief through a religious conversion. The climax of his mental distress during this experience is revealed in his own words:

One Day, perceiving an uncommon Drought and a disagreeable Clamminess in my Mouth, and using Things to allay my Thirst, but in vain, it was suggested to me that when Jesus Christ cried out, "I thirst," His Sufferings were near an End. Upon which, I cast myself down on the Bed, crying out, "I thirst! I thirst!" Soon after this, I found and felt in myself 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 truly to rejoice in God my Saviour, and, for some Time, could not avoid singing Psalms wherever I was...  

Although Whitefield's mental health was now somewhat improved, his body was so emaciated that the University authorities sent him home to Gloucester for a rest. Despite the objections of his family and friends, Whitefield, as soon as he secured lodgings with a Mrs. H., began to organise a small society of pious young people. Soon growing discontented with the extent of his evangelism in Gloucester, he borrowed some money from his landlady and set out for Bristol to convert his

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\[31\text{Ibid.}, 48.\]

\[32\text{Ibid.}, 48, 49. It is interesting to note that Whitefield's conversion experience came three years before the Wesley brothers underwent a "new birth." See Tyerman, The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, I, 31.\]
relations there. Perhaps because of the prejudices they had conceived against him, this attempt was futile. He was more successful, however, in his visit to an alms house in Bristol, where he persuaded at least one young woman to become a "true Follower of Jesus Christ." 33

Upon returning to Gloucester, Whitefield spent most of his time in religious meditation, studying religious texts, reading the Bible aloud, visiting the sick, soliciting money from the wealthy for the poor, and preaching to his little society. After a short time, he experienced a dream in which he thought God directed him to preach to the prisoners at the jail. The receipt of a letter soon afterwards from an Oxford friend requesting him to visit a certain criminal at the Gloucester jail seemed to him the answer to his dream. Going immediately to the jail, he secured permission to preach to the inmates. He spent the remainder of his stay at Gloucester reading Scriptures and exhorting the prisoners each day.

In the midst of these religious activities Whitefield began to have "premonitions" that he would be called into the ministry. Perhaps as a result of such thinking he had a dream in which the Bishop of the St. Mary De Crypt Cathedral at Gloucester talked with him and gave him some gold. Some time later the Bishop called Whitefield to the Church, offered to ordain him as a deacon, and gave him five guineas to buy a book. Whitefield interpreted the dream and its "Answer" as a Divine directive to enter the Church. 34

33 Whitefield, A Short Account, 53.
34 Ibid., 61-64.
Whitefield's Ordination as a Deacon. Soon after this, in March of 1736, Whitefield re-entered Oxford to finish his studies. Early in April he accepted an offer made by Sir John Phillips of an annuity of thirty pounds to remain permanently at Oxford as a university minister. The spring passed quickly, and in June he returned to Gloucester for his ordination. He attempted to write a sermon for the occasion, but was so disturbed that he "could not compose any Thing at all." On Saturday evening before the ceremony he imitated the apostles by retiring to a hill near the town where he prayed fervently for several hours. The next morning when he went up to the altar to be ordained he "could think of nothing but Samuel's standing a little Child before the Lord with a Linen Ephod." Despite the Bishop's urging, Whitefield was unable to preach in the afternoon because he had prepared no sermon and lacked sufficient self-confidence to preach extemporaneously. The next morning he thought God whispered to him the words, "Speak out, Paul." Thus inspired he picked up his pen, finished a sermon the "Necessity and Benefit of religious Society," which he had previously begun, and started a new one. The following Sunday he delivered his first sermon as a deacon of the Church. The success of this first venture may be

35A letter from Whitefield to Mr. G. R., in The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield Containing all his Sermons and Tracts which have been already published: With a select Collection of Letters (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771), I, 13. Hereafter referred to as Works.

36For letters written by Whitefield pertaining to his ordination see Ibid., I, 13-17.

37Whitefield, A Short Account, 68.

38It is to be remembered that the customary method of delivering sermons in the Church of England at this time was by reading from manuscript.
understood from a letter written by Whitefield a few days later, on June 30, 1736:

Curiosity, as you might easily guess, drew a large congregation together...The sight at first a little awed me; but I was comforted with a heart-felt sense of the divine presence, and soon found the unspeakable advantage of having been accustomed to public speaking when a boy at school, and of exhorting and teaching the prisoners and poor people at their private houses, whilst at the University. By this means I was kept from being daunted over much. As I proceeded, I perceived the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd of those, who knew me in my infant childish day, I trust, I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority. Some few mocked, but most for the present seemed struck; and I have since heard that a complaint had been made to the bishop, that I drove fifteen mad the first sermon. The worthy prelate, as I am informed, wished that the madness might not be forgotten before next Sunday.39

Apparently, Whitefield attributed much of the success of his first sermon to the "unspeakable advantage" of previous training in public address. In his later description of this event Whitefield emphasized the importance of his "unofficial" speech training while at the University.

"Oh, the unspeakable Benefit of reading to the Poor, and exercising our Talents while Students at the University! Such previous acts are very proper to prepare us for the Work of our Lord, and make us not unapt to teach in a more publick Manner.—It is remarkable that our Lord sent out his Apostles on short Missions before they were so solemnly authorized at the Day of Pentecost. Would the Heads and Tutors of our Universities follow his Example, and, instead of discouraging their Pupils from doing any Thing of this Nature, send them to visit the Sick and Prisoners, and to pray with, and read Practical Books of Religion to the Poor, they would find such Exercises of more Service to them, and to the Church of God, than all their private, and publick lectures put together."40

39 A letter from George Whitefield to Mr. H., written June 30, 1736, and printed in Whitefield's Works, 1, 18, 19.

40 George Whitefield, A Short Account, 70.
Summary. Whitefield's environment from early childhood had molded his religious development and had laid the foundations for his future success as an evangelist. After extreme "inward" religious conflicts, experienced prior to his being ordained a deacon in the Episcopal church, Whitefield accepted the doctrines of "Original Sin" and the "New Birth," which were to be the fundamental tenets of his preaching during the Great Awakening in America. His fellowship with John and Charles Wesley during his Oxford days had directed his religious thinking toward Methodism. His ability to magnetize large audiences during the Awakening may be attributed partly to his having frequently engaged in numerous speech activities during his youth. Quite early he began acting in plays at home and at school, reading aloud to his friends from the Bible and other books, and imitating ministers in their reading of prayers and in the delivery of sermons. A little later he began exhorting his grammar school and college friends, preaching to the inmates of the Gloucester and Oxford jails, and writing a number of sermons. The effect of all these social, religious, and psychological factors in conjunction with his speech activities prepared him for the role of an itinerant preacher.
CHAPTER II

WHITEFIELD'S BECOMING AN ITINERANT PREEACHER

On the Wednesday following his ordination, Whitefield returned to Oxford, where a week later he received his Bachelor of Arts degree. During the ensuing summer his ministerial duties at the University kept him busy: several small charity schools maintained by the Methodists were under his direct supervision; the distributing of money and books to the poor and the preaching to the prisoners at the Oxford jail were daily tasks; religious contemplation and the studying of religious books occupied much of his time. The atmosphere was pleasant at Oxford, and very likely the young clergymen looked forward to a quiet career as a university minister.¹

Whitefield Preaches for the First Time in London. The real beginning of Whitefield's career as an evangelist occurred early in August, when the Curate of the Tower of London, needing to be temporarily away from the city, requested him to assume the religious duties at the Tower. Accepting immediately, Whitefield arrived in London by stage-coach on Wednesday, August 4. After spending much of the remainder of the week in interviews with Sir John Phillips, and with other Londoners who were sympathetic with the Oxford Methodists,² Sunday afternoon he preached

¹The chief sources for this period of Whitefield's life are his personal letters found in Volume I of his Works, and in his A Further account of God's dealings with the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield from the time of his ordination to his embarking for Georgia; to which is annexed A brief account of the rise, progress and present situation of the Orphan-house in Georgia (Philadelphia: W. Bradford, 1746). The latter is hereafter referred to as A Further Account.

²It is to be remembered that it was Sir John Phillips who granted Whitefield his subsidy as a Methodist minister at Oxford.
his first London sermon at the Bishop-Gate Church. The large interior of the church and the size of the congregation at first disconcerted the youth, but he soon overcame this initial stage fright and preached "with power." According to Whitefield's own account, "as I went up the Stairs almost all seem [sic] to sneer at me on Account of my Youth; but they soon grew serious, and exceedingly attentive, and after I came down shewed me great tokens of Respect, blessed me as I pass'd along, and made great Enquiry who I was."\(^3\) This particular experience apparently helped Whitefield gain control of his nervousness in speaking before large audiences, for hereafter there is no reference to such trepidations in any of his letters or journals. Throughout the next two months he read prayers regularly in the evenings at Wapping Chapel, and preached at Ludgate Prison every Tuesday and at the Tower every Sunday to the prisoners and the custodians. His sermons were dominated with the theme of the "new-Birth, and the Necessity of renouncing all in Affection, in order to follow JESUS CHRIST."\(^4\) During this period he received his first impetus to become a missionary through the reading of several letters which the Wesleys had written to him from Georgia. The accounts of their work in America so stimulated the young man with the desire to emulate them that he spent many hours in tears of frustration.

**At Dunmow Whitefield Discovers His Gift of Eloquence.** In October the Curate of the Tower returned to London, and Whitefield went back to the ministerial routine at Oxford. Before long, however, circumstance


\(^4\)Ibid.
once more directed him toward the ways of an itinerant evangelist.

About the middle of December, the Reverend Mr. Kinch in requested him to take charge of the church at Dummer in Hampshire for a fortnight. Upon arriving at Dummer, the youthful minister was chagrined to discover that most of his congregation was composed of poor and illiterate people. He later described his reaction to his rustic charges in these words, "my proud Heart at first could not well brook it.---I would have given all the World for one of my Oxford Friends, and mourned for lack of them as a Dove that has lost her Mate." Nevertheless, he endeavored to make the best of his situation, and divided his time into three eight-hour parts: one for eating and sleeping, another for composing sermons and for religious study, and a third for conversing with his parishioners. Before long he began to enjoy his associations with his unlettered flock. As he expressed it, "The Profit I reaped by...conversing with the poor Country People, was unspeakable----I soon began to be as much delighted with their artless Conversation, as I had been formerly with the Company of my Oxford Friends; and frequently learnt as much by an Afternoon's Visit as in a Week's Study."

5Ibid., 13.

Although Whitefield does not describe his method of preparing his sermons during this period, it is known that all of his sermons at Dummer were written out in manuscript form. Evidence would seem to indicate that his delivery was based on partial memorization and partial reading of the written text. This was in conformity with the customary style of preaching by the Episcopal ministers.

7One of the religious tracts he found comforting at this time was Law's Serious Call to a devout Life. In future years Whitefield often recommended this book to young preachers.

8Whitefield, A Further Account, 8.
This temporary pastorate at Dummer was Whitefield's first genuine contact with the common people, and as such, it exerted an important molding influence upon his future career. He learned something of their problems, the way they thought, their religious beliefs, their hopes, fears, and desires. Of far more importance to this young man, who was later to sway great multitudes of common people like these on both sides of the Atlantic, was his gradual discovery at Dummer of the magnetic appeal which his emotional exhortations and dramatic delivery possessed for simple folk.

Very likely this early recognition of his rhetorical prowess stunted his future intellectual growth and settled about him the mold of an emotional evangelist. From this time on he tended to disparage academic scholarship as mere "Letter-learning"; henceforth he made no attempt to improve his understanding of the arts and sciences. Even in religion he attained no profound erudition. Luke Tyerman, the pious Methodist historian, admitted that although Whitefield believed himself to be a Calvinist, he did not understand the teachings of John Calvin. Copies of the sermons which he delivered in the years between 1737 and 1770 reveal no improvement in style, methodology, or content. He did not develop either the ability or the desire to organize religious societies in the manner of the Wesleys, Count Zinzendorf, and others. No

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10 For an extensive list of the sermons which Whitefield preached prior to or during the Great Awakening see the Bibliography. The best collection of his sermons after this period is: *Eighteen sermons preached by the late Rev. George Whitefield...Taken verbatim in shorthand, and faithfully transcribed by Joseph Gurney. Revised by Andrew Gifford* (London: Printed for and sold by Joseph Gurney, 1771).
definitive historian has pictured Whitefield as a man of high intellect or rational judgment. The Methodist historian, Abel Stevens, declared Whitefield to be "a man of no great intelligence, and of less learning."\(^{11}\) Nathan Bangs wrote that rather than being a constructive builder, Whitefield "was like a blazing comet. Though he burned and blazed as he went, and left a trail of gospel light behind him, it did not long continue to shoot forth its scintillations."\(^{12}\)

Throughout his ministerial career Whitefield's source of influence lay almost exclusively in the magnetism of his speaking. There was impressiveness in his manner, magic in his voice, and glowing imagery in his words. Probably during the closing months of 1736 Whitefield discovered his gift of eloquence. While the recognition of this power helped make possible the Great Awakening in the American colonies, it also hampered the intellectual maturation of the evangelist, thus limiting the eventual influence of his preaching upon religious and social evolution in America.

Another important determinant of Whitefield's future which occurred at Dummer was his decision to reject an offer of "a very profitable Curacy" in London in order to sail for Georgia as a missionary. For several months the desire to "serve the Lord" abroad had permeated his thinking. At this time he received a strongly worded appeal from John Wesley at Savannah stressing the need for more "religious Laborers" in


Wesley wrote, "Do you ask me what you shall have? Food to eat, and Raiment to put on, a House to lay your Head in; such as your Lord had not; and a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away." To Whitefield this letter was a divine call to preach the Gospel in a new environment.

Whitefield Formulates Plans to Go to Georgia. Several days after Whitefield's receipt of Wesley's letter, the Reverend Mr. Kinchin returned to Dummer, thus freeing the young clergyman to further his plans for going to Georgia. He made a quick trip to Oxford by stagecoach to attend to some business, then hastened to Gloucester on New Year's day to bid his family good-bye, and to seek an interview with Dr. Benson, the Bishop of St. Mary's de Crypt church, who had ordained him a deacon six months earlier. The Bishop was favorably impressed with the young man's plan for foreign service and wished him much success. Whitefield's family, on the other hand, was disappointed that he should give up his chances for a "suitable" pastorate in England. In addition to winding up his affairs and taking leave of his friends, he preached a morning and an evening sermon on each of the three Sundays during his stay.

The latter part of January he journeyed to Bristol to visit his relatives. One evening, shortly after his arrival, he was sitting quietly in a pew at St. John's church waiting to hear the regular "Thursday Lecture-Sermon," when the minister came to his seat and requested the youth to deliver a sermon in place of the scheduled lecture. Although he did not have his "Notes" with him, he went into

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13Whitefield, A Further Account, 15.
the pulpit and delivered from memory a sermon which he had previously used. The popular response to this speech was so positive that he was invited to preach the next evening at St. Stephen's cathedral. On Sunday he preached at two different churches. Early the next week he was summoned by the Mayor to preach before the town Corporation. During the remainder of his stay in Bristol he preached all the scheduled church lectures during the week and twice on Sunday. In a letter dated February 10, 1737, Whitefield wrote: "It would be almost sinful to leave Bristol at this critical juncture...The whole City seems to be alarmed. Churches are as full on week days, as they used to be on Sundays, and on Sundays so full, that many, very many are obliged to go away, because they cannot come in." It is important to notice that according to this letter Whitefield's preaching was especially popular with the dissenters from the Established church: "Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, &c. all come to hear the word preached." He was thus early displaying the catholic religious philosophy which later enabled him to win converts from all Protestant faiths during the Great Awakening in America.

In his *A Further account of God's dealings with the Rev. Mr. Whitefield*, he described the effectiveness of his own preaching at Bristol in this way: "The Word, thro' the Mighty Power of God, was sharper than a two edged Sword. The Doctrine of the New Birth and Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ (tho' I was not so clear in it as afterwards) made

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its way like Lightning into the Hearers Consciences. Inasmuch as the Further Account was written almost a decade later, Whitefield very likely over-emphasized the role of "Justification by Faith" in his preaching at this time. A dominant theme, which stressed the necessity for persons to experience a spiritual "New-Birth" in order to secure Salvation, ran through all of the nine sermons printed by Whitefield in 1737. Nowhere in these speeches is any obvious emphasis placed upon "Justification by Faith" as a means of securing this "New-Birth." Hence, it is probable that his exhortations to the people of Bristol centered largely around the need to be born again in Christ.

About the middle of February he departed "reluctantly" from his Bristol friends. On his way back to Oxford he stopped for a week at Gloucester, in order to attempt once more to convert some of the prisoners at the jail. After spending about ten days at the University, Whitefield went to London for an interview with General Oglethorpe and the trustees of Georgia who appointed him to be the chaplain at Frederica, a frontier settlement about 100 miles from Savannah. Oglethorpe introduced the youth to Dr. Potter, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Reverend Arthur Bedford, Chaplain to the Prince of Wales. The latter arranged for Whitefield to meet Dr. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, whose diocese included all of the American colonies. Although Whitefield barely mentions these interviews in his letters and writings bearing on this period, it must have been quite an experience for a twenty-three-year-old youth to meet the outstanding dignitaries of the Church of England and one of the most widely known military figures in

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16Whitefield, A Further Account, 19.
At Stone-House Whitefield Turns Toward Religious Excesses. Upon being informed that Oglethorpe would not sail before July, Whitefield agreed, at the invitation of the Reverend Sampson Harris, minister at Stone-House in Gloucestershire, to supply the pulpit temporarily. Since he had the use of the parsonage house, he conducted prayer services every night. The fame of these meetings spread to the neighboring villages and the number of worshippers grew until "Neither Church or House could contain the People that came." Often he would lead the congregation out into the woods where they would sing and pray in the blackness. At times he would be so overcome by his emotions during services such as these that he would hurl himself upon the ground, to quiver and to pray. During these nightly services the prayers must have been delivered extemporaneously, for he could not have read from the Prayer Book in the nocturnal depths of a forest. Several years later Whitefield claimed that he had been forced to discontinue the reading of the Liturgy in favour of extemporaneous prayers because he had been excluded from the Episcopal churches. Yet at Stone-House he had both a church and a parsonage in which to hold services conformable to the rites of the Church of England.

During his stay at Stone-House Whitefield became habitual in his defiance of established tradition. The holding of nightly prayer services, the using of extempore prayers, the leading of companies of

\[17\text{Ibid.}, 21.\]
\[18\text{Ibid.}, 23.\]
people about in the night with voices lifted in the singing of psalms, all helped to shape Whitefield's ministerial activities toward the excesses which characterized much of his work during the Great Awakening, and which, especially in New England, limited his enduring influence. At Bristol, Whitefield Solicits Charitable Contributions for the First Time. During the latter part of May the Reverend Mr. Harris returned to Stone-House and relieved Whitefield of his duties. Since many citizens of Bristol had invited him to make another visit to that city, Whitefield set out by horse the morning of the twenty-third. According to his own testimony: "Multitudes came on Foot, and many in Coaches a Mile without the City to meet me, and almost all saluted and blessed me as I went along the Street." He had easy access to the pulpits, and soon was preaching five sermons a week. His congregations were very responsive. According to Whitefield, "It was wonderful to see how the People hung upon the Rails of the Organ-Left, clim'd upon the Leads of the Church, and made the Church itself so hot with their Breath, that the Steam would fall from the Pillars like Drops of Rain. Sometimes almost as many would go away for want, as came in, and it was

19 During this period Whitefield spent a limited amount of time in "meditation" and in reading religious texts such as The Poor Country Curate, and Husbandry Spiritualized. See a letter by Whitefield dated April 26, 1737, in his Works, Vol. I, 25.

20 Whitefield's farewell sermon which he preached to the people of Stone-House was discovered in manuscript form a hundred years later, and was published in 1842. Its text was "Whom he justified, them He also glorified." See Tyreran, The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, B.A., Of Pembroke College, Oxford, I, 77, footnote.

21 Whitefield, A Further Account, 25.
with great Difficulty I got into the Desk to read Prayers, or Preach."  

Of far more importance than the size of his audiences or the number of sermons he preached at Bristol was the fact that here Whitefield endeavored for the first time to solicit contributions for charitable purposes. During the month of his visit he collected money two or three times a week for the prisoners at New-Gate prison and for the poor of Georgia. In one quick excursion to nearby Bath he preached three charity-sermons and collected one hundred sixty pounds for the "destitute People in Georgia."

Despite his having extracted several hundred pounds from the inhabitants of Bristol by his sermons, the people were "reluctant" to have him leave. According to Whitefield, "when I came to tell them It might be, that they would see my face no more, high and low, young and old, burst into such a Flood of Tears as I had never seen before; Drops fell from their Eyes like Rain, or rather gushed out like Water out of the Stony Rock."  

Whitefield Publishes His First Sermon. After leaving Bristol on June 21, Whitefield went directly to Gloucester, where he preached to crowded churches for several days, and then continued on to Oxford. The next two months were rather uneventful, except for the publication on August 5 of Whitefield's first printed work: The Nature and Necessity

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22 Ibid., 26.

23 Whitefield did take up charity collections prior to this time, but it was at Bristol that they began to assume an important role in his preaching.

24 Whitefield, A Further Account, 26, 27.
of our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in order to Salvation.\footnote{Pre-publication notice had appeared in the London Weekly Miscellany, July 22, 1737. The full title of this sermon is, The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in order to Salvation—a Sermon preached in the Church of St. Mary's Redcliffe, in Bristol, by George Whitefield, A.B., of Pembroke College, Oxford (London: Printed by C. Hivington for Harris, 1737). Hereafter referred to as The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in order to Salvation.} Several years later Whitefield wrote that the preaching of this sermon had begun "the awakening at London, Bristol, Gloucester, and Gloucestershire."\footnote{Whitefield, A Further Account, 30.}

Since Whitefield preached this sermon upon a number of occasions, and since it is representative of his rhetorical efforts of that period, it might be well to examine the speech briefly. His specific audience purpose was to convince his hearers that if any man should believe completely in Christ he should be a "new creature." In the introduction Whitefield sought the attention of the audience by quoting and applying familiar Biblical verses. He then prepared his hearers for the body of his talk by stating clearly the text of his talk, and by listing the four main heads of his speech: (1) to describe what was meant by being in Christ; (2) to describe what was meant by being a new creature; (3) to prove why a person had to be a new creature before he could be in Christ; (4) to draw some inferences from the preceding three parts. The body of the oration consisted of an amplification of each of these main heads. The conclusion consisted of an attempt to draw together the threads of his previous discussion into an emotional exhortation to his hearers to become "new Creatures in Christ."
This sermon went through three editions during 1737. According to Whitefield it "sold well to Persons of all Denominations, and was dispensed very much in many Parts both at Home and Abroad." 27 The number of copies which were printed is not known, but the fact that a special price of two guineas per hundred was charged those who wished to give copies away is indicative that the total number was considerable. 28

Several weeks after the printing of his sermons, Whitefield returned to London to await the expected sailing of Oglethorpe. He found lodgings at the home of the Moravian printer James Sutton, who later printed many of his journals and sermons. For many nights during the next three months, Whitefield, in the company of one or more friends, would sing psalms until considerably after midnight. One of his associates at these meetings was the Reverend Benjamin Ingham, who had recently

27 Ibid.

28 Eight other sermons by Whitefield were published in 1737:
(1) The Nature and Necessity of Society in general and of Religious Society in particular. Preached in the Parish Church of St. Nicholas in Bristol, and before the Religious Societies, at one of their General Quarterly Meetings in Bow Church, London, in the year 1737; (2) The Almost Christian: A Sermon preached at the Parish Church of St. John Wapping; (3) The Benefits of an Early Piety: A Sermon preached at Bow Church, London. Before the Religious Societies, at one of their Quarterly Meetings, on Wednesday, September 28, 1737; (4) The Great Duty of Family Religion: A Sermon preached at the Parish Church of St. Vedast, Foster Lane; (5) The Nature and Necessity of Self-Denial: A Sermon preached at the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Holborn, on Sunday, October 9, 1737; (6) Of Justification by Christ: A Sermon preached at the Parish Church of St. Antholin; (7) The Heinous Sin of Profane Cursing and Swearing: A Sermon preached at the Parish Church of St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey; (8) Intercession every Christian's Duty: A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of Great St. Helen, on Tuesday, December 27, 1737. These sermons are disappointing to the reader who expects either beautiful rhetoric or soaring flights of eloquence. For the most part they are dull reading. It appears either that Whitefield did not present them in the form in which they were written, or that his delivery was extremely magnetic.
returned from three years as a missionary in Georgia. He brought news of John Wesley, and acquainted the young clergyman with the problem he should meet in America.29

Whitefield Stir the London Populace. Whitefield had hardly arrived in London before he was invited to preach in various leading churches. Among these were Cripplegate, St. Ann's, Forester Lane, and Wapping Chapel. The last Sunday in August he preached four times to "very large, and very affected Auditories." The week nights he utilized in visiting the young people's religious societies of the different churches and attempting to indoctrinate them into the "Mysteries of the New-Birth."8

About the middle of September, Whitefield's name was mentioned for the first time in the London papers. The article reported that "a young gentleman going volunteer to Georgia* had collected eight pounds for charity in comparison to the customary collection of ten shillings.30 From this time on Whitefield became a newspaper figure. The size of his audiences, the number of pounds which he collected, and the itinerary of his preaching were published occasionally by the press. How much influence this publicity exerted upon Whitefield's personality or his oratory is not known, but very probably it augmented considerably the numbers who came to hear his sermons.

Church wardens and managers of charity schools were not slow to recognize Whitefield's ability to extract money from the pockets of Londoners. As a result, Whitefield was scheduled for as many as a dozen

29Whitefield, A Further Account, 29.

30Ibid., 33.
charity-sermons in advance and was granted free use of the churches during the week days. So great were the crowds gathered to hear him that constables were placed at the doors in order "to keep the People in order."31 To Whitefield "The Sight of the Congregations was very awful.—One might, as it were, walk upon the People's Heads, and Thousands went away from the largest Churches for want of Room. They were all Attention when the Word was delivered, and heard like People hearing for Eternity."32 On October 25, he wrote in a private letter, "All London is alarmed....thousands, I hope, are quickened, strengthened, and confirmed by the word preached."33 By November he was preaching nine sermons a week. Due to the fact that many persons attended several of all of these speeches, there could be little, if any, duplication. Whitefield later maintained that he did not begin to preach extemporaneously until January of 1739.34 This would indicate that each of these sermons which Whitefield delivered was written out and either read from manuscript, memorized, or partially memorized. It is difficult to believe that such a herculean task of composition could have been accomplished in the limited time available to the young evangelist for writing. According to his account of the period he was almost constantly engaged in preaching or "spiritual conversation." He had been preaching an insufficient time to build up any considerable back-log of sermons.

32 Whitefield, A Further Account, 36.
33 A letter to Mr. H. found in his Works, Vol. I, 30.
34 Whitefield, A Continuation Of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 16.
Therefore, circumstantial evidence would indicate that Whitefield was engaging either in extempore address or in a form closely allied to it.

Regardless of the method used in delivery, his speaking was tremendously effective. During the month of November his popularity increased still more. In his own words, "On Sunday Mornings, long before Day, you might see Streets filled with People going to Church, with their Lanterns in their Hands, and hear them conversing about the Things of God...In a short Time I could no longer walk on Foot as usual; but was constrained to go in a Coach from Place to Place to avoid the Hesperas of the Multitude.—They grew quite extravagant in their Applauses." Several of Whitefield's followers composed poems in his honor. One of these, which was printed in the November issue of the Gentleman's Magazine, was entitled: "To The Rev. Mr. Whitefield, On His Design For Georgia." On December 9, an anonymous pamphlet, The

35Whitefield, A Further Account, 36.

How great, how just thy Zeal, advent'rous Youth! To spread, in heathen Climes, the light of Truth! Go, loved of Heaven! with every grace refined, Inform, enrapture each dark Indian's Mind; Grateful, as when to Realms long hid from Day, The cheerful Dawn foreshadows the solar Ray.

How great thy Charity! whose large embrace Intends th' eternal weal of all thy Race; Prompts thee, the rage of Winds and Seas to scorn, To effect the Work for which thy Soul was born. What Multitudes, whom Pagan Dreams deceive, Shall, when they hear thy pow'rful Voice, believe!

Be gentle, Winds! and breathe an easy Breeze! Be clear, ye Skies! and smooth, ye flowing Seas! From Heaven, ye guardian Angels! swift descend,
Oxford Methodists, was published. Its preface consisted of a laudatory address to young Whitefield, which read in part: "It must afford no small pleasure to all the serious Christians to find, by your Success in the two first Cities of the Kingdom, that, degenerate as the Age is in which we live, a Spirit of Piety and Attention may nevertheless be excited in the Minds of the generality; and that without any other Novelty than by preaching the plain and obvious Doctrines of Christianity in so serious and affecting a manner as shall show the Preacher to be in Earnest, and himself affected by the Doctrines he would instil in others."

But along with popularity there came an increasing antagonism on the part of many of the more conservative ministers of the Church of England. Complaints were made that the regular parishioners were crowded out of the churches by the followers of Whitefield, that the pews and articles of church furniture were damaged by the mobs, that

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Delighted his blest Mission to attend;
Which shall from Satan's Power whole Nations free,
While half the World to Jesus bow the Knee.

Long as Savannah, peaceful Stream! shall glide,
Your Worth renowned shall be extended wide;
Children as yet unborn shall bless your Lore,
Who thus, to save them, left your native Shore.
Th' Apostles thus, with ardent Zeal inspired,
To gain all Nations for their Lord desired.

They measured Seas, a Life laborious knew,
And numerous Converts, to their Master drew;
Whose Alleluias, on th' ethereal Plains,
Rise scarce beneath the bright seraphic Strains.

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37 The Oxford Methodists: being an Account of some Young Gentlemen in that City, in derision so called; setting forth their Rise and Designs (London: 1737), 2nd ed., Preface.
Whitefield was a "spiritual Pick-pocket," who made use of a "kind of Charm" to get the people's money. The emotional "excesses" of Whitefield's exhortations of the London populace caused many of the more cultured classes to stigmatize him as an "enthusiast." According to Robert Tucker, the word "enthusiasm" meant "not zeal for a cause, but possession by a spirit resembling insanity." Most of the clergymen of the Established Church were repelled by the extravagances of the Moravians, French Prophets, Quakers, and Baptists, and judged Whitefield and the Wesleys in a similar light. The religious excesses of Puritanism had been partially responsible for the turmoils of the preceding century, and Whitefield's emphasis upon an emotional, personalized religion smacked too much of puritanism to be easily tolerated by the Episcopal clergy. This was the era of Walpole's "let sleeping dogs lie" philosophy. Nonconformity in religious, social, or political matters was regarded as dangerous by the "right thinking people." On October 28, the Weekly Miscellany characterized the preaching of Whitefield and the ministers who emulated him as "the utmost extravagance of Passion, the wildest flights of the Imagination; either glaring Nonsense, or darkness

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38 Beginning with the issue of October 28, 1737, the London Weekly Miscellany began a series of vitriolic attacks upon Whitefield and the other Methodists. The Weekly Miscellany was the outstanding religious periodical in England at this time. Its editor, Dr. Hooker, became one of Whitefield's most powerful foes.


40 For a discussion of this point of view see Theophilus Evans, The History of Enthusiasm from the Reformation to the Present Time (London: 1757).
visible.\textsuperscript{41} Whitefield's oral presentation was described as giving "a
loose to his passions, one while rising with the wildest ecstasy of
Joy, again sinking into the lowest dejection of Sorrow, and venting
sighs of the most immoderate Grief; now railing with all the bitterness
of Rage, then melting into the most soft and tender strains of affection.\textsuperscript{42} This emotional style of preaching later won for Whitefield a
tremendous response in America during the Great Awakening, but his
tendency to go to emotional extremes in his sermons, as we shall see,
lead ultimately to a reaction against him in the Colonies.

One of the reasons for the hostility of many churchmen was his
free association with Dissenters. For an Episcopal minister to mingle
publicly with the legally protected but socially ostracised dissenters,
as Whitefield did, evidenced a disregard for propriety. The molding
influence which was exerted upon Whitefield by these contacts with
Baptists, Quakers, Moravians, Presbyterians, and other religious strains,
was of great importance to the effectiveness of his preaching during the
Great Awakening in America. He was crystallizing in London during these
fall months of 1737 a catholic philosophy of a universal religion, the
sole requirement of which was a personal realization within an individual's
'soul' of the "power of the Lord." Differences in creed were to form
no barrier between Whitefield and his colonial audiences, for he was
willing to recognize as a "Brother in Christ" all those who had experi-
enced a "personal regeneration in Jesus Christ."

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid.
Whitefield's Departure from London. Just before Christmas of that year Whitefield was notified that a small convoy of three ships was about to sail for Georgia. On the Sunday before Christmas he preached a farewell sermon at six in the morning. In his words, "the whole church was drowned in tears; they wept and cried aloud, as a mother weepeth for her first born." Whitefield described the uproar following his final sermon at St. Helen's as "amazing. I was near half an Hour going to the Door. All Ranks gave vent to their Passions. Thousands and Thousands of Prayers were put up for me. They would run and stop me in the Allies [sic], hugg me in their Arms, and follow me with wishful Looks."

On December 28, Whitefield left London by coach. During the preceding four months he had delivered more than one hundred sermons and had collected a thousand pounds for the charity schools of England and approximately three hundred pounds for the poor of Georgia. He had stirred the great metropolis of London; now, his role of an international evangelist was about to begin.

Summary. The period from his ordination until his departure from London for America served in many ways to prepare Whitefield for the part he was to play in the Great Awakening. During this time he discovered his ability to sway the minds of the uncritical with emotional sermons; he determined to go to Georgia as a missionary; he began to

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[^44]: Whitefield, A Further Account, 42, 43.
master the technique of soliciting funds for charity; he published and widely circulated nine sermons; he preached to great throngs in the largest churches of London, Bristol, and Gloucester, and became one of the best known ministers in England; he crystallized a catholic philosophy of religion; he became accustomed to defying established tradition. Perhaps most important of all, he became an itinerant evangelist.
CHAPTER III

WHITEFIELD'S VISIT TO GEORGIA

Journey from London to Gibraltar. About ten o'clock the night of December 28, 1737, Whitefield arrived in the seaport town of Deptford, after a short ride from London. He joined there a considerable body of admirers who had preceded him, and in their company spent most of the night in prayers. The next day he expected to sail for Gibraltar, but adverse winds kept in the harbor the three small boats which were to carry Whitefield and several hundred soldiers to Oglethorpe's colony of Georgia. That evening Whitefield was invited by the Episcopal minister in Deptford to preach a sermon in place of the church's regular Thursday lecture. In his Journal Whitefield admitted that at first he was "fearful" since he had "no Notes." He went into the pulpit "depending on the Promise, Lo I am with you always even unto the End of the World; and was enabled to preach to a large Congregation without the least Hesitation." This is the first time in any of Whitefield's extant writings that the preaching of a sermon without either notes or manuscript is mentioned. This particular speech was a memorized oration which he had delivered previously in London.


2Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia (London: Printed for James Button, 1739), 16. Hereafter referred to as From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia.
The morning of December 31, Whitefield went on board his becalmed vessel, the Whitaker, and held a prayer service on the open deck. Many of the soldiers and sailors gathered about him and behaved "with Decency and Reverence." After reading from the Prayer Book he "enlarged a little" on the words of St. Paul, "I am determined to know nothing among you save JESUS CHRIST and his crucified." That afternoon he went in a small skiff to Gravesend in order to meet a delegation of his followers who had come down from London. Early New Year's morning he led a large group of worshipers to a hill near the city for a prayer service. In the morning and in the afternoon he preached a formal sermon from manuscript at the Gravesend Episcopal church. In the evening he delivered without the use of notes a memorized sermon which he had used in London.

Whitefield remained in Gravesend until January 6, when the Whitaker, in company with her two sister ships, sailed slowly down the coast to the Downs. During this brief trip Whitefield began the pattern of his ministerial activities which he was to continue during the entire voyage. He read public prayers twice daily in the "great Cabin"; he lectured each day upon the Bible to the women on board; he engaged in religious conversation the passengers and the members of the crew in the fore-castle, on deck, and in the steerage; he sat between decks upon the floor with his back resting against the heaving sides of the ship and read religious books, such as Arndt's True Christianity; he led the more pious of the passengers out on the open deck in the evenings to sing hymns and to

3Ibid., 4.

Whitefield, From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 16.
pray; he delivered at least two sermons each day. According to his Journal, some of these sermons were memorized renditions of orations which he had delivered previously in England; most, however, were extempore speeches, which were not based upon a written text. Several years later Whitefield stated that he did not begin to deliver extemporaneous sermons until January of 1739. Probably the conflict between these two statements is due to a shift in Whitefield's interpretation of the word "sermon." In his Journal in 1738 he considered extended "exhortations" to be sermons; in his later reference to extempore preaching he limited the word "sermon" to memorized speeches delivered at more important occasions. Available evidence indicates that the "exhortations" or extempore "sermons" which he delivered on board the Whitaker were about thirty minutes long, as contrasted to approximately the hour which was necessary to present any of his printed sermons. Sometimes these "exhortations" possessed a Biblical reference or some doctrine of the Episcopal Church; occasionally they were drawn from some unusual happening in the environment. One of the most powerful appeals which Whitefield's preaching possessed for the colonial audiences during the Great Awakening was its apparently spontaneous utterance. Here, on the Whitaker, he was receiving valuable training in extempore speaking.

On January 11, the small convoy dropped anchor in the Downs, where

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5Whitefield, A Voyage From London to Savannah, 7.

6Whitefield, From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 16.
it remained for three weeks awaiting appropriate winds. During this period Whitefield preached several times a day to the soldiers on the Whitaker upon such subjects as "I believe in the Holy Ghost," or the "Need for an Early Piety." He also conversed with individuals on board about "Righteousness, Temperance, and a Judgment to come." Several times he visited the sick and read prayers on the two other vessels in the convoy, the Lightfoot, and the Amy.

Most of Whitefield's time, however, was spent ashore, at Deal and Upper Deal. On Sundays he preached to great congregations in the Episcopal churches. On several occasions the crowds filled the church buildings and overflowed into the church-yards. Many persons would stand upon the "leads" of the church and look in through the top windows for a glimpse of the youthful evangelist. On week days he held services three times a day at his lodging place. So many came to hear him that a special support had to be placed under the floor. Because of limited space Whitefield divided his evening audience into as many as four different companies and preached to each in turn. Since each "sermon" lasted approximately one hour, this meant that he preached four hours straight with scarcely an interruption. It is little wonder that the young minister wrote in his Journal, "all Deal seems to be in a holy flame."

7It is to be recalled that his sermon on Early Piety was printed in 1737.
8Whitefield, A Voyage From London to Savannah, 18.
9Ibid., 22.
10Whitefield, Works, I, 36.
Early in the morning of February 2, a fair breeze filled the sails of the Whitaker and pushed her out to sea. An unusual turn of fate brought into the Downs that morning a vessel bearing the Reverend John Wesley, who was returning from his mission to Georgia. Upon hearing of Whitefield’s recent departure Wesley dispatched a letter by special carrier to the young evangelist urging him to return to London. In his answer Whitefield politely but firmly maintained that he would obey "God’s directive" to proceed to Georgia. Very likely Wesley’s message was influenced by his own tribulations in America. According to the Methodist historian Abel Stevens, Wesley’s "ascetic habits and severe formalism" had made him very unpopular with the colonists. His Journal dealing with his ministry at Savannah is replete with narrations of petty bickerings and misunderstandings. Wesley’s austere, dogmatic personality was almost the antithesis of the warm, emotional nature of Whitefield. The "high-church," formalized religion which Wesley had attempted to force upon the Georgians was vastly different from the pliable and tolerant theology of Whitefield. For these and other reasons Whitefield was to succeed in his mission to Georgia, while Wesley had largely failed.

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12 A letter to John Wesley, dated December 24, 1740, in Whitefield’s Works, IV, 56.

13 Abel Stevens, in op. cit., 80.


15 For a brief account of Wesley’s experiences in Georgia, see William B. Stevens, A History of Georgia, From Its First Discovery By Europeans To The Adoption of The Present Constitution In MDCXXXVIII (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1847), Book II, Chapter X. For a more extended account see Tyerman, The Life and Times of The Rev. John Wesley, M.A. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1870), I.
Great Awakening.

The reason for the restoration of the government and constitution during this period was an effort to reassert the rights and freedoms that had been lost. In Georgia, a chapter was written by the American Revolution's leaders to emphasize the importance of a strong government and a strong military.

For a young minister, this was an opportunity to grow and develop his talents. These were tumultuous times, and he was given the chance to prove his worth.

Local authorities leaned on the growing conflict, and other important governmental structures also leaned on the Georgia government. Each area had their own set of laws and regulations, and the young minister found himself in a position of influence.

The minister remained at the British fortresses on the frontier, where the government was most needed. By December, the young minister was in charge of the area, and the frontier was relatively peaceful.

The government, however, was not as peaceful. Other regions were dealing with unrest and rebellion, which the minister had to address.

The minister's speeches were listened to, and more and more of the soldiers gathered on the deck to hear what he had to say.
In addition to delivering numerous "exhortations," Whitefield preached seventeen sermons while at Gibraltar. Most of these sermons were speeches which he had used before in England. The preaching of the same oration to different audiences upon different occasions afforded him an opportunity to improve upon the various aspects of delivery, as well as to gain experience in adapting "set speeches" to different speaking situations. During the Great Awakening one of the characteristics which lifted Whitefield's preaching above that of other ministers was his ability to repeat a given sermon to many different audiences with great spontaneity, smoothness, and power. The general context of each of these sermons would remain the same, yet Whitefield would modify the speech sufficiently to meet the particular circumstances of the situation in which he was speaking. 18 In his orations at Gibraltar, just as previously during his itineracy in England, Whitefield was increasing the effectiveness of his oratory.

Whitefield was likewise gaining skill in developing speeches out of incidents in the environment. For example, on March 2, he visited a man in prison who had very recently killed a fellow soldier in a drunken row. The next evening Whitefield elaborated on the evils of drinking to an audience of over one thousand, weaving into the fabric of his talk the example of the "debauched killer" and the need for the men of Gibraltar to refrain from their excesses in drink. 19

At Gibraltar Whitefield experienced his first close contact with the Catholic religion. He was so agitated by what he termed the

18 For a fuller development of this aspect of Whitefield's preaching see Part III.

19 Whitefield, A Voyage From London to Savannah, 39.
"Catholic Pagentry" that he wrote in his Journal, "Oh...who hath bewitched these People, that they should thus depart from the Simplicity of CHRIST, and go Whoring after their own Inventions? Surely, was the great St. Paul to rise up from the Dead, and come and view the Roman Church, his Spirits would be stirred up within him...to see them thus wholly given to Idolatry." This concept of Catholicism grew stronger during the intervening years before the Great Awakening when it constituted one of the powerful bonds between Whitefield and his Protestant audiences. The colonists who came to hear him were strongly anti-Catholic in their thinking, and Whitefield was not loath to capitalize upon this mental stereotype by references expressing his abhorrence of the Catholic Church.

Journey from Gibraltar to Savannah. On March 7, the small convoy lifted anchor and turned westward into the Atlantic. Whitefield's ministerial efforts during the month-long crossing to Georgia were very similar to those previously described. One change in procedure which he introduced was to visit the other transports on clear days. This gave him an additional opportunity to present one oration to several different audiences. One of these sermons, "The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness," was delivered March 18, on the Whitaker, and March 19, on the Lightfoot; another sermon, "The Penitent Thief," was preached March 31, on the Whitaker, and April 3, on the Lightfoot. Both of these speeches were based upon a written text and were delivered either from memory or were read from manuscript. The former was an outgrowth of his sermon

20 Ibid., 32.
on drunkenness which he had preached at Gibraltar; the latter was a speech which he had previously presented several times in England.

Before long there appeared visible evidences of the effectiveness of Whitefield's preaching on board the Whitaker. The swearing and rough talking that had been so prevalent at the start of the voyage gradually decreased until an oath became "a strange thing." About two weeks away from Gibraltar Captain Whiting ordered that the drums be beaten every morning at six o'clock to call the soldiers to prayer service.

Another convincing testimonial of the effectiveness of Whitefield's evangelism was the respectful attitude with which the soldiers permitted him to take some "bad Books" from their possession and to throw them overboard. Whitefield recorded in his Journal that they made no protest when he seized their books, but accepted the religious tracts which he offered them in silence.

During this part of the voyage Whitefield revealed in his Journal for the first time an arbitrary and censorious aspect of his personality. It was this uncharitable element in his preaching throughout the Great Awakening, especially in New England, that eventually reacted disastrously against him. He possessed by nature a warm and ardent spirit, which sometimes led him into unguarded expressions or actions. He was in general exceedingly tolerant of most religious beliefs, but was adamant in his belief that everyone should feel intensely a personal

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23 Ibid., 47.
"regeneration in Christ." His outspoken denunciation of colonial ministers during the Awakening, as being "unconverted men," was a manifestation of the spirit of censoriousness which he exhibited upon several occasions during the voyage to Georgia. One Sunday during a marriage ceremony on board the Amy the nervous bridegroom laughed several times. Whitefield immediately closed his Prayer Book and refused to proceed with the wedding until the man evidenced contrite feelings by crying. 24 During a routine visit between decks one night Whitefield requested a small boy to say his prayers. When the child refused, Whitefield seized him by the feet and forced him upon his knees, then demanded that he repeat the Lord's Prayer. When the boy still refused, the minister struck him several blows until he was willing to comply with the "request." Whitefield wrote in his Journal concerning this affair, "I mention this as a Proof of the Necessity of early Correction. Children are sensible of it sooner than Parent's imagine. And if they would but have Resolution to break their Wills thoroughly when young, the Work of Conversion would be much easier, and they would not be so troubled with perverse Children when they are old." 25 When another small boy misbehaved during a worship service, Whitefield directed that he be tied with ropes until he could repeat from memory the 51st Psalm. 26

In Georgia. Very little is known concerning Whitefield's activities during the seven weeks, May 7, to August 28, that he remained in

24 Ibid., 45.
25 Ibid., 49.
26 Ibid., 52.
Georgia. Only twelve pages in his Journal are devoted to this visit; although Whitefield was customarily a prolific letter writer, only one letter has been preserved from this period. None of the dozen colonial newspapers examined for this time contained any references to the young evangelist's labors in Georgia. This is quite surprising since many newspapers in the Middle Colonies and in New England had printed a considerable number of feature articles concerning Whitefield prior to his landing in Georgia. As soon as he returned to England late in 1738, the colonial newspapers once more contained accounts of his activities. This would seem to bear out the often-stated thesis that during this period of Colonial history there were more channels of communication between England and her American colonies than among the colonies themselves.

At five o'clock on his first morning ashore at Savannah, Whitefield held a prayer service which was attended by about seventeen adults and twenty-five children. In the afternoon he called upon the magistrates.

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27Whitefield, A Continuation Of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From his Arrival at Savannah, To his Return to London (London: Printed for James Hutton, 1739). Hereafter referred to as, From his Arrival at Savannah, To his Return to London.

28A letter to Mr. H. (James Hutton?), dated June 10, 1738, at Savannah, found in Whitefield's Works, I, 44. No other letters from this period were discovered in the manuscript files of the American Antiquarian Society, Boston Athenæum, Boston Public Library, Harvard University Library, New York Public Library, or the Library of Congress. Since these libraries possess the richest collection of Américana of the Colonial period, it is reasonable to assume that no additional letters have been preserved in America.

29The only newspaper printed at this time in the colonies south of Virginia was the South Carolina Gazette, of Charleston.
who welcomed him to Savannah and, since Wesley's departure had left the community without a minister, invited him to remain in Savannah indefinitely. Very likely one of the reasons why the magistrates were so pleasantly disposed toward the young evangelist was because he had brought with him from England approximately three hundred pounds for the poor of Georgia, several hundred books, and innumerable items of clothing, drugs, hardware, and household utensils.

A few days after his arrival at Savannah Whitefield was seized by a fever which kept him in bed for over a week. By the sixteenth he was again attending to his ministerial duties. During the week days he visited from house to house, read public prayers twice a day, "expounded" twice a day, and read extracts from religious tracts three times a week to his congregation. On Sundays he lectured on the catechism or on

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30 It is to be remembered that Whitefield had been appointed chaplain to Frederica, a small community nearly one hundred miles south of Savannah.

31 Two of the three Episcopal ministers who had gone to Georgia with John Wesley in 1735 had already returned to England. Charles Wesley had left America late in 1736. (Although Charles Wesley was in England during the entire year of 1737 and recorded several meetings with Whitefield in his Journal, Whitefield did not mention any association with Charles in his account of that period—A Further Account.) The Reverend Mr. Ingham returned to England in the fall of 1737 and visited with Whitefield in London. The third fellow-laborer of John Wesley had been Charles Delamotte, who returned to England on the Whitaker, June 2, 1738. This left Whitefield as virtually the sole representative in Georgia of the Episcopal church. See William B. Stevens, loc. cit., 319-348.

32 The books included: Flavel's Husbandry; Wesley's tract on forms of prayer; Law's Call and Perfection; Arndt's True Christianity; 100 copies of Thomas Broughton's sermon, The Christian Soldier; 150 prayer books; 25 copies of Watt's book of songs; 50 spelling books; 200 copies of The Country Parson's Advice. See Whitefield, Account of Money received and expended, for the Poor of Georgia (London: Printed for James Hutton, 1739).
various "lessons" of the Episcopal church early in the morning and late in the evening, read public prayers twice, and preached two sermons. 33

Before June 10, he had definitely determined upon building an orphanage to care for the many fatherless children in Savannah. 34 This was a most important decision, for it was upon the ostensible purpose of collecting contributions for the establishment and support of this orphanage that he travelled through the American colonies during the Great Awakening. One of the most concrete appeals in Whitefield's preaching at that time was his plea for money to care for the orphans. 35

On June 11, he opened a school for girls in Savannah, which he planned to support by securing charity donations. He persuaded a friend to take over the instruction of the school. 36 While this venture is indicative of his propensities for organizing charitable institutions, it apparently did not assume a vital part of his work in Georgia, for it is not mentioned again in his Journal.

Shortly before the first of August he left Savannah for a visit to Frederica, the community to which he had been appointed chaplain by the trustees of Georgia. Since there was no church building there, he preached to the inhabitants under the branches of a large tree. During

33 Letter to Mr. H. (James Sutton?), June 10, 1738, in Whitefield's Works, I, 144.
34 Ibid.
35 For thirty-four years, 1736-1770, Whitefield was an itinerant minister. After 1739 his avowed purpose for constantly preaching from place to place was to obtain money for the support of his orphanage. During the 1740's he built two large churches in London. Very likely if he had resided permanently in London and had preached regularly in the two pulpits he could have received sufficient financial support for the orphan-house.
36 Whitefield, Journal From his Arrival at Savannah, To his Return to London, 5.
his visit to Frederica he made a short excursion to Darien, a small hamlet about twenty miles from Frederica, in order to visit the Reverend Mr. Macloud, a Calvinist minister of the Scottish church.37

After returning to Savannah on August 16, Whitefield spent the following two weeks in preparation for a visit to England to receive ordination as a priest and to seek contributions for his orphanage.38 On the afternoon of the twenty-seventh, he preached a farewell sermon to his parishioners, who, according to Whitefield's Journal, expressed their "great Grief...by shedding many Tears." The next day was spent in taking leave of his friends, who "expressed their affection now more than ever."39 About four in the afternoon he went aboard the small boat which was to take him to Charlestown, where he was to embark for England. Whitefield expressed his feelings about leaving Savannah in this way:

"I think I never parted from a Place with more Regret; for America in my opinion is an excellent School to learn CHRIST in...the longer I continued there, the larger the Congregations grew. And I scarce know a Night, though we had Divine Service twice a Day, when the Church-House had not been near full."40

One of the important developments at Georgia which helped shape Whitefield toward the role he was to play in the Great Awakening was

37Ibid., 8.


39Whitefield, Journal From his Arrival at Savannah, To his Return to London, 12.

40Ibid.
his growing emphasis upon a warm and gentle manner in his preaching. Hereafter his Journal and letters frequently referred to a gentleness of spirit which he felt during his sermons. This was one of the powerful elements of his preaching during the Awakening. He seemed to possess an ability to charm and fascinate his hearers into an acceptance of his doctrine. Even his enemies recognized the magnetism of his frequently gentle manner. One of the chief differences between his preaching and that of other evangelists of the Great Awakening, such as Gilbert Tennant and John Davenport, was his ability to persuade his auditors by the sweetness of his personality, while the others possessed only the ability to frighten people into "Salvation." In his Journal for July 25, Whitefield mentioned for the first time his deliberate usage of this factor of persuasion: "I have endeavoured to let my Gentleness be known amongst the people of Savannah, "because they consist of different Nations and Opinions." And I have strove to draw them by Gords of Love, because the Obedience resulting from that Principle I take to be most genuine and lasting." All available evidence indicates that this conciliatory attitude on the part of Whitefield brought a very positive response from the people of Georgia.

Journey to England. The first leg of Whitefield's journey to England consisted of a short trip by boat to Charlestown, South Carolina.

\[41\] Ibid., 7.

\[42\] Colonel William Stephens, the Secretary of the Trustees of Georgia, recorded in his Journal numerous highly complimentary observations of Whitefield. See, A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia Beginning October 20, 1777, reprinted in The Colonial Record, of the State of Georgia (Atlanta, Georgia: The Franklin Co., 1906), 142, 144, 148, 150, 154, 157, 165, 191. Hereafter referred to as: Journal.
A more comprehensive discussion of Whittier’s relation to the service of the American colonies (New York, Congress, and Co., 1902). In., p. 1

In this period of the American Church in America during the colonial period, many, after another little real ecclesiastical power for a detailed treatment of churches, the American colonists were called representatives in America.
only a few passengers. As a result Whitefield preached very infrequently. The lack of ministerial duties left him considerable time for writing letters and composing sermons. Among the numerous letters which have been preserved from this voyage is an interesting exhortation to his charges at Savannah. It is not known what sermons Whitefield prepared during the voyage, nor his specific method of composition.

Most of his Journal concerned the hardships of the trip. Influenced by contrary winds, the ship was unexpectedly slow in crossing the Atlantic. Several weeks before she arrived at Ireland, water was limited to a pint a day for each person; food was reduced to meager helpings of salt beef and water-dumplings, which made Whitefield ill. Whitefield interpreted these physical sufferings to be God's way of testing his faith; by this means God was preparing him for great things to come. He learned more definitely during this voyage to satisfy his "physical Wants" by turning to Christ for "spiritual Guidance." In his words, "I have learnt in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content. I knew both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all Things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer Need. I can do all thro' CHRIST which strengtheneth me."

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46 One of the sermons which he delivered on the Mary was his speech on the Sin of Drunkenness. This made the fourth time that he had presented this particular sermon.

47 A letter addressed "To the Inhabitants of Savannah" written on board the Mary, October 2, 1738, in Whitefield's Works, Vol. III, 428, 429, 430.

48 Whitefield, From his Arrival at Savannah, To his Return to London, 20.
When the insufficiency of food and water made him weak and "hallowed meid" he wrote, "My outward Man sensibly decayeth, but the Spiritual Man I trust, is renewed Day by Day...Blessed be God for these Things, I rejoice in them daily. They are no more than I expected, and I know they are Preparatives for future Mercies."49 This ability to endure physical hardship without losing emotional composure was an important factor in his training for the Great Awakening. There on the Mary he was learning how to imure himself to suffering by filling his mind with devotion to a religious ideal. He was learning to accept discomfort as a manifestation of God's desire to try his faith before using him for greater works. Such a background of physical "conditioning" was necessary for his success as an itinerant evangelist during the Awakening. Then he was to ride long, aching miles on horseback through uncharted forests, to preach three, four, or even ten hours a day, to ford chilled winter streams, to lie close to a camp fire huddled in wet blankets, to endure sickness and hunger without complaint. The grueling life of an itinerant minister was not suited for weaklings. Whitefield's physical discomfort aboard the Mary was good training for the future.

Unfortunately for Whitefield's permanent influence during the Great Awakening, he became more extreme during the voyage in his belief that he was a special agent of God's will. Practically all of his letters and Journals, written previously, were heavily tinctured with the spirit of "enthusiasm," but this tendency became more pronounced while on the Mary. In his Journal, written on board, he interpreted a divine direction

\[49\text{Ibid., 25.}\]
in the most minute details of his existence; Satan became increasingly a personal enemy which attempted to impede his progress in spreading the Word of God. The unguarded expression of these views in his journals and sermons which were later published gave his enemies an opening they were quick to utilize. One of the factors which limited Whitefield's effectiveness during the Awakening was the criticism engendered by the "enthusiasm" evidenced in his writings and the frequent allusions in his preaching to the "promptings of the holy Spirit" which he thought he experienced in his "Soul." During the voyage from Charles-town to Ireland Whitefield's concept of himself as a wandering apostle was becoming more fixed in his thinking.

On November 14, the Mary landed for emergency supplies at the southwestern coast of Ireland near the Shannon River. Whitefield went ashore, borrowed horses for himself and two companions, and set out across Ireland for Dublin. During his two weeks in Ireland he developed a more intense dislike for the Catholic religion; preached several times at Limerick and at Dublin; and received a cordial reception in Dublin from Dr. Burscough, Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Dulany, celebrated theologian, Dr. Randle, Bishop of Londonderry, and Dr. Boulere, Arch-Bishop of Armagh and Lord Primate of Ireland. On Thursday, November 30, he

50 See Ibid., 19 ff.
51 See Ibid., 22 ff.
52 Before 1741 Whitefield had published seven main Journals, and several biographical treatments of his life. See Bibliography for full details.
53 Whitefield, From His Arrival at Savannah, to His Return to London, 30-35.
landed at Park-Gate, England, after a twenty-four hour passage across
the Irish Sea from Dublin. The first international crusade of the
young evangelist had come to a close.

Summary. Whitefield's visit to Georgia prepared him in many ways
for the part he was to play in the Great Awakening. The effectiveness
of his preaching was increased in at least two specific ways: he
turned more definitely toward the extemporaneous mode of delivery, and
he gained further skill in adapting "set speeches" to different speaking
situations. Shortly after the beginning of the voyage he delivered his
first memorized sermon without the aid of either manuscript or notes.
During the following months he presented, entirely without notes, many
sermons which he had committed to memory. In these talks he was working
definitely away from the binding influence of following a manuscript in
delivery. Another step toward extempore preaching was his delivery of
extempore "exhortations" upon less important occasions in place of
memorized sermons. These were in reality extemporaneous speeches, some-
what shorter than his "sermons" but of the same rhetorical character.
Most of the five hundred speeches delivered by Whitefield during his
eleven-months absence from London, were of this type. It was only a
step from the delivery of extempore "exhortations" to the presentation
of extemporaneous "sermons," which Whitefield first used shortly after
his arrival in London in January, 1739.

The second important influence upon his preaching during this
period was his growing ability to adapt the contents of a prepared
speech to meet the exigencies of different speaking situations. During
the Great Awakening he often repeated the same sermon many times. The
contents of the speech would be essentially the same each time, yet he would direct it for the particular audience to which he was speaking in such a way that the whole speech would appear spontaneous and extempore. During the voyage to and from Georgia Whitefield had the opportunity to give at least four times his sermon "The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness"; he repeated numerous other sermons, as "The Penitent Thief," "The Heinous Sin of Profane Cursing and Swearing," and the "New Birth in Christ Jesus."

Another important result of his visit to Georgia was his decision to establish an orphanage in Savannah. This furnished him a legitimate reason for itinerating through the colonies in 1739 and 1740. In Georgia Whitefield began to emphasize still more gentleness and sweetness in his preaching manner. He was mastering the technique of persuading individuals to accept Christ by a sort of personal magnetism.

Two unfortunate aspects of Whitefield's character which severely limited the eventual influence of his preaching in America were his growing censorious attitude toward conservative ministers and his increasing belief that he was a special agent chosen by God for the fulfillment of a divine design.

Perhaps the most important molding influence upon Whitefield's preaching and upon his personality in general was that exerted by the numerous experiences encountered during the visit to Georgia. He had sung hymns upon deck under the "starry handiwork" of his God; he had been drenched with waves that broke over the bridge and flooded the cabins; he had made converts out of rough "sea dogs" and soldiers; he had dined with Governors, Generals, Majors, Magistrates, Indians,
Saltzbergera, carpenters, store-keepers, Bishops, and Arch-Bishops; he had met life in its rawest forms; he had seen men fight, swear, and die; he had felt slow starvation and thirst.

Whitefield was much impressed with the dying struggles of one soldier on the Whitaker who had shortened his life by excessive drinking. He wrote in his Journal: "Alas, how did his Breast heave, his Heart pant, and great Drops of Sweat trickle down his Face! His Eyes looked ghastly, and the whole Man was in a bitter Agony....This Morning I buried the dead Soldier in time of public Prayers, chose proper Lessons, and gave the Soldiers a suitable Exhortation; but I was so affected with a Sense of the Misery of fallen Man, that I could not speak with my usual Vigour." Whitefield, From London to Savannah, 51, 52.
CHAPTER IV

WHITEFIELD'S PREACHING IN THE FIELDS OF ENGLAND

During the nine months (November 30, 1738, to August 13, 1739) that Whitefield remained in England he, along with John and Charles Wesley, initiated the beginnings of the great Methodist revival. The general religious character of eighteenth-century England was "cold, unspiritual, and formal." The Church of England was experiencing a "spiritual fatigue; and in place of the enthusiasm for the teachings of the gospels, the church had substituted reasonableness and moderation; religion became a system of morality, which, without supernatural basis, itself decayed." This was the era of Walpole's "sleeping dog" philosophy, when the preservation of the political and social status quo was the dominant motive of England's ruling classes. "Sobriety and good sense were the qualities most valued in the pulpit, and enthusiasm, and extravagance were those which were most dreaded." The religious

1 The classical English historian, William E. Lecky, believed that the Methodist revival was one of the most important movements in English history: "Although the career of the elder Pitt and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they must yield...in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had been begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and of Whitefield." It "exerted a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even upon the course of its political history." William E. Lecky, A History of England In The Eighteenth Century (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882), II, 567.


...
influence greatly his theology and the style of his preaching. The next morning he called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, who awarded him a "favourable Reception." If this interview had occurred several months later, Whitefield would not have received such courteous treatment, for during the early months of 1739 his theology and his sermons became increasingly repugnant to the clergy of the Church of England. Whitefield soon discovered that many of the conservative Episcopal ministers of London had not forgiven him for the emotional "excesses" of his sermons in 1737, and that "some of the Clergy, if possible, would oblige" him "to depart out of these Coasts." By December 10, the pulpits of five churches were denied him; only three churches were accessible for his preaching. As a result, Whitefield did most of his preaching to private religious societies during the two months he remained in London before leaving for Bristol.

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6 The Moravians were a denomination of Christians who, in 1722 at Herrnhut in Saxony, formally organized the Renewed Church of the United Brethren. This religion required no adherence to any set creed; the Scriptures constituted the only authority for faith and religious practice. The true Moravian at this time felt a deep personal conviction that the Holy Ghost was working within him, and was directing the course of his daily actions. In 1738 the first Methodist society was formed at the Moravian chapel in Fetter-lane. Lecky has characterized the early Methodists as "an offshoot of Moravianism." (op. cit., 624) Nevertheless the Methodist society which met with the Moravians in their chapel were at all times a separate society. See, A. C. H. Seymour, The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon (London: W. E. Painter, 1844), I, 19.

7 See page 29 for an illustration of the Bishop of London's change of attitude toward Whitefield.

8 Whitefield, A Continuation Of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia (London: Printed for James Hutton, 1739), 2. Hereafter referred to as Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia.
During his first week in London a most important change took place in Whitefield's theology. Prior to this time the basic promise underlying all of his preaching had been the theory that all men shared in Adam's "guilt" and were totally depraved from birth; "eternal, hideous torture" was the doom of each unconverted man; salvation could be attained only by a spiritual "rebirth," i.e., a supernatural alteration of the character and personality of the individual. Whitefield had always been rather vague about the method of achieving this "new birth." When he arrived in London, he was surprised to find the Wesleys teaching the doctrine of "Justification by Faith only." John Wesley had sought spiritual advice in 1738 from Peter Bohler, a Moravian teacher, "whose calm and concentrated enthusiasm, united with unusual mental powers, gained a complete ascendancy over his mind." From Bohler, Wesley absorbed the conception that every man, no matter how ethical his standards of conduct, or how generous and kind his heart, was condemned to everlasting hell, until, by a sudden flash of insight, he became convinced that the sacrifices of Christ atoned for all his sins.

Such a doctrine was diametrically opposed to the contemporary philosophy of the Church of England, which advocated that any individual who submitted to the act of baptism experienced a "new birth," and that "faith"

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9Lecky, op. cit., II, 605.

must be accompanied by "good works" in order to insure salvation. During the time of Elizabeth the doctrines of the Church of England had been formalized into the Calvinistic "Thirty-nine Articles," which were retained down through the eighteenth century as the "standard" Episcopal dogma. The church's "working" philosophy, however, at the time of the Methodist revival, was based upon the teachings of "good works," and was designed to preserve the social, political, and religious status quo. Hence, any advocacy of a doctrine which taught that deep personal faith in Christ was the sole requisite for Salvation, and that the doing of "good works" was merely an incidental concomitant of such faith was sure to arouse the intense opposition of the Episcopal clergy and the upper classes.

The first evidence that Whitefield had incorporated "Justification by Faith only" into his theology is found in his Journal for December 10:

"The old Doctrine about Justification by Faith only, I found much revived" in London, "and many Letters had been sent concerning it to me, all which, I providentially missed of. For now, I come unprejudiced, and can the more easily see who is in the right. And who dares assert that we are not justified in the Sight of God, merely by an Act of Faith in Jesus Christ, without any Regard to Works past, present, or to

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come? Before long Whitefield had introduced "Justification by Faith" into his sermons as one of his fundamental tenets. This principle, perhaps more than any other, aroused the people of England and America in the great revivals of 1739 and 1740.14

In his Journal for December 25, Whitefield mentioned specifically for the first time his having prayed extemporaneously. On Christmas eve he preached to several religious societies and joined his Methodist and Moravian friends at the chapel in Fetter-lane in a night-long session of praying and singing. Early in the morning one of the overwrought worshippers cried out that God had suddenly appeared to him; the others, believing that they too perceived God's presence, fell upon the floor, crying, "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."15 At four o'clock in the morning Whitefield left Fetter-lane to "expound" and pray before a religious society of several hundred persons in Red-cross-street. Upon this occasion he prayed extemporaneously in front of a large assembly for the first time. During the Christmas and New Year's season he was almost constantly engaged in "exhorting" and in delivering prayers before Methodist societies. At this time he abandoned almost completely the Episcopal ritual of reading prayers from the Prayer Book, in favor of extemporaneous praying. On January 7, he wrote, "God grant I may pursue the Method of...praying extemporaneously. I find God

13Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 2.

14Lecky, op. cit., 605.

15Seymour, The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntington, 19, 20.
blesses it more and more."16 Some weeks later he "convinced" several
individuals that extempore praying was "agreeable to God."17

The immediate effect in England of his resort to extempore pray-
ing was to cause the conservative clergy to turn more strongly against
him and to exclude him from their churches. During the Great Awaken-
ing in America Whitefield's skill in praying extemporaneously was one
of the major elements of his appeal to the colonists. Since very few
of his auditors were members of the Episcopal church, it would have
been foolish for him to read prayers from the Episcopal Prayer Book.
Furthermore, there was a distinct prejudice among the Puritan element
against the reading of prayers of any form. The experience which
Whitefield received in delivering extempore prayers before large audi-
dences during his stay in England was very valuable training for his
work in the Great Awakening.

Perhaps the most important change which occurred in Whitefield's
oratory during the early months of 1739 was his adoption of the extem-
poraneous mode of preaching. During his voyage to Georgia he had
delivered several hundred sermons; at that time, however, he was
relying upon memorized sermons for all of the more important occasions.
Whitefield probably could not have become the ardent evangelist he
proved to be during the Methodist revival in England and the Great
Awakening in America if he had limited himself to the presentation of
memorized sermons.

It was therefore of considerable importance to the effectiveness

16 Ibid., 7.
17 Ibid., 10.
of his preaching that on February 2, 1739, he delivered his first extempore sermon. In his Journal he recorded: "This is the first Time I have preached without Notes, (for when I preached at Deptford and Gravesend, I only repeated a written Sermon) but I find myself now, as it were, constrained to do it."\(^{18}\) According to Whitefield, this sermon "was attended with great Power." He preached his second extempore sermon that evening at Wapping-chapel. The next day, after preaching twice extemporaneously, he wrote, "I find I gain greater Light and Knowledge, by preaching extempore.—So that I fear I should quench the Spirit, did I not go on to speak as he gives me Utterance."\(^{19}\) From this time on Whitefield used the extempore mode of delivery almost exclusively.

Of some importance to Whitefield’s future effectiveness as an evangelist was his ordination as a priest in the Church of England on January 14, by Bishop Benson, who had ordained him a deacon two years earlier. After the ceremony the Bishop wrote in a letter to the Earl of Huntington that, although Whitefield was "mistaken on some points," he believed him to be "a very pious, well-meaning young man, with good abilities and great zeal."\(^{20}\) However, before many months had passed Benson was to "lament bitterly" his having ordained the young evangelist.\(^{21}\) This advancement in rank gave Whitefield a status equivalent to other Episcopal ministers and gave added authority to his preaching.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 16.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 17.
\(^{20}\) Seymour, op. cit., 1, 196.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 23.
during the Great Awakening.

At this time another influence was exerted in the total preparation of Whitefield for his work in the Great Awakening. The trustees of Georgia appointed him chaplain at Savannah, which was much more widely known than Fredericksburg, and gave him five hundred acres of land for his projected orphanage. The grant of land was the first official manifestation of approval for Whitefield's orphan-house. Without such an approval there would have been no occasion for his preaching over Colonial America during the Great Awakening.

The censorious side of Whitefield's character, which had revealed itself for the first time during his voyage to Georgia, became much more vehement during the early months of 1739. Whitefield's first major altercation with the Established clergy came on Monday, January 29, when he and John Wesley spent most of the night in arguing the merits of the "new birth" with two Episcopal ministers. In reference to this conference Whitefield wrote, "God enabled me with great simplicity to declare what he had done for my soul, which made them look upon me as a madman." An important intensification of Whitefield's opposition toward the Church resulted from the debate: "We speak what we know, and testify that we have seen, and they receive not our witness. Now therefore I am fully convinced there is a fundamental difference between us and them."  

22 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 15.

23 Ibid.
His conviction that most of the clergy were "Pharisees" who taught a "dead Religion" grew stronger during the following months, and he gradually became quite violent in condemnation of them. This censorious criticism of ministers who he felt were insufficiently ardent in their religion became ingrained in his preaching, and was often manifested in his sermons during the Great Awakening.

**Whitefield at Bristol.** In the early afternoon of February 8, Whitefield and several friends set out on horseback for Bristol. Among these companions was William Seward, a young man of independent means, who had been converted by Wesley in 1738, and who was later to accompany Whitefield during part of his travels in America. On their course to Bristol Whitefield stopped to preach at Windsor, Basingstoke, Dummer, Salisbury, and Stapleashwin. He spoke in private homes, inns, and schoolhouses, but not once within a church.

On Whitefield's first morning at Bristol, February 15, the Chancellor of the city advised him to refrain from preaching until he had secured the Bishop's permission. Ignoring this suggestion, Whitefield secured admission to the Newgate prison and delivered his sermon "The Penitent Thief" to the inmates. All of the churches were closed to him, but dozens of pious folk invited him into their homes to preach to their friends.

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24 The keeper of the jail was a Mr. Dudge, who had been deeply affected by Whitefield's preaching during his visits to the prison in 1737. Seymour, op. cit., II, 357. Whitefield preached daily at the prison until the mayor and the sheriff, fearing that Whitefield's emphasis upon the "new-birth" would contaminate the prisoners, denied him permission to preach further.
Such a field of endeavor was too limited for the zealous minister; on February 16, he made one of the most important decisions of his entire career—a decision which bore tremendous implications for both the Methodist revival in England and the Great Awakening in America.

About three o'clock that afternoon he rode out a few miles from Bristol to Kingswood, a mining community of exceedingly ill repute, where he ascended a small mound and preached to several hundred miners who came out of the pits to hear him. The Rubicon was crossed; the epoch of field preaching had begun. Probably Whitefield realized that he was beginning a new era of religious expression, for he wrote in his Journal: "Blessed be God that I have now broke the ice; I believe I never was more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields." This new avenue for preaching enabled him to address vast throngs of multiple thousands in England and in America. He was no longer dependent upon the churches; the out-of-doors was now his chapel.

He preached again and again at Kingswood during the next few weeks. His audiences constantly grew until he was addressing almost twenty thousand miners. People came from twenty miles away to see the

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25 John Wesley characterized the inhabitants of Kingswood in the following manner, "Few persons have lived long in the west of England, who have not heard of the colliers of Kingswood; a people famous from the beginning hitherto, for neither fearing God nor regarding man; so ignorant of the things of God, that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish; and therefore utterly without desire of instruction, as well as without the means of it." John Wesley, a letter to Mr. D., November 27, 1739, in The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., 251.

26 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 31.
novel sight of a young clergyman in a cassock, standing upon a mound of earth, and addressing a great crowd of sweaty, dirty miners. It was perhaps here that Whitefield fully discovered the effect of his eloquence. Looking toward the silent crowds, he could see the results of his words by "the white gutters made by their tears, which plentifully fell down their black cheeks," for they came unwashed out of the coal shafts.

Whitefield was carried away by the success of his preaching to the ignorant colliers. In his Journal he wrote, "Well may the Devil and his Servants rage horribly. Their Kingdom is in Danger." On another day he added, "The Fire is kindled in the Country; and, I know, all the Devils in Hell shall not be able to quench it." No doubt his easy triumphs at Kingswood caused him to believe more deeply that he, like the apostles of old, was divinely appointed to "preach the gospel to every living creature."


29 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 61.

30 Among the interesting repercussions which resulted from Whitefield's field preaching was the charge printed in the London Common Sense magazine, April 19, 1739, that the price of coal would rise to exorbitant heights if the miners continued much longer to quit their work in order to hear Whitefield preach.

31 Ibid., 40.
The valuable experience that Whitefield received at Kingswood in developing a fluent, extemporaneous delivery before large audiences is indicated by his own testimony: "As the scene was quite new, and I had just begun to be an extemporaneous preacher, it often occasioned many inward conflicts. Sometimes, when twenty thousand people were before me, I had, in my own apprehension, a word to say, either to God or to them. But I was never totally deserted, and frequently (for to deny it would be lying against God) so assisted, that I knew by happy experience, what our Lord meant by saying, 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'"32

In addition to speaking out-of-doors at Kingswood, Whitefield toured the communities within a few miles' radius of Bristol, and preached in the open fields to large audiences; since the churches in the city were still unavailable, he spoke upon the Bristol greens, in private homes, and in halls owned by various religious societies.

Whitefield in Western England. After leaving Bristol on April 2, Whitefield spent the following three weeks in itinerating through western England. About five o'clock on the evening of the second, Whitefield and a company of twenty horsemen arrived in Thornbury, where he mounted a table in the street and preached to approximately a thousand persons. The next morning he came to Old-Passage; after preaching several times, he crossed the Severn river to the Welsh shore. During

32 A manuscript of Whitefield's quoted in Gillies, Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield Compiled by the Rev. John Gillies, 38. The manuscript has apparently been lost in the century and a half which has followed the publication of Gillies' book.
the next five days he preached at least once each at Cheapsow, Husk, Pontypool, Abergavenny, Comihoy, Carleon, Trelak, and Colford. As he rode from town to town he was invariably accompanied by twenty to one hundred horsemen, who sang psalms and hymns as they galloped along the dusty country roads. Later, during the Great Awakening in America, Whitefield was to be escorted frequently from village to village by cavalcades of several hundred equestrians. By that time such a procedure had become a matter of course to the young evangelist. Such manifestations of religious zeal in the Great Awakening, as in Wales, created considerable opposition by the conservative ministers.

Only one of the Welsh churches was offered to Whitefield; upon this occasion the congregation was so large that Whitefield went out of the church into the yard to preach. Following the sermon, Whitefield recorded in his Journal his growing fondness for out-of-doors preaching: "I always find I have most Power when I speak in the open Air. A Proof this to me, that God is pleased with this Way of Preaching." 33

On Monday, April 9, Whitefield arrived in Gloucester, where he remained for eight days. He was denied the use of the churches during the week, upon the ostensible reason that his preaching "kept People from their Business." 34 During his stay Whitefield preached several times a day in a field belonging to his brother, in private homes, at meeting-halls of religious societies, and in the neighboring suburbs. On April 12, he delivered his first public phillipic against what he

33 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 69.
34 Ibid., 74.
termed the "indolent, earthly-minded, pleasure-taking" clergy of the Church of England. In his Journal that night he wrote: "was I not to speak, the very Stones would cry out against them. Speak therefore I must, and will, and will not spare; God look to the Event. Whatever becomes of the Pastors who feed themselves, and not the Flock, I have borne my Testimony. I have delivered my own Soul." With this sermon Whitefield began open strife with the Church of England.

Several days later Whitefield left Bristol and itinerated toward Oxford, preaching at various communities on the way. He arrived at the University late Saturday night, April 21. The next day he denounced the "degenerate" moral condition of Oxford in violent emotional sermons, which he delivered to several religious societies. He cried, "Oh how is the faithful City become an Harlot! Oh that my Head was Water, and my Eyes Fountains of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night for the Members of this University!" As a result of these tirades, the Vice-chancellor of the University called at Whitefield's lodging place on Monday morning and demanded to see the young evangelist. According to Whitefield's testimony:

When I first saw him, I perceived he was in a Passion, which he soon expressed in such language as this: 'Have you, Sir, says he, a Name in any Book here? Yes, Sir, said I; but I intend to take it out soon--Yes, and you had best take yourself out too, replied he, or otherwise I will lay you by the Heels. What do you mean, continued he, by going about, and alienating the Peoples Affections from their proper Pastors?

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35 Ibid., 75, 76.
36 Ibid., 85.
Your works are full of vanity and nonsense, you pretend to inspiration. If you ever come again in this manner among these people, I will lay you... by the heels.

Whitefield left Oxford almost immediately.

Whitefield's preaching after this became increasingly censorious; he attacked the clergy, social institutions, social customs, and the universities in sweeping condemnations, with little or no resort to evidence; he made only feeble attempts to become acquainted with reality. During his itinerant tours in western England he became increasingly an emotionalist, at the sacrifice of his powers of objective thinking. This boded ill for his later preaching during the Great Awakening.

Whitefield's Preaching in the Parks of London. Whitefield arrived in London after a short ride from Oxford, April 25. On the twenty-seventh, the Islington church, the last of the London churches to do so, closed its pulpit to Whitefield. Undaunted, the young evangelist left the church, went out into the churchyard, and preached to his followers from a tombstone.

That evening, in a private letter, he wrote, "To-day, my master by his providence and spirit compelled me to preach in the church-yard at Islington." Whitefield was satisfied that God willed he should repeat in London the open-field preaching which he had begun in Bristol. In his Journal he recorded, "they have thrust me out" of their Synagogues. "And since the self-righteous men

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37 Ibid., 86.
38 Boston Gazette, June 25, 1739.
39 A letter by Whitefield to Mr. H., London, April 27, 1739, in his Works, I, 49.
of this Generation count themselves unworthy. I go out into the High-
way and Hedges, and compel Harlots, Publicans and Sinners to come in,
that my Master's House may be filled." The next morning he preached
again in the same churchyard to a large crowd of the pious and the
curious which trampled over the graves and tombstones in their hurry
to hear him.  41

On Sunday, April 29, Whitefield preached his first sermons in the
parks of London. About seven in the morning he preached in a congrega-
tion of several thousand at Moorfields, a large city mall near the
artillery ground. In the evening he preached to almost thirty-thousand
auditors at the Kennington Common.  42 According to the evangelist: "All
stood attentive, and joined in the Psalm and Lord's Prayer most
regularly,—and I scarce ever preached more quietly in any Church.—The
Word came with Power."  43

During the three months that he remained in London he preached
about ten times a week in the parks and in the near-by communities to

40 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Depart-
ture from thence on his Way to Georgia, 88.
42 Kennington Common was located in one of London's poorer out-
lying districts and had been used at various times as the site for the
city's gallows. Pickpockets plied such a successful trade at Kenning-
ton and at Moorfields during Whitefield's sermons that, according to
the London Daily Post, their earnings often exceeded the donations in
43 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Depart-
ture from thence on his Way to Georgia, 90.
congregations of twenty or thirty thousand persons. It is impossible to arrive at any accurate estimate of the size of the audiences which attended Whitefield's out-door sermons: Whitefield claimed crowds as high as eighty thousand; Wesley estimated audiences of thirty thousand; other contemporaries recorded vaguely in their diaries and published pamphlets auditoriums of "many thousands"; most modern historians estimate crowds of about thirty thousand. Very likely Whitefield overestimated the size of his auditoriums. For example, he recorded in his Journal that an audience of "very much larger" than twenty thousand had attended his sermon of July 29, at Moorfields. However, a letter published in the Gentleman's Magazine for August stated that the writer had attended Whitefield's sermon on the twenty-ninth, and had made several marks on the ground where the outermost of the hearers stood; the next morning he had measured the distance from the rostrum to these marks and had calculated the space taken up by the congregation to be 2,827 square yards. The person then computed that if nine people stood in each square yard the audience would number 25,443 persons. If the writer had used a more reasonable figure of six people per square yard,

44 The continuity of Whitefield's stay in London was interrupted by two evangelistic tours. The first lasted from May 21 to May 26, during which time he preached a total of ten sermons at Hertford, Culney, Northampton, Bedford, Hitchin, and St. Albans. The second tour extended from June 18 to July 21; he would often ride forty or fifty miles in one day and would preach two or three times en route. He delivered sermons at Hertford, Broad-Oaks, Wimblsh Green, Saffron-walden, Thaxted, Bishop-stortford, Blackheath, Saxley, Cirencester, Gloucester, Painswick, Stroud, Randwick, Hampton, Twakebury, Evesham, Pershore, Chefford, Bristol, Kingswood, Bath, Thornebury, Tedbury, Malmsbury, Abingdon, and Basingstoke.

then the audience would have totaled 16,950. Nevertheless Whitefield's audiences were tremendous. At times the crowding and shoving that invariably accompanied such gatherings seriously injured or even killed some of the auditors. 46

Whitefield apparently had little difficulty in reaching the fringes of any except the larger audiences with his powerful voice. His writings of this period indicate that he was constantly aware of the problem of projecting in the open air. He often recorded in his Journal that listeners had informed him that the outermost parts of the crowds could hear his words distinctly. On June 1, he addressed what he thought to be eighty-thousand people; although he was ill, he believed that he spoke loudly enough for most to hear. 47 Since many of his sermons during the Great Awakening were delivered in the open air, this training formed good experience in increasing his power of vocal projection.

During these sermons in the parks of London, just as previously at Bristol, Whitefield received valuable practice in swaying large bodies of people. A typical entry in his Journal concerned an audience of "thirty thousand": "they were as quiet during my Sermon, as though there had not been above fifty Persons present.—I did not meet with a Moment's Interruption." 48 Both friendly and hostile pamphlets characterized Whitefield's power over his open-field congregations as

47 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 112.
48 Ibid., 105.
"almost hypnotic." A tangible evidence of his appeal to audiences is the fact that he collected over two thousand pounds for his Orphanage during his stay in England. There were numerous references in his Journal to the "willingness" of his auditors to contribute. After one sermon at Kennington-Common Whitefield himself helped take up the collection. Later he wrote in his Journal: "it would have delighted anyone to have seen with what Eagerness and Chearfulness the People came up both Sides the Eminence on which I stood, and afterwards to the Coach Doors to throw in their Mites...when we came home, we found we had collected above Forty seven Pounds, amongst which were sixteen Pounds in Halfpence."

The experience that Whitefield acquired in preaching to large mass audiences in the parks of London was of considerable importance in preparing him for the mammoth out-of-door congregations in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. However, two of the "unfortunate" aspects of his preaching became greatly accentuated during his stay in London.

First, never before had he given such overt expression to his conviction of "divine inspiration." His sermons contained numerous references to the workings of the Holy Ghost upon his "soul," and to the "evidences" of a divine benediction upon his ministerial labors. For instance, on May 10, it rained profusely before the time set for his sermon at Kennington Common. Just before he mounted the improvised pulpit, according to his Journal: "God was pleased so visibly to interpose in causing the Weather to clear up, and the Sun to shine out just

49 Whitefield, An Account Of Money Received and Distributed For The Orphan-House in Georgia. To Which is prefixed A Plan of the Building (London: Printed by W. Strahan for T. Cooper, 1741).
as I began, that I could not avoid taking Notice of it to the People in my Discourse. Our Minute Philosophers, nay, and our Christians, falsely so called, laugh at the Notion of a particular Providence. But to suppose a general, without holding a particular Providence, is as absurd, as to imagine there can be a Chain without being composed of Links. *50 There is little doubt that Whitefield's frequent revelation of his "divine favor" rendered him ludicrous to many of the conservative classes.

Second, Whitefield had begun in Bristol a campaign against the clergy of the Church of England; in London, he grew more violent. For instance, he wrote in his Journal, concerning a sermon which he preached on May 26, "I could not help exposing the Impiety of these Letter-learned Teachers, who say, We are not now to receive the Holy Ghost, and count the Doctrine of the New Birth, Enthusiasm. Out of your own Mouths will I condemn you, you wicked and blind Guides. Did you not, at the Time of Ordination, tell the Bishop, that you were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you the Administration of the Church? Surely, at that Time, you acted the Crime of Ananias and Sapphire ever again. You lied not unto Man, but unto God." *51 Since most of the outstanding dignitaries of the Episcopal Church disagreed with his interpretation of the "new-birth," Whitefield often tactlessly insulted the most powerful ecclesiastics in London. On Sunday, July 23, he delivered another violent phillipic. In his words, "God gave

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*50 Whitefield, Journal From His Arrival at London, To His Departure from thence on his Way to Georgia, 94.

*51 Ibid., 110.
me great Power, and I never opened my Mouth so freely against the Letter-
learned Clergyman of the Church of England. Every Day do I see the
Necessity of speaking out more and more...I cannot see "the Episcopal
Church" sinking into Papistical Ignorance, and Deism refined, and not
open my Mouth against these, who by their sensual lukeward Lives and
unscriptural superficial Doctrines, thus cause her to err."52,53

The intense controversy, which was created in London by Whitefield's
emotional "excesses" is shown by the publication of great numbers of
hostile pamphlets and articles.54 From the pulpit and the press he was

52 Whitefield, A Continuation Of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's
Journal. During the Time he was detained in England by the Embargo
(London: Printed by W. Strahan, and sold by James Button, 1739), 3rd
ed., 32. Hereafter referred to as Journal During the Time he was
detained in England by the Embargo.

53 Two of the more immoderate of Whitefield's sermons which he
directed at Established clergy are: The Spirit, Doctrines, and Lives
of our modern Clergy, not conformable to the Spirit of Christ. A Sermon
preached at Islington and Bexley (London: Printed for C. Whitefield,
1739); An exhortation to the People of God not to be Discouraged in
their Way, by the Scoffe and Contempt of wicked Men. A Sermon preach'd
in Mr. Delamot's Yard, at Blendor-Hall near Bexley (London: Printed
for C. Whitefield, 1739).

54 The pamphlets concerning Whitefield which were printed during
1739 included the following: (1) Edmund Gibson, Observations upon the
Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect Usually Distinguished by the
Name of Methodists. (2) Gibson, An Earnest Appeal to the Public in
relation to Mr. Whitefield. (3) Gibson, The Bishop of London's Pastoral
Letter to the People of his Diocese; Especially those of the two great
Cities of London and Westminster; By way of Caution, Against Inkawear-
ness on one hand, and Enthusiasm on the other. (4) A Defence of the
Rev. Mr. Whitefield. (5) A Defence of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield's
Doctrine of Regeneration, in Answer to the Rev. Mr. Land. Designed to
correct his Mistakes, to wipe off his Aspersions...By a Member of one
of the Religious Societies. (6) A Faithful Narrative of the Life and
Character of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, B.D., from his Birth to the Present
Time; containing an Account of his Doctrines and Morals, his Motives
for going to Georgia, and his Travels through several Parts of England.
(7) A Letter to the Bishops, in relation to Mr. Whitefield. (8) A
Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London, Occasioned by His
Lordship’s Last Pastoral Letter and Mr. Whitefield’s Answer. By
Whitehead. (9) A short Preservation against the Doctrines revived
by Mr. Whitefield and his Adherents: Being a Supplement to the Bishop
of London’s late Pastoral Letter. By a Curate of London. (10) A
Supplement to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield’s Answer to the Bishop of London’s
Last Pastoral Letter. By a Presbyter of the Church of England. (11)
An Earnest Appeal to the Public, on occasion of Mr. Whitefield’s
extraordinary Answer to the Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of London:
Intended to vindicate his Lordship from the extravagant charges and
mean evasions contained in the said pretended Answer; and to detect the
ture spirit and design of its Author, from his notorious inconsistencies
with himself, his disregard of the Church by whose authority he preaches,
and his treatment of those whom that Church hath constituted his supe-
riors. (12) An Expostulatory Letter to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, and the
rest of his Brethren, the Methodists of the Church of England; wherein
the Rites and Ceremonies of that Church are considered; and the parti-
culity of those Gentlemen, with regard to the practice of them, condemned.
(13) P. Anneet, Judging for Ourselves; or Free-thinking, the great Duty
of Religion. Displayed in two Lectures, by P. Anneet...With a Poem to
the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. (14) Tristran Land, A Letter to the Rev. Mr.
Whitefield. Designed to correct his mistaken Account of Regeneration,
or the New Birth. (15) Letter to the Bishop of London, on his late
Pastoral Letter and Mr. Whitefield’s Answer. (16) Observations and
Remarks on Mr. Seagrave’s Conduct and Writings. In which his Answer to
the Rev. Dr. Trapp’s four Sermons is more particularly considered. (17)
Remarks on the Reverend Mr. Whitefield’s Journal. Wherein his many
Inconsistencies are pointed out and his Tenets considered. The whole
showing the dangerous tendency of his Doctrine. Addressed to the
(19) Robert Seagrave, An Answer to the Rev. Dr. Trapp’s four Sermons
against Mr. Whitefield. (20) Seagrave, Remarks on the Bishop of London’s
Pastoral Letter, in vindication of Mr. Whitefield and his particular
doctrines. (21) Robert Skerret, The Nature and Proper Evidence of Regen-
eration. (22) Henry Stebbing, A Caution against Religious Delusions.
A Sermon on the New Birth: Occasioned by the Pretensions of the Metho-
dists. (23) The Accomplished Methodist. (24) The Amorous Humours of
one Whitefield. (25) The Case between Mr. Whitefield and Dr. Stebbing.
(26) The Conduct of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield vindicated from the Aspersions
and Malicious Inventives of his enemies. (27) The Methodist: A Humor-
uous Burlesque Poem: Address’d to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and his Followers:
Proper to be bound up with his Sermons, and the Journals of his Voyage
to Georgia. (28) The Methodists Dissected: or an Impartial Inquiry into
the Conduct of those Arch Methodists G.W. and G.W. (29) The Figur
Youth. Addressed to Mr. Whitefield. (30) The Mock Preacher. (31)
Joseph Trapp, The Nature, Folly, Sin, and Danger of Being Righteous
over much; with a particular view to the Doctrine and Practices of cer-
tain Modern Enthusiasts. Being the Substance of Four Discourses lately
preached in the Parish Churches of Christ Church, and St. Lawrence
Jewry, London, and St. Martin’s in-the-Fields, Westminster. (32) Trapp,
The Nature, Usefulness, and Regulation of Religious Zeal. A Sermon preached at St. Mary's Oxon; before the Right Honorable Mr. Justice Fortescue Aland and Mr. Baron Thomson; and before the University of Oxford; at the sessions held there, on Thursday, August 2nd, 1739. (33) Joshua Tucker, A Complete Account of the Conduct of the Eminent Enthusiast, Mr. Whitefield. (34) Tucker, The Life and particular Proceedings of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield. By an Impartial Hand. (35) True Character of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. (36) Jonathan Warne, Dr. Trapp tried and cast. and allow'd to the Tenth Day of May next to recent; being some Remarks on his Book call'd The Nature, Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous Overmuch...with a Postscript, in vindication of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. (37) Warne, The Spirit of the Martyr revived in the Doctrines of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, and the judicious and faithful Methodists. (38) Warne, The Dreadful Degeneracy of a great part of the Clergy, the Means to promote Irreligion, Atheism, and Pervery; to which is prefixed a letter to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield. (39) John Wilder, The Trial of the Spirits; or, a Caution against Enthusiasm, or Religious Delusion. in opposition to the Methodists. A Sermon preached before the University of Oxford.


A Number of the sermons which Whitefield preached in 1739 were not placed in print until the following year. These included: (18) Faith acts above Reason, proved from the Example of Abraham, in offering up Isaac, and the great Folly of Racists. A Sermon preached at Hackney-Marsh, during the time of the Koeve-Races. (19) Christ the Support of the Tempted. A Sermon preached at Blackheath. (20) Christ the only
attacked by one of the most powerful dignitaries of the Episcopal Church, Dr. Joseph Trapp, as being "ignorant," "illiterate," "ridiculous," "detestable," and "insane." Trapp characterized Whitefield’s published Journals as a "rhapsody of madness, spiritual pride, and little less than blasphemy." The Weekly Miscellany contained leading articles against him in almost every issue. In the copy for May 26, the Miscellany ridiculed Whitefield’s claims that he had been "forced" into preaching out-doors in the London parks: "Have the Bishops, from whom alone he ought to take Directions, commanded him to turn Mountebank? Is he compelled by military force, or by the Violence of the People, to mount the Stage?" The article then described Whitefield’s intellectual


character as being a combination of "pride and vanity" equalled only by his "weakness and folly." The Political State demanded that Whitefield prove that he had received a "signal characteristic of Divine Favour." A number of the pamphlets, written by clergymen who were hostile to Whitefield, descended into vulgar, scurrilous slander, full of foul analogies, and "unchristian" retorts.

One of the most interesting pamphlets of this controversy was a twenty-eight page poem: The Methodists, An Humorous Burlesque Poem; Address'd to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and his Followers: Proper to be bound up with his Sermons, and the Journals of his Voyage to Georgia. The following brief excerpt presents the flavor of the piece:

O Britain! Miserable Land!
Fools of all Sorts still crowd thy Strand!
Projectors, Chymists, Priests of Rome!
French Prophets, Pietists, all come.
And now to crown 'em all in one;
The METHODISTS the Work have done.

Hail, O Saint Wh—tf——d, Ape of Grace.
Thou holy Sinner, with a formal Face;
Go on secure in selfish Pride,
The Clergy and the Church deride:
Like a young Pelican, with Stomach good,
Prey on thy Mother's vital Blood;
The Place that foster'd thee despise,
And by Enthusiasm rise;
Content thyself to lead the Throng,
And charm the Vulgar right or wrong.
When T——pp [Dr. Joseph Trapp], with solid, lasting Sense,
Displays thy fatal Influence,
Stare thou the Reverend Preacher in the Face;
And squint and fleer at all he says:
Let Boys and Girls thy Followers be,
While Men of Sense thy Converse flee;
Religion's sacred Name degrades,
And sink thy Calling to a Trade.


57 Political State, May, 1739, quoted in Boston Evening Post, September 17, 1739.
Eve the Bishop of London entered the war of pamphlets against Whitefield and other Methodists with a Pastoral Letter to the People of his Diocese. The objections he voiced in regard to Whitefield's preaching were very similar to those raised by many colonial clergymen following Whitefield's visit to America during the Great Awakening. The Bishop disapproved of Whitefield's claims to "extraordinary Communications" from God, and to "Divine Inspiration"; he objected to Whitefield's usage of "apostolic language" in his sermons; and he denounced Whitefield's boasts that the wrigglings, and convulsions produced in his hearers were the sole work of the "Holy-Ghost. 58

Although most of the printed matter concerning Whitefield and the Methodist revival was intensely hostile, a few favorable pamphlets and newspaper articles were published. 60 These were, however, largely

58 The Methodists, An Humorous Parleque Poem; Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and his Followers: Proper to be bound up with his Sermons, and the Journals of his Voyage to Georgia (London: Printed for John Brett, 1739), 27, 28.

59 (Edmund Gibson), The Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter to the People of his Diocese; Especially those of the two great Cities of London and Westminster: By Way of Caution, Against Lukewarmness on one hand, and Enthusiasm on the other (London: Printed by S. Buckley, 1741), 5th ed.

60 A few magazines attempted to publish both sides of the controversy. For example, see the London, Gentleman's Magazine for July and August, 1739.
obscured by the great volume of the adverse literature. Ola Winslow has made the sweeping statement that Whitefield "was not even accorded the dignity of serious criticism, but constantly made ridiculous as the target of abusive rhymes and unseemly jests." There is no doubt that a concentrated attempt was made to make Whitefield ridiculous in the eyes of the people. Viewed in the light of the immense crowds that attended Whitefield's sermons and the large collections he received, such an attempt was unsuccessful. Even a cursory examination of the hostile pamphlets should indicate that the authors were earnest in their attempts to embarrass the young evangelist. It was impossible to treat lightly a man who by the magnetism of his oratory could draw multiple thousands daily to the parks and fields to hear him preach.

There is no positive evidence to indicate precisely what effect such opposition by the clergy exerted upon Whitefield. Likewise, the influence of the plaudits of the masses upon Whitefield's character and preaching is unknown. In a few months, he had become, in the words of William W. Sweet, "the greatest evangelist of his time and perhaps of all time." That the twenty-four-year-old youth could avoid being somewhat warped by the contending forces which swirled about him seems impossible. Very likely the approbation of the unlettered element caused him to believe more firmly that the ignorant and the lowly stood as high in the judgment of Christ as the learned and the

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61 Winslow, Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758. 178.
62 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America. 276, 277.
that the only real requirement for preaching was to experience a "divine call"; that God had indeed chosen him as an apostle to preach to all the world. Probably the opposition of the educated and conservative classes motivated him more intensely to decry "letter-learning," and to become more censorious in his basic attitude toward all ministers and persons in authority who disagreed with his theology.

**Summary.** Whitefield's experiences in England during his nine months' visit exerted a great influence in preparing him for his role as an itinerant evangelist during the Great Awakening in America. His effectiveness in swaying large colonial audiences resulted partly from his having delivered over three hundred sermons, most of them extemporaneous, to vast audiences gathered in the fields of England. In many of these services he substituted extemporaneous prayers for the Episcopal ritual of reading from The Book of Common Prayer. His improvised emotional prayers constituted one of the most powerful elements of his preaching in America.

Also during this visit he incorporated into his theology the doctrine of "Justification by Faith only," the advocacy of which throughout the Great Awakening created for him numerous enemies. Extensive itinerating in England served as excellent preparation for his evangelistic tours in the American colonies.

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63 The Duchess of Buckingham after hearing Whitefield and the Wesleys preach expressed her distaste for their egalitarian principles in a letter to the Lady Huntingdon: "their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tainted with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to be told, [sic] that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting." Seymour, The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon, I, 27.
Two unfortunate aspects of his preaching which severely weakened the influence of his preaching in America were aggravated during this stay in England. (1) He grew far more censorious in his sermons, attacking the Established clergy, social customs, and the universities. (2) He also became more outspoken in his conception of himself as a special emissary of Christ.

Thus Whitefield's return to England served in many ways to formulate more definitely the characteristics of the evangelism he brought to America during the Great Awakening.
PART II

WHITEFIELD'S STIRRING PREACHING IN COLONIAL AMERICA!

THE AUDIENCE AND THE OCCASION

Chapter V.  Whitefield's Evangelism from Pennsylvania to Georgia
Chapter VI.  Whitefield's Second Visit to the Middle Colonies
Chapter VII. Opposition to Whitefield in the South
Chapter VIII. Whitefield's Invasion of New England
Chapter IX.  Whitefield's Final Appeal
ABBREVIATED CHRONOLOGY OF WHITEFIELD'S ITINERARY
DURING THE GREAT AWAKENING IN AMERICA

1739:  
November 2 to November 12: Arrival; Preaching in Philadelphia  
November 12 to November 14: Journey to New York  
November 14 to November 18: New York City  
November 18 to November 23: Journey to Philadelphia  
November 23 to November 29: Second visit to Philadelphia  
November 29: Beginning of trip by horseback to Charlestown  
December 5 to December 8: Annapolis, Maryland  
December 14 to December 15: Williamsburg, Virginia

1740:  
January 5 to January 6: Charlestown  
January 10 to February 10: Savannah  
February 10 to February 26: Tour of southern Georgia  
February 26 to March 12: Savannah  
March 13 to March 18: Charlestown  
March 21 to April 3: Savannah  
April 3 to April 13: Voyage to New Castle  
April 15 to April 23: Third Visit to Philadelphia  
April 23 to April 29: Trip to New York  
April 29 to May 4: Second Visit to New York City  
May 4 to May 7: Itinerary, New York to Philadelphia  
May 7 to May 12: Fourth Visit to Philadelphia  
May 12 to May 15: Journey to New Castle  
May 20 to June 5: Voyage to Savannah  
June 5 to June 30: Savannah
July 3 to July 22: Charlestown

July 26 to August 17: Savannah

August 17 to September 14: Voyage to Rhode Island

September 14 to September 17: Newport, Rhode Island

September 18 to September 29: Boston

September 29 to October 6: Itinerary in northeast Massachusetts

October 6 to October 13: Second stay in Boston

October 13 to October 17: Journey westward

October 17 to October 20: Northampton, Massachusetts

October 20 to October 30: Itinerary southward

October 30 to November 3: Third Visit to New York City

November 3 to November 8: Trip to Philadelphia

November 8 to November 17: Fifth stay in Philadelphia

November 17 to November 25: Itinerary to Reedy Island

November 25 to December 1: Reedy Island

December 1 to December 2: Voyage to South Carolina

December 2 to December 11: Charlestown

December 11 to December 30: Savannah

1741:

January 3 to January 23: Charlestown

January 23: Departure for England
CHAPTER V

WHITEFIELD’S EVANGELISM FROM PENNSYLVANIA TO GEORGIA

The reluctance of historians to attempt definitive studies of the Great Awakening has left us with a limited understanding of this important segment of our social life.¹ It is clear, however, that the Great Awakening, with its "hypnotic suggestions, its lurid terrorisms, its outcries and hysterical possessions,"² was not a totally impromptu phenomenon. The eruption of religious excesses in 1740 throughout Colonial America was probably precipitated chiefly by the evangelist George Whitefield,³ but it would be myopic not to perceive that

¹The best references for the Great Awakening in New England are: Joseph Tracy, The Great Awakening. A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield (Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1842); and Thomas Prince, Jr., ed., The Christian History, Containing Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in Great-Britain, America &c. (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland and T. Green, for T. Prince, Jr.), for the years 1743, 1744, and 1745. The latter is hereafter referred to as The Christian History. This was the first religious magazine in America. It consisted of weekly issues of eight pages, small octavo. It was edited by Thomas Prince, Jr., son of the elder pastor of the Old South Church in Boston. Its life span was quite brief, being less than three years. The most scholarly sources dealing with the Awakening in the Middle Colonies include: Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1930); and Charles H. Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1920). No documentary work is available on the Awakening in the Southern Colonies, during the time of Whitefield’s visit. Practically all colonial historians emphasize the importance of the Great Awakening in the social development of America, but little investigation has been made of the primary materials relating to the movement.


³This viewpoint appears to be almost unanimously accepted among modern historians. See for example, Herbert L. Goss, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century. III, 417.
predisposing elements had been long at work preparing the way. Ola Winslow has written:

The wave of hysteria which swept over America from 1740 to 1745 was largely his [Whitefield's] doing, but the inner movements of change which came to open expression during those years owed little to his evangelism. Long before he came the currents had been shifting, as men had grown restive under the old system and wavered in their loyalty. Seldom has it fallen to the lot of an evangelist to find his way so excellently prepared. George Whitefield burst upon the American scene with almost everything in his favour; the spadework had all been done, and more. He did not even plant; he merely put in his sickle and claimed the harvest.

The social heritage of centuries, molded by the peculiar environment of the American frontier, favorably predisposed the Colonies to a great resurgence of religious zeal.

According to Charles H. Maxson, the Great Awakening was more than merely an intercolonial movement; it was part of an international evangelical revival which was rooted in Pietism. In 1670 Philip J. Spener, a Lutheran minister at Frankford-on-the-Main, encouraged the "earnest seekers" in his congregation to meet bi-weekly for "holy fellowship" and hymn singing. Gradually the influence of this small group of pious folk spread through the neighboring hamlets. Soon societies of piety, which emphasized Christianity as a mode of living and minimized the importance of doctrine, sprang up in many sections of Germany. Rapidly gaining power, the movement swept into England, the Scandinavian countries, and the American colonies. It exerted great influence in shaping the Methodist revival in England and Scotland in

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4 Ola E. Winslow, Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, 176, 177-178.
5 Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 1-3.
the 1730's and 1740's; it helped freshen the sluggish streams of
Lutheranism, Moravianism, and the German Sectarian groups. Long
before Whitefield mounted his first colonial pulpit, Pietism was
abroad throughout the land, preparing the way for a new emphasis in
colonial religion.6

Under the emotional preaching of George Whitefield, pietism "swept"
as a tidal wave of religious fervor over the colonies from New England
to Georgia. Wherever it penetrated, the evangelical movement brought
with it a revival of personal religion and was concerned little, if at
all, with a reformation of doctrine. It represented an effort to
establish piety and to awaken a spiritual life in believers everywhere.
It found churches dying under the burden of cold formalism; it left
them reinvigorated and glowing with a fresh spiritual zeal.7

Preparation of the Colonial Audience in the Middle Colonies for
Whitefield's Preaching. The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies
grew out of separate religious movements among the Germans, Dutch,
and Scotch-Irish.8 The coming of the Germans to America brought a new
emphasis to colonial religion. A sincere devotion to Pietism char­
acterized each of the German religious groups, as the Reformed, the
Lutherans, and such Sectarian bodies as Moravians, Mennonites, Dunkers,

6Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 496-501, 570, 571; Cyril C. Richardson,
The Church Through the Centuries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1938), 194-195, 205, 206; Moxon, The Great Awakening in the Middle
Colonies, 1-10; Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790, 3,
27.

7Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790, 3.

8Curtis P. Nettels, The Roots of American Civilization (New
York: F. S. Crofts and Co., 1932), 482; Moxon, The Great Awakening
in the Middle Colonies, 40.
Schwenkfelders, and Labadists. The first German immigrants to arrive in America were a small group of Mennonites who founded Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1693. There was no great influx of Germans before 1710, when wars, religious persecutions, and economic distress caused hundreds of Palatines to leave their homes. Many of these displaced persons sought refuge in England; considerable numbers of them were transshipped by the British government to the province of New York. A few of them migrated down the Susquehanna River into Pennsylvania. About seven thousand Palatines landed in Pennsylvania in 1717. Carl Bridenbaugh has written: "Philadelphia received few accreditons to its German population until 1717, when Palatines began to arrive with every ship. Thereafter Penn's town became the chief port of entry for Germans coming to America, not a few of them making the place their permanent home." The steady inflow of Germans continued until by 1741 they represented two-fifths of the total population of Pennsylvania. Most of them remained in the Middle Colonies, although goodly numbers found homes on the frontier or in the Southern Colonies.

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While most of the early German immigrants were members of the rather conservative Lutheran or Reformed churches, small bodies of Sectarians gradually settled in the Middle Colonies. Peter Becker led several families of Dunkers to Pennsylvania in 1719; four years later the first Dunker church in America was established in Germantown; in 1729 Alexander Mack brought thirty Dunker families to Germantown. A few Schwenkfelders settled in Montgomery, Bucks, and Berks counties of Pennsylvania in 1734. That same year a few Moravian evangelists arrived in Pennsylvania and were soon followed by increasing numbers of Moravian immigrants.

According to Wesley Gewehr, "The Germans were deeply evangelistic, earnest and pious. . . . They formed plastic material for the revivalist who found them very receptive to a gospel which taught a direct personal relationship between Christ and the believer—the gospel of the Great Awakening. Probably no people in America were more subject to religious emotion than these Germans."

Despite this fondness for evangelistic religion by the Germans in general, it is probable that because of their deeper attachments to the warm passions of Pietism and because of their willingness to accept pious, untrained, and unordained youths as ministers, the Sectaries did

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15Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 7.
16Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 218.
17Ibid., 229.
more to prepare the way for the Great Awakening than did the Reformed and the Lutherans. The Sectarian ministers were often itinerants who visited isolated churches and preached a fervent religion. As a result of their efforts, the German Sectarian churches experienced several minor revivals during the twenties and thirties, such as the Mennonite "awakening" in Germantown in 1723. Because of their common pietistic background, most Germans in the Middle Colonies proved to be staunch supporters of Whitefield; his closest friends among them were probably among the Sectarian groups. Maxson has summarized the contribution of the Germans to the preparation of the Great Awakening well:

Throughout the eighteenth century the Germans of Pennsylvania were peculiarly subject to religious excitement. The pietistic sentiments of early and influential settlers and the labors of itinerant evangelists kept alive warm religious feeling. Pietism in its radical individualism brought to the New World men fantastically diverse from each other. Yet in spite of superficial differences, as true Pietists, they were sympathetic with all Christians and held as a fundamental principle that Christianity in its essence is the life of God in the soul of man.  

The second religious movement which helped foster the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was the revival among the Dutch of the Raritan Valley in New Jersey. Prior to 1720, when a young German Pietist, Theodorus J. Frelinghuyzen, came to America as the pastor of four congregations on the Raritan, religion in the Dutch Reformed

20 Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 10.

21 Ibid.

22 Twenty years later Whitefield characterized Frelinghuyzen as a "Calvinistical Minister...a worthy old Soldier of Jesus Christ, and...the Beginner of the great Work, which...the Lord is carrying on in these parts" of America.
churches was characterized by apathetic formalism.23 So thoroughly was [Frelinghuyzen] the soul of the evangelical revival among the Dutch until the coming of Whitefield that the account of the movement up to that time is the story of his life.24

Soon after his arrival Frelinghuyzen began regular circuits through the wilderness to his four isolated churches. Herefore, an occasional visit from a neighboring minister or the reading of the Scriptures by a voorlezer had been the extent of Raritan church services. Frelinghuyzen's impassioned advocacy of personal spirituality was a new experience for the Dutch. "Insisting upon regeneration, repentance, faith and holiness, he declared that most of his listeners, since they had had no profound religious experience, were unfit to participate in the Lord's Supper."25 Charles H. Maxson has described Frelinghuyzen's preaching as being tremendously forceful:

Never had the people of the Raritan seen such earnestness, such passion, in the pulpit. Frelinghuyzen defined life in terms of which they had never dreamed. The doctrines he taught were so new that they seemed a departure from the Dutch Reformed teachings. He declared that God hates the outward performance of religious duties apart from a suitable frame of mind. The pastor described regeneration as such a thoroughgoing conversion, such a crisis in the believer's experience, that almost none of his hearers dared claim that they had been converted. The result was that even his elders and deacons who sat with him at the table forebore to commune.

23 Probably the best reference for the condition of religion in New Jersey and New York prior to the Great Awakening is Ecclesiastical Records State of New York, Vols. III and IV. See also Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 185-210; 245-270.

24 Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 11.


26 Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 13.
The more conservative members of his congregation resented such teachings and protested to other Dutch Reformed ministers, including Domine Boel, one of the pastors of the Collegiate Church of New York, who declared Frelinghuyzen to be a "schismatic" and a "teacher of false doctrines." His teachings of personal regeneration instead of baptismal regeneration, "divine life in the soul," and his insistence upon the right to pronounce judgments upon the authenticity of the religious conversions of others were basically the same as those doctrines to be preached by Whitefield nearly two decades later. But by that time the strangeness of the doctrines had worn off, and Whitefield was spared much of the violent criticism which had met Frelinghuyzen during his ministry.

Frelinghuyzen had been at Haritan but a short time before it became evident that the Reformed churches were splitting into a conservative, anti-revivalistic wing led by Domine Boel and an evangelistic group dominated by Frelinghuyzen. Both sides published numerous tracts and sermons. Before long this conflict had "reverberations in every Dutch Reformed church in the colonies and even reached Holland." Frelinghuyzen's emotional preaching brought increasing response from the people. In 1726 the ingathering of new church members reached revival proportions. This emphasis upon emotional religion gradually spread to other Dutch churches and to the English populace of the valley. As a

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28 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 174.
result, the English colonists established a church and called to its pulpit Gilbert Tennent, who soon developed into a powerful evangelist like Frelinghuysen. At times the two men held combined church services, one preaching in English and the other in Dutch. Although this disregard of Reformed Church tradition subjected Frelinghuysen to further animosity, it created additional interest in religion among the common people, and it prepared the way for the generous offering of Reformed Church pulpits to Whitefield and other evangelists during the early part of the Great Awakening.

In at least three other ways Frelinghuysen was instrumental in making the Great Awakening possible among the Dutch in the Middle Colonies. He introduced pietistic private prayer meetings, which helped break down formalism, and which probably prepared the Dutch mind for the numerous prayer meetings held by Whitefield in private homes during the Awakening. He fomented the revival spirit by frequent publications of his sermons. Logically sound and emotionally powerful, these works were widely read by the Dutch. Of considerable importance was his introduction of lay helpers. Frelinghuysen drew to him young men of good ability, indoctrinated them with his principles, and fired them with his zeal. These helpers were sent to the various churches to assist the resident ministers. Many passed from helper to preacher without ordination. When the Great Awakening began, these young evangelists were prepared to help spread the influence of the movement among the

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30Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 16, 17.
The third source of the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was the revival among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The great migration from Scotland and Ulster to the Colonies began about 1710. From 1720 until the Revolutionary War, the Scotch-Irish constituted the great bulk of immigrants to America. Most of them sought homes in Pennsylvania, but many settled elsewhere in the Middle Colonies. By 1732 numbers of Scotch-Irish began to pour southward down the Shenandoah Valley into the Southern Colonies.

The first Presbyterian presbytery was formed at Philadelphia in 1706 under the leadership of Francis Makemie. In 1716 the first Synod was established in the Quaker City, consisting of four Presbyteries: the Philadelphia, Newcastle (Delaware), Snow Hill (Maryland), and Long Island. Before 1720 there were thirty-seven Presbyterian churches in America, of which twenty-six were in the Middle Colonies.

The revival among the Presbyterians before Whitefield's visit to the Middle Colonies was due largely to the efforts of the graduates of

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33 A good many of the early Scotch-Irish settlers landed in New England, but the uns hospitable reception they received limited further immigration. Ibid.
William Tennant's Log College on Neshaminy Creek, Pennsylvania. 36

Tennant, a powerful Scotch-Irish evangelist, established his school in 1726, primarily for the purpose of training his sons for the ministry. 37

Since there was a great need for trained ministers, and since there were no institutions of higher learning in the Middle Colonies at this time, other young men sought an education for the ministry at Neshaminy. 38

During the next twenty years approximately eighteen young men were trained at the Log College, most of whom became the ministers of various churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The most outstanding of these were Charles Beatty, John and Samuel Blair, and the sons of the founder:

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36 Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 25.

37 William Tennant, Sr., was born in Ireland late in the seventeenth century; he was ordained a priest in the Church of Ireland in 1706; in 1716 he came to America with his wife and their four sons, who were later to become famous evangelists; he was accepted into the Presbyterian church as a minister by the Philadelphia Synod of 1718; from 1718 to 1726 he served as a pastor of several small congregations in New York; in 1726 he moved to Neshaminy as the local minister and in that year established his college. He was a man of very devout character and emotional disposition. The awakening among the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies was largely due to his ability to instill something of his own ardent religious zeal into his students at the Log College. See, Archibald Alexander, Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College, Together With an Account of the Revivals of Religion Under Their Ministry (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1851), 13-24; Hereafter referred to as Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College. Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 21-39; Briggs, American Presbyterianism Its Origin and Early History, 186-187.

Gilbert, William, Jr., John, and Charles Tennent. Complaining of the "dead orthodoxy of the churches, of the lack of genuine piety in the ministry, and of the great need for converted ministers," they seem stirred a "militant revivalism which swept the whole region."

Throughout the seventeen-thirties the Scotch-Irish revival mounted higher and higher, and new congregations were formed as converts increased and new communities were reached.

In 1738 the Philadelphia Synod created the New Brunswick presbytery, which was to be composed of ministers from the Presbyteries of New York and Philadelphia living west of the Raritan River. This new ecclesiastical court was dominated by Log College alumni, who used their new

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38 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 275, 276; Alexander, Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College, Chapters III-VI, IX-XIX.

39 The young Tennents were of extremely emotional character. Each of them underwent a violent and thorough religious conversion. William, Jr., who, next to Gilbert, was the most powerful orator of these evangelists, possessed a most unstable nervous system. Once, when conversing with one of his brothers "on the state of his soul," he fainted and fell to the floor. All attempts to revive him failed, and the next day the neighbors were invited to the funeral. At the last moment a young doctor persuaded the family to postpone the burial because he believed he had observed "a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff." After three days the neighbors were again summoned, the grave dug, and the coffin prepared. Just before the body was to be lowered into the ground, it opened its eyes, groaned, and slipped back into an apparently lifeless condition. Gradually during the following days Tennent returned to consciousness, but for the next twelve months he suffered from amnesia.


41 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 276.

authority to push their plans for a religious revival. They were considerably hampered, however, by an edict issued by the anti-revivalistic Philadelphia Synod, which forbid any presbytery to accept as a minister anyone who did not possess either a diploma from some European or New England college, or a certificate of approval from the Philadelphia Synod. This presented a serious threat to the Log College and hence to an adequate supply of evangelistic ministers.43 As a result, the presbytery of New Brunswick, ignoring this decree, ordained John Rowland, William Robinson, and Samuel Finley, all of whom became evangelists of extraordinary power.44

Many older ministers in positions of authority in the Philadelphia Synod resented the "extravagant exhortations" and "censurousness" of the Log College graduates. This cleavage between the conservative and evangelistic elements of the Presbyterian church ministry grew more definite as the news of minor revivals in various Middle Colony communities "stirred the desire of the pious in other towns for a like spiritual rejuvenation." Great segments of the populace were stirred by the quickened religious tempos of the times. Many sermons by the evangelists were printed and widely distributed in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Revivalism was in the air. According to Charles Mauzro, "Above all, the almost incredible stories of the success of George Whitefield in the home land gave promise of a general revival.


It was a time gladdened by hope* in the minds of many. 45

Early in 1737 reports of Whitefield's "phenomenal" evangelism in England and Wales began to appear in the papers of the Middle Colonies. Great emphasis was placed upon the size of his auditories and the amount of the collections, as well as the fact that he preached not only in the churches, but also in the streets and in the fields. It must have made novel reading for the American public—sermons by an Episcopal minister delivered out-of-doors to multiple thousands on week days! Although his preaching did not receive the extensive publicity in the press and from the pulpit in the Middle Colonies that it enjoyed in New England, Whitefield's name was widely known at the time of his arrival in 1739. 46

Whitefield's First Visit to Philadelphia. After a two-and-a-half-month voyage across the Atlantic, the twenty-four-year-old Whitefield, and a party of sixteen followers whom he had brought over to America to assist in the care of his proposed orphanage in Georgia, arrived in Philadelphia late Thursday evening, November 2, 1739. 47 The next day he visited Commissary Cummings of the Anglican church, rented a house

45Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 39.


47Five of these followers paid their own passage from England. Whitefield, An Account of Money Received and Disbursed for the Orphan-House in Georgia. To which is prefixed a Plan of the Building (London: Printed by W. Strahan for T. Cooper, 1741), 26.
at a "very cheap rate," and settled his "family" before dusk. As Whitefield went about the town in the pursuit of his business, he found that many persons were "in great Expectation" of hearing him preach. Saturday morning he read prayers and assisted at the Communion in the Episcopal Church; in the afternoon he preached at the church to a "large Congregation"; that night he was invited to attend a Quaker meeting.

In his Journal Whitefield recorded that while he felt "something of a Sympathy" with the views expressed, he was disappointed that the Quakers talked only of the "inward Christ" and ignored completely the "Outward Christ." This seems strange thinking for an evangelist whose entire religious philosophy centered about the inward experiencing of the "Divine Presence." Very likely he did not realize how similar his doctrines were to those of the Quakers. Because the Quakers controlled the city government and constituted one of the major religious denominations in Philadelphia, it was of considerable importance to the effectiveness of his oratory that they accepted him as a friend during the early days of his visit to Pennsylvania.

During the early part of the following week he preached once or twice a day at the Episcopal church and "exhorted" nightly to the crowds of ministers and laymen who came to his lodgings. On Thursday evening

48 Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From his Embarking after the Embargo, To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia (London: Printed by W. Strahan for James Hutton, 1740), 27. Hereafter referred to as Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia.

49 Before long Whitefield was to fall out of the good graces of the orthodox Quakers. In later years he developed into an avowed opponent of Quakerism. See various letters in his Works, Vol. I, II, and III.
about six o'clock he preached his first out-of-doors sermon in America. According to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Whitefield stood on the Court House gallery and spoke to almost six thousand persons in the street, "who stood in an awful Silence to hear him." According to this estimate of the size of the audience, almost one-half of Philadelphia attended the sermon. On Friday Whitefield preached in the morning at the Episcopal church and in the evening from the Court-House steps to an auditory which he estimated at eight thousand. The night was clear and cool, and never before, even in London, had he observed "so profound a Silence" in an audience. In his words: "The People did not seem weary of standing, nor was I weary of speaking. The Lord endued me with Power from on high. My Heart was enlarged and warm'd with divine Love. My Soul was carried out in Prayer, that I thought I could have continued my Discourse all Night."

Although the sermons which Whitefield preached during his first week in Philadelphia have not been preserved, there was apparently little in them to cause offense to the Anglican ministry. He had been granted

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50 Philadelphia, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 15, 1739; Boston, *Evening Post*, November 26, 1739. It must be remembered that contemporary estimates of the size of Whitefield's audiences were unreliable. For a discussion of the problem of ascertaining accurately the number of his auditors see Part III.

51 The population of the city was slightly under thirteen thousand in 1740. Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness*, 303.

52 Whitefield, *Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia*, 30.

53 At this time there was only one Episcopal church in Philadelphia. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness*, 422.
the use of the Episcopal church for sermons during the week days (a highly irregular proceeding) and had been entertained by the officials of the church upon several occasions. However, on Saturday afternoon, after he had preached in the morning at the Episcopal church and had dined later with the minister, Whitefield received a call from William Tennent, Sr., of Neshaminy. Whitefield was immediately impressed with the piety of the elderly man, and thought him to be "an old grey-headed Disciple and Soldier of Jesus Christ." In the ensuing conversation Whitefield learned about the "degenerate state" of the majority of the American clergy, and about the struggles which Tennent and the graduates of his Log College had undergone to spread a "revitalized religion" over New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Very likely they discussed the similarity between the Methodist movement in England, under the leadership of Whitefield and the Wesleys, and the evangelistic movement in the Middle Colonies sponsored by the Tennents and their followers. This interview possessed tremendous import for the Great Awakening, for during the brief discussion Whitefield aligned himself firmly with the cause of the Log College evangelists.

About three o'clock that afternoon he went to the city prison where he preached upon the "Trembling Taylor." That evening before dark he preached to an immense crowd for more than an hour from the Court House

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54 Alexander, Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College, 18.

55 Whitefield did not mention in his Journal when Tennent and his friends left Philadelphia, but it is probable that they remained overnight and returned to Neshaminy the next day.
steps. Since many of the people seemed unwilling to leave at the end of his discourse, Whitefield offered a long extemporaneous prayer before dismissing them. As he returned to his lodgings, dozens of people followed him along the streets and crowded into the house behind him, begging for further advice on what they must do in order "to be saved." Almost all bent their heads and "wept most bitterly" as the evangelist again spoke to them of the "damnable" condition of their hearts and the "eternal Hell" which awaited them if they refused to be "born again in Christ." 56

The following afternoon, Sunday, Whitefield delivered his first denunciatory sermon against the clergy of the Church of England. As he reported in his Journal: "I was carried out much in bearing my Testimony against the uncharitable Principles and Practices of the generality of our Clergy. Three of my Reverend Brethren were present, I know not whether they were offended....I must prove that the generality of the Episcopal ministers do not preach or live up to the Truth as it is in Jesus." 57 Since this attack occurred the day after his meeting with Tennent, who had been condemning the generality of the ministers for the past twenty years, it appears likely that the elderly evangelist influenced considerably Whitefield's attitude toward the colonial clergy.

Whitefield's First Visit to New York City. On Monday morning, November 12, Whitefield and three friends set out by horseback for New York. Large audiences along the way were assured by the publication of

56Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 32.
57Ibid., 32, 33.
his proposed itinerary in the Pennsylvania Gazette. 58 Such newspaper announcements were most unusual at this time, and, in themselves, created considerable attention. About one o'clock in the afternoon the party arrived at Burlington, New Jersey, about twenty miles from Philadelphia. After eating lunch at a private home, Whitefield preached in the Episcopal church "to a mixed but thronged and attentive Congregation." 59 Although he was importuned to remain all night and preach a second sermon, he and his companions left Burlington about five o'clock and arrived in Trenton shortly after dark. They spent the night at an inn and set out before dawn Tuesday morning for New Brunswick, about thirty miles away.

After riding continuously until early afternoon, the horsemen dismounted in New Brunswick at the home of the Reverend Gilbert Tennent, the oldest of the four sons of William Tennent, Sr. During the remainder of the afternoon Tennent told the English minister of the "many remarkable Effusions of the Blessed Spirit" which had characterized the preaching of the Log College evangelists. Whitefield was soon convinced that the Tennent family and their associates were "the burning and shining Lights" of that part of America, and that their opposers were "carnal secure Ministers" who were motivated by the Devil. 60 In the evening he determined to speak in Tennent's Presbyterian meeting-house.

59 Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 34.
60 Ibid.
Never before in England or in America had Whitefield held services in the church of any faith other than the Anglican. This was the real beginning of his flaunting of the long established tradition of preaching in the churches of only one denomination. The use of the pulpits of various religious faiths, from the Dutch Reformed to the Moravian, enabled Whitefield to augment the numbers of those who heard his doctrines during the Great Awakening; but it also eventually led to bitter opposition by the conservative clergy, and eventually helped to weaken his influence in the colonies.

The next morning, Wednesday, November 14, Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, and a group of followers left New Brunswick. As they rode along, they recounted illustrations of what they believed God had done for their souls. Tennent spoke of "many sweet Instances of God's striving with his Heart, and how Grace, at last, overcame all his Fightings against God."61 About noon they arrived at Elizabeth, New Jersey, where they boarded a boat. At four o'clock they arrived in New York City, where they were affectionately received by the Reverend Mr. Noble, a Presbyterian minister, who had written to Whitefield during his stay in Philadelphia, urging him to visit New York.

Early that evening he went to the Presbyterian meeting-house, where he heard Gilbert Tennent preach the most "searching Sermon" he had ever heard. He believed that in his speech Tennent had gone "to the Bottom indeed, and did not daub with untempered Mortar." Never before had he heard a preacher "dissect the heart" of "natural Man" so skillfully.

61Ibid., 35.
Before retiring that night, the evangelist recorded in his *Journal*:

"He convinced me more and more that we can preach the Gospel of Christ no further than we have experienced the Power of it in our own Heart... Hypocrites must either soon be converted or enraged at his Preaching. He is a son of Thunder, and does not fear the Faces of Men. He is deeply sensible of the Deadness and Formality of the Christian Church in these Parts, and has given noble Testimonies against it."62 The association with this harsh-spoken evangelist, who condemned the "unconverted clergy" so vigorously and who spoke of "damnation and brimstone" so forcefully, was soon to show its influence in Whitefield's preaching.

Thursday morning Whitefield called upon the Reverend Mr. Vessey, Commissary of the Church of England, who charged him with disloyalty to the Episcopal church, with creating disturbances in Philadelphia and other places, and with censuring his ecclesiastic superiors. Perhaps as a result of the encouragement gained through his relationship with the Tennants, Whitefield was outspoken, if not insolent in his manner. He told the Commissary that he was "no respecter of Persons; if a Bishop committed a Fault," he "would tell him of it; if a common Clergyman did not act aright" he "would be free with him also, as well as with a Layman." When the Commissary refused him the use of the Episcopal church, he replied that he "would preach in the Fields, for all places were alike."63

About three o'clock that afternoon he preached in a field to

several thousand people. Some of the spectators sat in their coaches; some sat astride their horses; others stood in a semi-circle about the young orator. According to the Boston Gazette, such a concourse of people had never been seen before in New York.

Among the hearers was a person who a few years later wrote an account of the occasion to The Christian History. Previous to hearing Whitefield, this individual had scanned several of his printed sermons and sections of his published journals and had come vaguely to the conclusion that the evangelist was "a good Man." However, curiosity was the main factor which brought him to join in the field the congregation which awaited the appearance of Whitefield. Soon after he arrived, he saw a slim young man mount a "little Eminence on the side of a Hill," beckon to the audience with his hands, and dispose his hearers in front of the mound and on either side. Whitefield then bowed his head and "prayed most excellently," in an extempore manner. During the sermon the scattering of scoffers present in the audience gradually became quiet, "a solemn Ave and Reverence appeared in the faces of most," and "a mighty Energy attended the Word." The writer confessed that he "heard and felt something astonishing and surprising" but that he was not "fully rid of his Scruples."

Still curious and still somewhat skeptical, this correspondent of The Christian History attended Whitefield's sermon that evening at six

64 Boston Gazette, December 3, 1739.

65 The identity of this person is not known. However, since the article immediately precedes Thomas Prince, Sr.'s, account of the revival of religion in Boston, it is possible that Prince wrote this analysis of Whitefield's preaching in New York City. Thomas Prince, Jr., ed., The Christian History, 1744, 159-160.
o'clock at the Reverend Mr. Pemberton's Presbyterian church. Almost
two thousand other persons were within the church or gathered around
the doors. The sermon must have been extremely powerful. In the words
of this witness: "I never in my Life saw so attentive an Audience;
Mr. Whitefield spake as one having Authority! All he said was Demon­
stration, Life and Power! The Peoples sic Eyes and Ears hung on
his Lips. They greedily devours'd every Word. I came Home astonished!
Every Scruple vanished; I never saw nor heard the like; and I said
within myself. Surely God is with this Man of a Truth."66

Many other New Yorkers believed that Whitefield was a "man of God";
crowds of the pious followed him around from place to place; hundreds
came to hear him preach. Since the weather was too cold to hold out­
of-door services during the remainder of the week, he preached twice
each day in the Reverend Mr. Pemberton's meeting-house. Sunday, November
18, was his last day in New York. At eight o'clock in the morning he
delivered a sermon to about fifteen hundred persons in the church; later
in the morning and in the evening he attended the Episcopal services.
Whitefield found the sermons there to be so logical and unemotional
that, according to his Journal, his heart "almost bled...to consider
what blind Guides were sent forth" to preach in the Anglican churches.
He wrote further in his Journal: "If I have any Regard for the Honour
of CHRIST, Good of Souls, I must lift my Voice like a Trumphtet, and
shew how sadly our Church Ministers are fallen from the Doctrines of
the Reformation.—Her Prophets prophesy Lies, and I fear many of the
People love to have it so.—It is high Time, O Lord, that thou have

66bid.
At eight o'clock that night, after a number of his followers had endeavoured unsuccessfully to secure the use of the town hall, Whitefield preached a farewell sermon in the Reverend Mr. Pemberton's church. The building was crowded and approximately one thousand stood outside in the churchyard. Despite the chill wind, the windows were opened so that those outside might hear. According to The Christian History, many who were unable to get close enough to hear shed tears in their disappointment. These within the range of the speaker's voice heard an outspoken demnunciation of the doctrines taught in the Anglican church.

Whitefield later explained in his Journal the reason for the sternness of his remarks: "Our People need to be caution'd against the Generality of the Scribes and Pharisees of our Communion, as much as the Jews were caution'd to beware of the Scribes and Pharisees by our dear Lord Jesus." 69

One of the more interesting events during the week Whitefield remained in New York was the beginning of a war of letters between the Reverend Jonathan Arnold and William Smith, both of New York City, over the character of Whitefield. During the middle of the week, Smith, who was a follower of Whitefield, invited Arnold and Whitefield to dine at his house. In the course of the meal the two ministers became involved

67Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 39.


69Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 39.
in a violent altercation in which Arnold was purported to have shaken his fist under the English minister's nose, and to have shouted that if Whitefield ever returned to New York he would follow him from pulpit to pulpit and preach every time he did; and if he could not outpreach him, he would give him a physical beating. The next day the irate Arnold sent to the New York Gazette a letter which read in part:

My Dear Brethren, It is with Grief and Piety that I survey your present exposed State and Practice, by reason of Mr. Whitefield's coming and preaching among you! I now warn you to treat him as he deserves, i.e., with Neglect and Contempt, as being the most irregular Man in Doctrine and Manners, that I ever knew! Remarkable for Ignorance and Confidence: The he makes large Pretences to Inspiration and Divine Knowledge, he is unworthy the Honour the Crown, or the Character of a Clergyman; for he gives himself the Liberty of condemning the whole Body of the Bishops and Clergy of the English church, and passing unwarrantable condemnatory Sentences upon Men, as if he was the Supreme Judge....I therefore Warn you in Christ's Name, in Faithfulness to your Souls, to shun him as an open Enemy to Religion, whatever may be his specious Pretences. A Violator of all Rule and Order, disobeying those who have the Rule over him, and displacing his Betters; Don't suffer yourselves to be imposed upon or drawn away by this Deceiver, but Watch and Pray that you enter not into Temptation.

The publication of Arnold's letter led Smith to utilize the same medium for a rebuttal; letter followed letter on the front pages of the New York Gazette; other newspapers in the Middle Colonies and in New England reprinted them. For three months these vituperative articles attracted the attention of the reading public, until both sides, apparently tired of the struggle, let the matter drop.

70 Boston, Evening Post, February 11, 1740.

Whitefield's Return to Philadelphia. Whitefield and his party arrived at Elizabeth, New Jersey, about seven o'clock Monday morning, November 19, having left New York at ten o'clock the night before. Shortly after his arrival, the evangelist was refused the use of the pulpit of the Episcopal church by the minister, the Reverend Mr. Vaughan. At noon he dined with the famed dissenting minister Jonathan Dickinson, and early in the afternoon preached in Dickinson's church to about seven hundred persons. Although he had previously censured the Episcopal ministry, in this sermon he attacked for the first time the ministers and people of the "dissenting" religious groups who contented themselves with a bare speculative knowledge of the Doctrines of Grace, but who never experienced "the Power of them in their Hearts." Several years later Dickinson wrote to a friend in London concerning this speech:

I could observe no further influence upon our people by that address, than a general thoughtfulness about religion, and a promptitude to make the extraordinary zeal and diligence of that gentleman the common and turning topic of their conversation. I do not know that there was any one person brought under conviction, or any new and special concern about their salvation by that sermon.

This sermon had, however, at least two immediate results: first, it marked the beginning of Whitefield's attack upon all ministers whom he regarded as unconverted, regardless of their church affiliation; second,

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72 In Whitefield's Journal the name "Dickinson" is misspelled: "Dickerson." Errors in the spelling of the names of persons and places are not infrequent in his journals. See his Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 40.

it meant that Dickinson, who had been favourably predisposed to the cause of revivalism but who had been unwilling theretofore to align himself with that wing of the Philadelphia synod, was now definitely committed to the evangelistic element led by the Tennents and Whitefield. 74

After the sermon Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent rode on to New Brunswick, where he preached twice at the latter's church on the following day, Tuesday, November 20. Whitefield later wrote in his Journal concerning the sermon: "It is impossible to tell with what Pleasure the Children of GOD heard those Truths confirm'd by a Minister of the Church of England, which for many Years have been preached to them by their own Pastor.—Mr. Tennent's Opposer's Mouths were stopt." 75 Among the persons who remained at the church after the sermon to talk with the young evangelist were the two revivalistic ministers, Frelinghuysen of Haritae and Cross from Barking-Bridge, a small community about twenty miles from New Brunswick. 76 How much influence the meeting with these outstanding evangelists exerted upon Whitefield is not known; but it is safe to assume that he received comfort in their encouragement.

Early the next morning Whitefield set out with a score of followers for Maidenhead, about twenty miles along the road to Philadelphia. At

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74 See Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 278. Sweet is in error, however, in giving the date for this sermon as 1740.

75 Whitefield, Journal from his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 41.

76 Whitefield mispelled "Frelinghuyzen" in his Journal, as "Freeling Housen." Ibid.
Maidenhead he met John Rowland, the Log College graduate who had been ordained the year before by the New Brunswick presbytery. Rowland had assembled a crowd, and Whitefield preached from a wagon to about "fifteen hundred" persons on the conversion of Saul. Following the sermon the evangelist, upon being informed that a criminal was to be executed later in the week at Trenton, about ten miles away, mounted his horse and, in company with thirty friends, rode to that village in order to preach to the prisoner and the inhabitants of the town.

Early the next morning Whitefield's party left Trenton and arrived in Eshaminy about twelve o'clock. As Whitefield rode into the churchyard of William Tennent, Sr., he found, as he estimated, three thousand people waiting to hear him preach. In his words: "I began to speak as the Lord gave me utterance.—At first the People seem'd unaffected, but in the midst of my Discourse, the Power of the LORD JESUS came upon me, and I felt such a Struggling within myself for the People, as I scarce ever felt before.—The Hearers began to be melted down immediately, and cry much." After he had finished, Gilbert Tennent gave a short exhortation. At the conclusion of the services Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, and William Tennent, Sr., retired to the elder Tennent's home where they spent the remainder of the afternoon and evening in religious discussion and in formulating plans for the promotion of the religious awakening. To the English evangelist, William Tennent and his wife seemed like "Zacchary and Elizabeth." His admiration for the Tennents was evidenced by his Journal for this period, which contained numerous laudatory comments about the Tennent family.

77Ibid., 44.
Friday, November 23, Whitefield left his Neshaminy friends and returned to Philadelphia for his second visit. With the exception of Tuesday, when he preached at nearby Germantown to about "six thousand" people, he preached twice each day for the next four days at the Presbyterian meeting-house. On Wednesday, November 28, he preached to a "large Congregation" in the morning at the church; in the afternoon when he arrived to preach his farewell sermon, the building was full and "several thousand" persons were standing in the yard. In order that all might hear, the minister led the crowd to Society Hill, climbed upon the balcony of a nearby house and preached for over an hour and a half to approximately "ten thousand" people. According to his Journal: "I endeavoured to come in all Plainness of Speech, without any Respect of Persons. The mention of my Departure was a Grief to many, and it almost melted me down, to see with what Eagerness and earnest Affection they follow after the Preaching of the Word. If I could preach, they would attend all the Day long."  

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78 Whitefield estimated this audience at six thousand; the Boston Weekly News Letter, December 13, 1739, gave the figure of five thousand.  


80 This estimate of ten thousand was made by Whitefield; The Christian History, 1744, 363; and the Boston Weekly News Letter, December 13, 1739.  

81 Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 50.
On Thursday, November 29, William Seward, a wealthy English friend and traveling companion of Whitefield, purchased a sloop for the evangelist's use. Later that morning Whitefield directed the followers whom he had brought over from England as helpers for his Georgia orphanage to leave their Philadelphia quarters and sail to Savannah. He hired a crew and placed at their head an old sea captain who had been converted by his preaching at Philadelphia. Instead of embarking with them, however, the evangelist determined to go to Savannah by horseback and evangelize at stops along the way. It seems strange that he should send his "family" southward by boat and choose the fairly hazardous and much more time-consuming land route. Very probably he had no desire to return to the dull, commonplace routine of a village minister in remote Savannah. After biding goodbye to his "family," Whitefield took leave of the crowds which hung around the door of his lodgings. As he later expressed it: "Oh how bitterly did the poor Souls weep.—As I passed along the Street, they came running out to the Doors, and discovered the Concern that was in their Hearts by the Sorrow of their Countenances." 83

82 Seward was a good example of a man affected by Whitefield's capacity to stimulate his followers into a passionate devotion to an emotionalized religion. Before Seward forsook his profession and his family to become a disciple of the evangelist, he had been a broker of stocks in London's Exchange Alley and had received an annual income of about seven thousand pounds. He became so extreme in his religious "enthusiasm" as to feel at times that Whitefield possessed insufficient zeal. (William Seward, Journal, 27.) According to Viscount Percival, in his "sermons" Seward "told his hearers, he knew not a word he said to them, but the Angels whisper'd into his ear the words that came out of him." (Lord Egmont, Journal, 402.)

83 Ibid., 53.
Whitefield's popularity with the people of Philadelphia is evidenced by the hundreds of requests made to Benjamin Franklin for copies of his journals. Alexander Bradford, Philadelphia's other printer, told the evangelist on the day of his departure that he could easily sell a thousand copies of his sermons if they were ready from the press. Perhaps no higher tribute could be paid the effectiveness of Whitefield's oratory in the Quaker City than a recommendation by Benjamin Franklin, who thought Whitefield to be a "remarkable" preacher:

The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was a matter of speculation to me, who was one of the number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers, and how much they admired and respected him, notwithstanding his common abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally half beasts and half devils. It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.

Few hostile articles appeared in the newspapers of Pennsylvania and New York during Whitefield's visit. Instead, most of the published comments were highly laudatory.


85 An example of such laudatory comments is the following poem, originally printed in the *New York Journal* and then reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:

WHITEFIELD! that great, that pleasing Name
has all my soul possess'd:
For sure some Seraph from above
Inspired his Godlike Breast.

He comes commission'd from on High,
The Gospel to proclaim:
And thro' the wide extended World
To spread the Savior's Name.
However, in contrast to his reception by the New Englanders a year later, in the fall of 1740, there was little apostrophization of Whitefield as an "Angel of God" in the Middle Colonies at this time.  

See! See! He comes, the heavenly Sounds
Flew from his charming Tongue;
Rebellious Men are seiz'd with Fear
With deep Conviction stung.

Listening we stand with vast surprise,
While Rapture chains our Powers,
Charm'd with the Musick of his Voice;
Nor know the passing Hours.

Blasphemers hear the dreadful Sound,
Inspire'd with trembling Awe;
While he declares their crimson Guilt,
And loud proclaims the Law.

While, WHITEFIELD, to thy sacred Strain
Surpriz'd we listen still,
Immortal heights we seem to reach,
Celestial Transports feel.

Approach ye Mortals here below
And flock around the Song;
With Pleasure hear the Savior's Name
Sound from a mortal Tongue.


Whitefield manifested a good business sense as one of the aspects of his personality during his sojourn in Philadelphia. He brought over from England a large quantity of stores which he sold for a "considerable profit" to the people of Philadelphia. To facilitate this transaction he had advertisements, such as the following, inserted in the newspapers:

TO BE SOLD

At the House of the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD, in Second-Street (the same in which Capt. Blair, lately dwelt) the following GOODS, being the Benefactions of CHARITABLE PEOPLE in England, towards BUILDING an ORPHAN-HOUSE in GEORGIA: BRASS Candlesticks, Snuffers and snuff-Dishes, four, six, eight, ten and twenty-penny Nails, Pidgeon, Duck and Goose Shot,
Whitefield's Journey Southward. About eleven o'clock Thursday morning, November 29, Whitefield left Philadelphia in the company of a large body of horsemen; that evening he preached to about seven thousand at Chester. On Friday he spoke twice to more than "five thousand" each time at Wilmington and spent the remainder of the day in religious conversation with William Tennent, Jr., the local Presbyterian minister. On Saturday he spoke at New-Castle in the morning to "2500," and in the afternoon to "three thousand" at Christian-Bridge. Sunday he preached twice at White-Clay Creek to "eight thousand" persons who stood in the rain to hear the two sermons.

About four o'clock Wednesday afternoon Whitefield arrived in Annapolis, Maryland. He was received with "much civility" by the Reverend Mr. Sterling, Episcopal minister of the parish, and by Governor Ogles. On Friday morning, in order to hear the evangelist preach, the governor suspended court business. In this sermon, his only sermon in

bar Lead, Pistol Powder in quarter and half Barrels, English Duck Hump. 1, 2, 3, 4, English Cordage, Ratling, Warming, Marline and Span-yard, Rugs and Blankets, Duffills strip'd, Brills for Bed-sacking, seven eights and three quarter Garlix, white Toles, white Hessins, Russia Hempen Ditto, narrow Lawns, Scotch Cloth, cotton Romalls, Seirsuckers, white Dimities, Carredaries, Chercomes, long Romells, colour'd Gingham with Trimmings, Gorgoroons black, black Persian, Taffities, strip'd Linseys, Swanskin Bays, broad Cloth, Shalloons, long Elle, Buttons, Buckrams, and sewing Silk. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, November 22, 1739.)

87 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, December 6, 1739; Boston Weekly News Letter, December 20, 1739. Whitefield more conservatively estimated this audience to number five thousand. (Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 53.)

88 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, December 6, 1739; Boston Weekly News Letter, December 20, 1739. Whitefield believed these audiences numbered over ten thousand. (Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 55.)
Annapolis, Whitefield was exceedingly out-spoken in his condemnation of the "innocent Diversions" of the "Age" as being contrary to "the whole Tenour of the Gospel of CHRIST." The thesis of his oration was that "Cards, Dancing, and such like, draw the Soul from GOD, and lull it asleep as much as Drunkenness and Debauchery." Following the sermon, the Governor entertained Whitefield and his eight traveling companions very hospitably at dinner. The next morning, Saturday, December 8, the evangelist left Annapolis on the way to Williamsburg, Virginia.

After a leisurely week of travel, the party arrived in Williamsburg late on Friday evening, December 14. The next day Whitefield dined with the Governor, and then called upon Commissary James Blair, whom he found to be "by far the most worthy Clergyman" of the Episcopal church he had yet met in America. Blair was quite friendly to the evangelist and invited him to preach in the Anglican church on Sunday morning. At that time Whitefield spoke upon his often-used theme, "What think Ye of Christ?" The Virginia Gazette reported that his "extraordinary Manner of Preaching" won the "Admiration and Applause of most of his Hearers." At noon he dined with the Commissary; then he and his friends mounted their horses and set off southward.

Whitefield's Arrival in Charlestown: After riding almost constantly during the daylight hours for three weeks, and preaching only a few times to small audiences, he arrived in Charlestown on Saturday, January 5.

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89. Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 59.
90. Williamsburg, Virginia, Virginia Gazette, December 14, 1739.
1730. Since Commissary Alexander Garden was out of town, Whitefield was unable to secure the use of the Episcopal church for Sunday. As a result, the evangelist preached that afternoon in one of the "dissenting" meeting-houses, probably the Presbyterian, where he found a polite but unresponsive audience. In his Journal he complained that the splendor of their apparel ill befitted a church congregation: "I question whether the Court End of the Town at London could equal," or "exceed them in affected Finery and Gaiety of Dress." However, in his sermons on Monday at the French church in the morning and at the Presbyterian meeting-house in the afternoon, he believed he could see "a visible Alteration" in his audiences.

Whitefield's Establishment of an Orphanage at Savannah: Before daylight Tuesday morning, Whitefield left Charlestown in an open canoe paddled by five Negroes, and after three days reached Savannah. Upon his arrival, January 10, he found that his "family" had preceded him by three weeks. In conjunction with James Habersham, they had selected a five-acre site about ten miles out of Savannah for the orphanage, had applied to Oglethorpe for an official grant, and had begun fencing and clearing the land. Whitefield surveyed the tract and readily approved the location. He then rented the largest house in Savannah for six

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91 Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 80.

92 Habersham had crossed the Atlantic on the Whitaker with Whitefield in 1738, and had been appointed by the evangelist to be the school-master of the charity school which Whitefield had begun in 1738. Habersham later became a successful merchant and a figure of considerable importance in Georgia politics.
months to serve as a temporary orphan-house.\textsuperscript{93}

Whitefield was so busily occupied with the problems of the orphanage that he had time only to read the Episcopal lessons occasionally during the week days and to preach two sermons and one "lecture" on Sundays. On his first Sunday in Savannah, January 13, he preached twice from the text, "What think ye of Christ?", which "he pressed home with great Energy, denouncing Anathemæ on all such as taught otherwise." During his stay in Savannah his sermons rarely varied from the theme of the "New-Birth" and "Justification by Faith only," and showed "little Variation" in treatment or methodology.\textsuperscript{94} At times during these sermons he characterized the clergy as "slothful Shepherds, dumb Dogs, &c. who led their People dreaming on in a carnal Security to Destruction." He told his hearers that very few of the great political figures, wealthy persons, or learned men for the last "age and more past," could enter Heaven. He asserted that, because of their emphasis upon "good works," the anonymous author of the \textit{Whole Duty of Man}, a guide book of piety, and Archbishop Tillotson, one of the most outstanding Anglican churchmen of the seventeenth century, had caused thousands to perish in Hell.

\textsuperscript{93}William Stephens, \textit{Journal}, 17, 491. Since Whitefield's \textit{Journal} contained only scattered entries during his stay in Savannah, the best reference for the period is the journal written by Colonel Stephens. Colonel Stephens complained in his \textit{Journal} that Whitefield paid such high wages that the town's labourers flocked to work for him and neglected to plant carefully their five-acre garden plots. Within a few days almost every bricklayer, carpenter, and sawyer in Savannah had been hired by the minister to aid in the construction of the orphanage. At least one of these workers became so enamored of the evangelist that he forsook his wife and family and offered his services to the orphanage for life in return for food and shelter. \textit{Ibid.}, 527.

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Ibid.}, 510.
Stephens believed that these expressions "were very shocking to many People." 95

One of the most interesting sermons of this period was Whitefield's valedictory to the people of Savannah on Sunday, March 30. He took his text from Paul's farewell to Ephesus, Acts 20: 26, 27: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." According to Stephens, he preached "in the same Manner as St. Paul exhorted the Elders of the Church." He carried "the Parallel betwixt the Apostle and himself as far as it would go; signified, that he expected Persecution wheresoever he went; therefore, knew not, whether ever these among whom he had preached the Gospel" in Georgia, "should see his Face any more." 96 He explained that the "Lord called him" to evangelize once more to the people of Pennsylvania and New York and that it would be several months before he should return.

It appears that Whitefield was not particularly successful in his ministry at Savannah. If there were any "great meltings" present in his audiences, neither Whitefield nor any other contemporary recorded them. In one of his later speeches in Savannah he reproached his hearers for their "Hardness of Heart," and the "slight Improvement of Grace" they had made under his ministry. He told them that they "came behind all, to whom" he "had preached the Word elsewhere; for he seldom failed of Number in those Places, who followed him with Weeping, desirous to know how they must be saved; but" he "found few such" in Savannah. 97

Whitefield himself admitted that he had not possessed "much enlarge­ment in preaching." In a letter written on February 4 he complained: "my heart is often weighted down, and torn to pieces with a sense of my desperately wicked and deceitful heart." A further testimony of the relative ineffectiveness of Whitefield's preaching in Savannah was a report to the London Trustees made by Captain Thompson, who had heard Whitefield preach several times in Georgia. Thompson stated that the evangelist had converted a few persons, but that the majority of the people disliked him and believed his theology to be "much alter'd" from what it was at the time of his previous visit in 1738.

There were various reasons why Whitefield's preaching did not achieve the spectacular success in Savannah that it had in the Middle Colonies. One was the unwarranted zeal with which he secured children for his orphanage. Within a few weeks after his arrival in Savannah, he had gathered all of the destitute orphans in that locale and had housed them in his home. On February 4, he met with the Magistrates of Savannah in the home of William Stephens to discuss the progress of the orphanage. One of the officials present was a Mr. Parker, who had supported for a number of years two orphan boys, one of whom was now an almost grown lad of sixteen years. When Whitefield learned of this situation, he immediately demanded that Parker turn the two children over to the orphanage. In the resulting argument, Parker protested that it was unfair for him to have supported the boys until they were capable of rendering him some service, only to have them taken out of

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98Whitefield, a letter dated February 4, 1740, Savannah, in his *Works*, 1, 150.  
his hands. However, the evangelist was adamant, and finally won custody of the children. 100

Four days later Whitefield met with the magistrates and persuaded them to rule that all orphans in the colony of Georgia, regardless of the status of their support, were to be considered under his jurisdiction. His claims were based solely upon his deed from the London Trustees, which stated in vague terms that he was to have the authority to place orphans in a special home. The evangelist argued that since the deed did not specifically exempt any orphans, all orphans were subject to his authority. This reasoning did not convince Stephens, and, as was later demonstrated, did not reflect the meaning of the Trustees.

On February 10, the minister left Savannah on an eighteen-day tour of southern Georgia to find additional orphans. 101 Shortly after his return, he took two orphaned children from the home of their brother, John Mellidge, who had been providing adequately for their support. Mellidge then protested to General Oglethorpe, who was living at Fredericksburg. The General wrote to Mr. Jones, a bailiff of Savannah, and to Stephens, asserting his opinion that the trustees had intended to give Whitefield jurisdiction only over destitute orphans. Young Mellidge, acting upon the advice of Oglethorpe, called upon the evangelist and

100 Ibid., 506.

101 Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, After his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia (London: Printed by W. Strahan for James Hutton, 1741), 6-9. Hereafter referred to as Journal, After his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his Second Return thither from Philadelphia.
requested the return of his brother and sister. This Whitefield
promptorily refused, stating that the orphans were at their proper
home with him. The General then commanded Jones to remove the boys
from the orphanage, and, when Whitefield left Savannah on April 3 for
Pennsylvania, Jones carried out his orders. 102

Unfortunately the matter was not allowed to drop there; Whitefield
wrote several letters full of invective to the London Trustees, com­
plaining about Oglethorpe's "interposing" in the orphan house affairs. 103

Upon hearing of these disturbances in Georgia, Viscount Percival, presi­
dent of the Board of Trustees (later knighted as Earl of Egmont),
interpreted Whitefield's actions to indicate clearly that his purpose
in establishing the orphanage had been to "breed up those of his sect."
Believing that he was endeavouring to "lift himself beyond the author­
ity" of the civil officials, the Trustees issued to the Bailiffs and
Recorders of Savannah specific instructions which were designed to
curtail Whitefield's activities: (1) The authority for placing chil­
dren in the orphanage was lodged exclusively in the hands of the
magistrates. (2) Only "destitute" orphans were to be admitted into
the orphan-house. (3) The civil authorities of Savannah were to
inspect the orphanage carefully once each year and to send a report of
their findings to the Trustees. (4) Either Whitefield or the manager


103 Journal of the Earl of Egmont, First President of the Board
of Trustees, from June 14, 1738, to May 25, 1744, Reprinted in the
Colonial Records of Georgia Compiled and Published Under Authority of
the Legislature by Allen D. Chandler (Atlanta, Georgia: The Franklin-
of his orphanage was to be required to submit regular accounts to the 
Savannah magistrates.\(^{104}\) When news of this edict by the Trustees 
reached Georgia, it impaired the evangelist's prestige in that colony 
and later, in conjunction with numerous other factors, helped reduce 
the influence of his preaching upon colonial America.

Whitefield's propensity to "slurring remarks" in his letters to the 
London Trustees indirectly helped weaken the effectiveness of his 
preaching in Georgia. He frequently deplored the "low moral condition" 
of Georgia, implied that the Trustees lacked religion, and threatened 
"to inform the world" of the misapplication of funds granted them for 
religious purposes. He so irritated the members of the Board with his 
tactless remarks that at the board meeting on April 16 most of those 
present evidenced "great resentment" and expressed their opinion that 
Whitefield was "a Hypocrite" and was "ambitious of power." Viscount 
Percival pacified the members as well as he could: "I was willing to 
excuse the fool the best I could, lest by writing to him in too angry 
terms he should in a yet abandon his design of building the Orphan 
house, and the charge of keeping the Orphans fall upon the Trust. I 
said I knew not how to extenuate his want of respect for the Trustees, 
but by urging his youth, unexperience, un-mannerly education, and 
indiscreet Zeal. That I acknowledged him an Enthusiast, but Enthusiasts 
are ever sincere, the often dangerously mistaken, which is inconsistent 
with hypocrisy."\(^{105}\) The attitude of the Trustees toward Whitefield was

\(^{104}\text{Ibid.}, 359-361.\)

\(^{105}\text{Ibid.}, 334.\)
directly communicated to the officials in Savannah and indirectly by them to the people of Savannah. In all probability this mark of disapproval injured his "ethical proof" in the eyes of conservative persons and weakened the effectiveness of his later preaching there.

Another factor which directly affected the influence of Whitefield's ministry in Savannah was his quarrel with the Reverend Mr. Morris. Morris had served both the pulpit at Fredericksa, to which he had been appointed by the Trustees, and the pulpit at Savannah from the fall of 1736 to Whitefield's arrival in Savannah in January, 1740. According to contemporary accounts, Morris was a capable preacher who stressed the importance of "good works" in Christian living. At first the relationship between the two men appeared cordial, but before long the ardent evangelist became irritated by the "mild" religious philosophy of Morris. One afternoon early in March, Whitefield invited him to tea at the orphanage. The beverage had hardly been served before Whitefield denounced his guest as immoral because he practiced on the violin and played cards with the Savannah ladies; he also accused him of teaching false doctrines and of being "at Work for the Devil."

When Morris protested that, before receiving his appointment as chaplain to Fredericksa, he had been given a strict examination by the Bishop of London, Whitefield replied that the Bishop knew no more about Christianity than did Mahomet [sic] or any other infidel. He climaxed his tirade


107 Shortly after his altercation with Whitefield, however, Morris became disgruntled with the religious affairs in the colony, neglected his duties, and became the subject of unsavory gossip. He returned to England in the summer of 1741 to defend his reputation before the Trustees and did not return to America. (See indexes of Stephens, Journal, IV, and Lord Egmont, Journal.)
by stating that Norris should never again assist him in administering
the Sacrament, nor ever receive it from his hands. According to
Stephens, the argument between the two ministers soon became "The com-
mon Talk of the Town," and added to the confusion caused by Whitefield's
seizure of the orphans.

Another reason for the comparative lack of success of Whitefield's
preaching was that Savannah in 1740 was a sleepy wilderness village of
only a few hundred inhabitants. Whitefield's sojourn of three
months in Savannah, with a few intermissions, was a much longer time
than he remained in any one locality during his evangelistic tour of
the Middle and sea-board Colonies. There is considerable truth in Ola
Winslow's statement that he "needed a new flock and a fresh pasture
every forty-eight hours." His talents were not amenable to the
routine duties of a village clergyman; he needed the thrills and excite-
ment of seeing vast audiences weeping and crying out under the passion
of his oratory. Probably his parishioners grew too familiar with his
idiosyncrasies to be overpowered with his preaching. Certainly few of
them regarded the evangelist as a divine emissary, sent to "lead their
steps to righteousness."

The most important results of Whitefield's stay in Savannah may be

109 Ibid.
110 "A State of the Province of Georgia, Attested upon Oath in
the Court of Savannah, Nov. 10, 1740." Included in the appendix of
William Stephens, Journal, IV.
summarized briefly: he began the construction of a large orphanage, which he named Bethesda; to house the orphans temporarily he rented a house in Savannah; he aroused the ire of a number of Georgians and of the London Trustees by his manner of operating the orphanage and by his censorious attitude. The establishment of the orphanage was of extreme importance to the success of his later preaching in the Middle Colonies and in New England, for it gave him a concrete appeal and mitigated the objections of the conservatives to his itinerant evangelism. Although available references to his preaching in Savannah are limited, it appears that his ministerial efforts there were less successful than they had been elsewhere in the colonies. His sermons were in general repetitious and critical.

Whitefield Creates a Stir in Charlestown. Whitefield's stay in Savannah was interrupted by a five-day visit to Charlestown. He arrived in the South Carolina city late Thursday evening, March 13. Early the next morning he called upon Commissary Alexander Garden, who in 1733 had been very favourably predisposed toward the young evangelist. The Commissary received him coldly and in the course of the ensuing interview accused him of emotional radicalism and excessive pride. The evangelist retorted that he preached only primitive Christianity and that he believed almost all of the Episcopal ministers, including Garden, to be settled too securely upon their "lees." He charged further that the generality of the clergy were carnal, unconverted men who did not "have Christ in their Hearts." Whitefield said that since Garden did not preach out against balls and other "sinful" forms of amusement, he should be forced to preach from the pulpit against the Commissary.
When Garden threatened to suspend Whitefield from his ministerial post
if he preached again in any public church in South Carolina, the
evangelist replied that he would treat such an edict as he would a
"pope's bull." Garden finally became so exasperated at the self-
righteousness of Whitefield that he ordered his guest out of his
house.112

It seems strange that Whitefield could have felt as strongly as
he did against the officials and clergy of the Church of England, and
yet be willing to remain an Episcopal minister. He was definitely a
dissentor from the church in fact if not in name; in America he had
preached rarely in Episcopal churches; he had followed the Episcopal
ritual in his services very infrequently; he had maligned his consti-
tuated ecclesiastic authorities in print and in the pulpit; he had
violently accused the Anglican clergy of being unconverted and sloth-
ful; he had associated intimately with the most radical element of the
independent ministers; he had consistently preached a theology widely
variant from that held by other Episcopal ministers.

During the next four days of his remaining stay in Charlestown,
Whitefield preached twice a day in various "dissenting" churches. As
usual he stressed the doctrines of the "New-Birth," and "Justification
by Faith only." He also spoke out sharply against the "heinous evils"
of balls and social assemblies. According to his Journal, he made
only one direct appeal for contributions to the orphanage and received

112Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few
Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 10, 11.
over seventy pounds sterling. Hundreds of persons crowded the churches
to hear him preach and then followed him to his lodgings to hear
further exhortations and prayers. In the words of one resident of
Charlestown: "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 Hearing him again!----
How awfully, with what Thunder and Sound did he discharge the Artillery
of Heaven upon us?  

Several incidents helped stimulate interest among the people of
Charlestown in hearing Whitefield preach. At the regular Sunday morning
service, March 18, Commissary Carden delivered a scathing indictment of
Whitefield, whom he compared to the Pharisee who went to the temple
saying: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." This
was the beginning of a series of bitter sermons which Carden was to
deliver that year against Whitefield. The spectacle of the dignified
Commissary of the Church of England hurling epithets from the pulpit
at a fellow clergyman created much interest among the populace. The
Baptists, Presbyterians, Moravians, and other "dissenting" faiths of
the city were no doubt pleased with this schism in the Anglican church.

113Josiah Smith, The Character, Preaching, &c. of the Reverend
Mr. George Whitefield, impartially Represented and Supported. In A
Sermon, Preach'd in Charlestown, South-Carolina, March 26th Anno Domini.
1740. With a Preface by the Reverend Dr. Colman and Mr. Cooper
of Boston, New-England (Boston: Printed by G. Rogers, for J. Edwards and
H. Foster, 1740), 12. Hereafter referred to as The Character, Preaching,
&c. of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield.

114Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few
Days after his Second Return thither from Philadelphia, 10, 11.
Another factor which created a certain amount of enthusiasm was the arrival from Philadelphia of a large bundle of printed copies of Whitefield's sermons, which he distributed freely among the townsmen.

A third reason for the large attendance at his sermons was the publication of two letters which Whitefield had prepared previously at Savannah. One endeavoured to prove that Archbishop Tillotson knew "no more of Christianity than Mahomet." His method of proof consisted chiefly of quoting a few passages from Tillotson's writings which were supposed to illustrate his lack of information about Christianity. One of the reasons Whitefield offered to substantiate his thesis was that "natural Men" often spoke well of Tillotson's writings and, in his words, "we cannot but pronounce a Voe against those Books which natural Men speak well of." The second of these letters, which was very long, was designed to point out the "fundamental errors" of the Anglican manual of piety, *The Whole Duty of Man.* Whitefield objected to this book because the word "regeneration" was not found in the Preface, the table of contents, or in the index. Both of these letters, extremely injudicious, evidenced great haste in composition, superficiality of thought, and needlessly immoderate language.115 No doubt the publicity attending their publication motivated any curious persons, as well as the pious, to hear Whitefield in Charlestown. However, these pamphlets, reprinted and scattered over the colonies from Savannah to Boston, created many enemies for the evangelist and helped to lessen his eventual...

115When Colonel Stephens heard of these publications he confided in his *Journal* that he no longer doubted the widely circulated rumour that Whitefield had encouraged one of his orphans to throw the book, *Whole Duty of Man,* into the fire. *Stephens, Journal,* IV, 528.
influence in the American colonies.

The altercation between Garden and Whitefield was to have far-reaching consequences upon the total effectiveness of Whitefield's preaching during the Great Awakening. In July of 1740, the Commissary was to summon Whitefield to appear before an ecclesiastic court to show reason why he should not be suspended from his ministerial office. During the ensuing months, numerous recriminatory pamphlets, sermons, public letters, and newspaper articles were written by the two clergymen and their supporters. This publicity drew many of the curious to hear Whitefield, some of whom fell under the spell of his eloquence and became his followers. On the other hand, it helped crystallise the conviction of many "conservative" persons that the emotionalism of religion was getting out of bounds. In 1743, 1744, and 1745, during the aftermath of the Great Awakening, scores of pamphlets were written to discredit Whitefield and the Awakening; many of these publications referred to his differences with the Commissary as evidence of a "disreputable character."

On Tuesday, March 18, he left Charlestown by boat for Savannah. About a week later, on March 26, Josiah Smith, a minister of the Independent church of Charlestown, preached an extravagant eulogy of the evangelist. He referred to Whitefield as "that Son of Thunder." "this

116 A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Whitefield from Georgia to a Friend in London, Shewing the Fundamental Errors of a Book Entitled, the whole Duty of Man (Charlestown: 1740); Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield: Viz. Letter I. To a Friend in London, concerning Archbishop Tillotson. Letter II. To the same, on the same Subject. Letter III. To the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, concerning their Negroes (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1740). Hereafter referred to as, Three Letters From The Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield.
Great Master of Assemblies," "the gallant Youth," an "incomparable Preacher." Smith divided his sermon into three parts: (1) He analyzed and defended the doctrines which Whitefield had preached in Charlestown. (2) He described the nature and effectiveness of his oratory. (3) He vindicated the character of the evangelist. According to Smith, Whitefield stressed in almost every one of his sermons the doctrines of "Original Sin," "Justification of Faith only," "Regeneration," and "inward Feelings of THE SPIRIT." Smith asserted that all of his religious principles were logical, scriptural, and orthodox.

It is evident from this testimony that Whitefield did not preach the Calvinistic doctrine of "Election" during his sermons in Charlestown. At no time previous to this in his journals or in his printed sermons did he directly advocate such a belief. Yet in several letters written during his stay in the South he stated that he was "far more convinced" of the doctrine of "Election" than when in England. 117 These letters introduced between Whitefield and the Wesleys a bitter fight over the merits of "Election," resulting in a temporary schism among the Methodists in 1741. Possibly during his visit to London in 1739, Whitefield had absorbed a belief in "Election" from the Moravian society in Fetter-Lane or from his correspondence with the Scottish revivalists, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine. Tyerman asserted that the evangelist's acceptance of "Election" came "suddenly" in England about the month of June, 1739. 118 The only evidence he cited was the prominent allusion to this

117 Whitefield, a letter to John Wesley, dated March 26, 1740, at Savannah, in his Works, I, 155.

118 Tyerman, in op. cit., 274.
doctrine in a 1772 version of the sermon which Whitefield preached at Stoke Newington on July 31, 1739. In a footnote Tyerman admitted that the original editions of this sermon, published in 1739, did not contain any mention of "Election." It is probable that Whitefield was influenced toward accepting this doctrine through his associations with the Tennants and other Calvinistic revivalists in the Middle Colonies. Although the manner of his acceptance is not known, his private letters written during the early months of 1740 showed that he believed firmly in it. Smith's eulogistic sermon about Whitefield in which he analysed and defended the tenets advanced by the evangelist during his preaching in Charlestown indicates that in Charlestown, at least, Whitefield placed no emphasis upon "Election."

In his sermon Smith complained that his pen could not describe Whitefield's "Action and Gesture, in all their Strength and Decencies." He characterised Whitefield as "a finished Preacher, a great Master of Pulpit-Oratory and Eloquence." He asked his hearers to remember:

"With what a Flow of Words, what a ready Profusion of Language, did he speak to us upon the great Concerns of our Souls? In what a flaming Light did he set our Eternity before us? How earnestly did he press CHRIST upon us? How did he move our Passions, with the constraining LOVE of such a Redeemer? The Awe, the Silence, the Attention, which sat upon the Face of so great an Audience, was an argument, how he could reign over all their Powers. Many thought, He spake as never Man spake before him."[113] Smith went so far as to state that if St. Paul were alive he would look and speak like Whitefield.

This sermon by Josiah Smith probably exerted an appreciable

[113] Smith, The Character, Preaching, &c. of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, 12.
influence upon the reception of Whitefield's oratory in the colonies. In Charlestown it was presented to a large congregation and then published in pamphlet form. In the summer of 1740 it was printed in Boston with a highly laudatory preface written by Benjamin Colman and William Cooper, both noted Boston ministers. This publication, along with other pamphlets and news reports concerning the evangelist, helped prepare the way for his triumphant sweep through New England in the fall of 1740.

Summary. During the first four months of Whitefield's visit to America he had preached in eight colonies, from New York to Georgia. In the Middle Colonies he had thrilled great mass audiences in the churches and in the fields, and had formed a firm alliance with the Log College evangelists. In the South he had begun the construction of a large orphan-house, had established a temporary orphanage, and had preached briefly (to filled churches) at Charlestown. With his emotionalism he had helped inaugurate a great religious awakening in America; but by his tactless zeal and his censorious attitude he had sowed seeds which were soon to bear bitter fruit.
CHAPTER VI

WHITEFIELD'S SECOND VISIT TO THE MIDDLE COLONIES

With his friends Habersham and Seward, Whitefield left Savannah in his sloop at daybreak on Wednesday, April 3. During the ten-day passage to Newcastle, Pennsylvania, he penned one of the most unusual "love letters" ever written. For some time he had believed that God desired him to marry in order to provide a matron for the orphanage. In pursuit of this desire, he wrote a "loveless" proposal of marriage to Elizabeth Delamotte of Middlesex, England, whom he had met during several of his evangelistic tours. He opened his letter by warning the young lady not to be surprised at the contents of the message, and then introduced a series of questions:

Do you think you could undergo the fatigues, that must necessarily attend being joined to one, who is every day liable to be called out to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ? Can you bear to leave your father and kindred's

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1Whitefield likewise wrote a letter to Elizabeth's parents, requesting their permission to propose marriage to her. He assured them that they need not be afraid of sending him a refusal because if he "knew anything" of his heart, he was completely free "from that foolish passion, which the world calls Love." He stated that he wished to marry only because it was God's will; if they refused to permit him to propose marriage to their daughter then he would realize that she was "not the person appointed by God" for him. Whitefield stated as one of his reasons for desiring to marry Miss Delamotte: "I should think myself safer in your family, because so many of you love the Lord Jesus, and consequently would be more watchful over my precious and immortal soul." Although the letter of reply by the Delamottes has not been preserved, it is known that Whitefield received an answer which discouraged future attempts of courtship with Elizabeth. (Whitefield, a letter to William S—, [Seward?], dated Savannah, June 26, 1740, in his Works, I, 194.) Whitefield, Letter to Mr. and Mrs. D——, April 4, 1740, in his Works, I, 159. (Tyerman has proved that Whitefield was writing to the Delamottes. Tyerman, in op. cit., 370, 371.)

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house, and to trust on him, (who feedeth the young ravens that call upon him) for your own and children's support, supposing it should please him to bless you with any? Can you undertake to help a husband in the charge of a family, consisting perhaps of a hundred persons? Can you bear the inclemencies of the air both as to cold and heat in a foreign climate? Can you, when you have a husband, be as though you had none, and willingly part from him, even for a long season, when his Lord and master shall call him forth to preach the gospel, and command him to leave you behind?"2

After offering several Biblical allusions of the type of "holy marriage" that he desired, he explained his lack of ardour in this way: "I make no great profession to you, because I believe you think me sincere. The passionate expressions which carnal courtiers use, I think ought to be avoided by those that would marry in the Lord....I love you only for God, and desire to be joined to you only by his command, and for his sake." He signed his letter, "Your affectionate brother, friend and servant in Christ."3 This letter is of interest because it helps reveal the character and personality of the young evangelist whose preaching stirred colonial America during the Great Awakening.

When Whitefield landed at Newcastle, Sunday, April 13, he found that the people of Pennsylvania had not forgotten about him during his four months' absence. In the pulpits he had been both praised and condemned; the presses of Benjamin Franklin and Andrew Bradford had printed numerous copies of his sermons, religious tracts, and journals. In a letter written at New Brunswick a week after his landing, he wrote that copies of his sermons were "in the hands of thousands" in that

2Whitefield, Letter to Miss E_____, April 4, 1740, in Ibid., 160.

3Ibid., 161.
locality.\(^4\)

Often during his absence from Pennsylvania the Philadelphia newspapers, the American Weekly Mercury and the Pennsylvania Gazette, devoted the front page and sometimes more to Whitefield and the new religious awakening. One of the more eulogistic of these reports, entitled "The Conduct and Doctrines of the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD vindicated from the Aspersions and malicious Invectives of his Enemies," occupied two pages in the December 13, 1739, issue of the Pennsylvania Gazette. According to this article, later published in pamphlet form, no minister in the history of Christianity had come closer to emulating Christ than had Whitefield; in learning no one had excelled and few, if any, had equaled him; and for "unaffected Piety" he stood "alone" among his contemporaries. The article deplored the "mean, scandalous Aspersions" against his character wrought by "the Mockery of licentious Tongues" and the "envious Pens of Public Defamers." Whitefield's doctrines were defended as orthodox and sound, and it was asserted that the "Testimonies of thousands, of Millions" of souls which had been saved through his preaching would "undoubtedly be his Glory, and his Crown of Rejoicing in the great Day of God."\(^5\)

Another typical news report was printed two weeks later, December 27, when the same paper published an extended poem which offered some praise of the young evangelist:

\(^4\)Whitefield, Ibid., I, 167.

SWELL is thy voice, and manly is thy strain,
Nor does thy wak'ning trumpet sound in vain.
Then still go on, proclaim thy Master's laws.
Warm'd with the promise of thy Lord's applause.

Of more importance on the other hand, Whitefield was warned to modify
his condemnatory attitude toward those who did not share his convictions:

Yet spare the man, where room to spare can be;
Let Vice, not man, receive the lash from thee.
And oh! beware! nor let thy zeal condemn,
For bare opinions, weak imperfect Men.

He was further urged to avoid acting upon impulses as though they were
inspirations of divine origin:

From frantik impulse guard thy faithful breast,
Nor give admittance to so false a guest....
They stifle truth, whilst airy phantoms rise,
And fill the clouded mind, with dark surmise;
Blow up the man, with enthusiasm rage,
And every Pow'r, tumultuously engage;
Drive him to actions, which he did detest,
And raise a tempest in his doubtful breast.6

This poem not only helped maintain popular interest in Whitefield during
his absence from the Middle Colonies, but it also helped focus a certain
amount of attention upon several of the "less commendable" elements of
his preaching.

During his stay in the Southern Colonies, the Philadelphia newspa-
papers, as well as those of New York and New England, printed on their
front pages various "letters to the editor" which continued the contro-
versy between the New York minister, Jonathan Arnold, and William Smith
over the character of Whitefield. By this time the argument had
descended to the level of name calling between the two protagonists.
Arnold was accused of "stuffing his guts" at Smith's house, and of

6Ibid., December 27, 1739.
writing "heaps of Rubbish." Smith was represented as being a "Liar and Deceiver," whose house and family "abounded with wild Fowl." How much influence this propaganda had upon the reading public is not known; however, both the friends and opposers of Whitefield utilized the opportunity to voice their opinions in highly expressive language.

On April 10, just three days before Whitefield landed in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Gazette published his article concerning Archbishop Tillotson, printed in Charleston the preceding month. Tillotson's theology was highly respected by many in the Middle Colonies, especially the Episcopal clergy, and the publication of this injudicious article later aroused much opposition to Whitefield's preaching.

Whitefield's Third Visit to Philadelphia. Immediately upon disembarking on Sunday morning, April 13, at Newcastle, Pennsylvania, William Seward, one of Whitefield's traveling companions, borrowed a horse and rode to Christian Bridge and Whetly Creek to give notice of the evangelist's arrival. He returned in time for the afternoon sermon, bringing with him the evangelical ministers, Lewis Hovel, Dr. Jones, and Charles Tennant, in addition to several hundred members of Tennant's congregation. That evening, after the services, Whitefield rode on to Willington in the company of "a large group of horsemen." As they

7Boston, Evening Post, February 11, 1740.
8Philadelphia, American Weekly Mercury, January 8, 1740.
9Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, April 10, 1740. Also, see page 147.
rode along singing and "praising God," he was "much rejoiced, in hearing how mightily the Word of God had prevailed since" he "was at Pennsylvania last." In the morning at eleven o'clock he preached from the balcony of the house at which he spent the night to about "three thousand" people. So spontaneous was the response to Whitefield's speaking that Seward recorded in his Journal: "it is impossible to express the Affection of the People." Following the sermon, the minister and his friends dined at the home of a Quaker and then mounted their horses and proceeded on to Philadelphia, arriving about eight that night.

The next morning, Tuesday, April 15, Whitefield was courteously received by the Governor of Pennsylvania. Later in the morning he was informed by Commissary Cummings that he would be denied the use of the Episcopal pulpit because his newspaper article on Tillotson and his Answer To the Bishop of London's Last Pastoral Letter, printed shortly before his arrival in Philadelphia, were "disrespectful" and "untruthful." When the evangelist retorted that such charges should be made in public through the medium of the press, the Commissary explained that neither of the Philadelphia printers would accept any anti-Whitefield material. 

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11 Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 17.

12 Seward, Journal. 3.

13 Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 19. It seems unlike Benjamin Franklin to take sides on an issue such as this; therefore Whitefield's statement should be accepted with reservations.
In the afternoon he preached upon the "blind beggar" to about "ten thousand" people from a balcony on Society Hill, where the preceding fall he had delivered his farewell address. In this sermon Whitefield endeavoured to show that the "generality of the Clergy" in their attempts to discredit the revivalistic ministers were actuated by the same spirit which motivated the Scribes and Pharisees when they cast out the "Blind Man," whose spiritual and natural eyes had been opened by the " Redeemer." He wrote later that during the delivery of the sermon he "felt somewhat of that Divine Fire and inward Strength which... the poor Beggar felt when hearing his Testimony for the Blessed JESUS, before a Bench of Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing."  

In his peroration he attacked Tillotson as a "deceiver of Souls," who had led thousands of individuals into Hell. The resulting opposition to this tirade against the Archbishop did not perturb Whitefield. He recorded in his Journal: "It cannot be expressed how many carnal Hearts were disturbed by my Testimony against the Archbishop, that great and good Man, as they call him. But before I have done, I do not despair of seeing People bring his Works as they once brought the Books of curious Arts, and burn them before all Men."  

During the following seven days that Whitefield remained in the vicinity of Philadelphia he preached nine times upon Society Hill to

14Ibid.

15Ibid. Such an attitude toward the burning of books soon found unguarded expression in his sermons and exhortations. Eventually some of his followers did burn the writings of Tillotson and various Arminian authors, thus helping to discredit the Great Awakening in the eyes of the conservative element.
great mass audiences.¹⁶ Many of the conservative ministers resented
his success with the populace, as well as the censorious character of
his sermons. Even the Quakers, who disliked his emphasis upon original
sin, began to "spit out a little of the serpent."¹⁷ Whitefield could
feel the rising sentiment against him in certain quarters: "The Storm,
I find, is gathering space.—As the Word of GOD increases, so will the
Rage and Opposition of the Devil."¹⁸

On Sunday morning, April 20, Whitefield attended the Episcopal
church and heard the Commissary challenge the doctrine of "Justifica-
tion by Faith only" in two sermons¹⁹ based upon a text taken from
James 2: 18. "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works:
show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by
my works." That evening the evangelist preached at Society Hill from
the same text. His peroration contained a sharp denunciation of the
Episcopal ministry and an appeal to the congregation to leave churches
"where Christ was not taught" and to attend meeting-houses where the

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¹⁶The Philadelphia papers did not contain references to the
size of Whitefield's congregations during this week. In his Journal
Whitefield estimated that his audiences varied between six and fifteen
thousand.

¹⁷Whitefield, A letter dated April 28, 1739, New Brunswick, in

¹⁸Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few
Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia.

¹⁹These sermons were later published: Archibald Cummings, Faith
absolutely necessary, but not sufficient to salvation without good works.
In Two Sermons, Preached at Christ-Church in Philadelphia, April 29,
1740. By Archibald Cummings, M.A. Commissary to the Bishop of London.
As Published in Their own Vindication, from the false and rash Reflec-
tions of the famous Mr. WHITEFIELD (Philadelphia: Andrew and William
Bradford, 1740).
preachers spoke a "feeling Religion." Unfortunately for his cause, he repeated this exhortation many times in public during the following months. Other evangelists, such as the graduates of the Log College, emulated him in fiery sermons to the people. As a result of these exhortations many people grew critical of their ministers; schisms appeared in many congregations; some churches divided over differences of opinion concerning the piety of the minister. Although the climax of this movement did not occur until several years after Whitefield's departure from the colonies, 20 it was the logical culmination of the pattern set by Whitefield in his sermons during the Great Awakening.

Several events which happened during this week directly influenced the attitude of Philadelphians toward the evangelist's preaching. On Wednesday, April 16, William Seward, Whitefield's traveling companion, made an arrangement with the owner of the building which housed the "Assembly Room, Dancing-School, and Musick-Meeting," whereby he obtained the keys to the building in return for the payment of the customary rent and the guarantee to compensate the owner for any damage that might occur. In the evening when the pleasure-loving set of the city discovered that their place of amusement had been closed, several threatened to cane Seward; others broke down the door of the building. 21 These individuals of more moderate inclination gathered in the coffee-

20 Whitefield left Charleston January 16, 1741, for England, where he remained until the fall of 1744. He spent the years 1744-1748 in America preaching over most of the colonies. The chief period of agitation over the merits of the Great Awakening occurred during the years 1743, 1744, and 1745.

houses to drink bowls of punch and to "growl" against the revivalists for not "preaching up" morality and "letting it go at that." 22

In addition to drawing the attention of Philadelphians toward Whitefield's preaching, the "Assembly-Room" affair probably exerted a not inconsequential influence upon the people of the other colonies. News items concerning the incident, which were printed in the Philadelphia papers, were copied by other newspapers throughout the colonies. On May 1, Seward had inserted in the Pennsylvania Gazette the following report: "Since Mr. Whitefield's Preaching here, the Dancing School, Assembly and Concert Room have been shut up, as inconsistent with the Doctrine of the Gospel: And though the Gentlemen concern'd caus'd the Door to be broke open again, we are inform'd that no Company came the last Assembly Night." 23 Various competent historians, including Carl Bridenbaugh, 24 have apparently accepted this report at face value, without being cognizant that this item was a prejudiced report by Seward and not a disinterested observation by Benjamin Franklin, the editor of the Pennsylvania Gazette.

The front pages of the issues of the Pennsylvania Gazette during the month of May were devoted largely to public letters concerning the closing of the concert room. Some of these letters denied in vituperative language that the "Assembly-Room" had been closed by popular

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22 Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 22.

23 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, May 1, 1740.

demands as a result of the preaching by the evangelist. Seward was charged with breaking the law and with "lying" in his public letter which had been printed in the Gazette on May 1.

Whitefield's sermons upon the evils of dancing, and Seward's action in closing the "Assembly-Room" had the immediate effect of focusing further publicity upon the young revivalist. According to Carl Bridenbaugh, a more distant influence was to "put a blight on public recreation which lasted for several years," and to bring the dancing parties of the Philadelphia gentry to an end. So effective were the evangelist's admonitions against the "sinful diversions of the Age" that four years after he had departed from the Quaker city the much-traveled Dr. Hamilton believed Philadelphia placed less emphasis upon "gay diversions" than any of the colonial cities.

The effectiveness of Whitefield's preaching during his week's visit to Philadelphia was also probably affected by the publication in the Pennsylvania Gazette of his public letter: To the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, Concerning Their Negroes. Although his experience with the race problem consisted almost solely of what he had seen on his quick transit through the Southern Colonies during the closing months of 1739, this treatise was a stern judgment upon slave holders. In the introduction of the letter Whitefield told

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26 Ibid., May 29, 1740.
27 Bridenbaugh, in op. cit., 440.
28 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, April 17, 1740. Whitefield penned this public letter January 23, 1740, when he was at Savannah.
them: "I think God has a Quarrel with you for your Abuse of and
Cruelty to the poor Negroes." He compared the treatment of the slaves
to that of horses or dogs, and concluded that it was "probably better"
for the Negroes to die as quickly as possible in order to avoid a life-
time of "abuse."29 The great disparity between the standards of living
of the whites and blacks was described bluntly by the evangelist in this
way: "my Blood has frequently almost run cold with me, to consider how
many of your Slaves had neither convenient Food to eat or proper Raiment
to put on, notwithstanding most of the Comforts you enjoy were solely
owing to their indefatigable Labours."30

One of the most striking passages of the letter, which must have
irritated some of his readers, was his apparent countenance of a Negro
uprising: "And tho' I heartily pray God they may never be permitted to
get the upper Hand; yet should such a Thing be permitted by Providence,
all good Men must acknowledge the Judgment would be just."31 Another
provocative remark was his insistence upon the equality of the Negro:
"Think you your children "are any way better by Nature than the poor
Negroes? No, in no wise. Blacks are just as much, and no more, con-
ceived and born in Sin, as White Men are. Both, if born and bred up
here, I am persuaded are naturally capable of the same Improvement."
In the conclusion of the letter Whitefield warned the slave-holders that
unless they repented of their mistreatment of the blacks they should

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
expect God to destroy them.\textsuperscript{22}

Shortly after the letter appeared, it was published in pamphlet form by Benjamin Franklin and was widely scattered over the Middle Colonies and New England.\textsuperscript{33} Other newspapers copied parts of the letter from the \textit{Gazette}. Evidence that the tract was widely read is indicated by the frequent references to it in pamphlets printed several years later during the agitation over the merits of the Awakening. The remarks concerning "equality" and "insurrections" must have been extremely offensive to slave-owners in the Southern Colonies and somewhat disconcerting to the inhabitants of the Middle Colonies. According to Carl Bridenbaugh, "the most dangerous threat to law and order in the towns came from Negroes and Indians, slave and free, both of whom more readily adopted the white man's vices than his virtues."\textsuperscript{34}

When Whitefield's letter was published in 1740, Negroes constituted one-fifth of the population of New York and formed a sizable element in the major cities of the colonies.\textsuperscript{35} Severe punishments for minor offences were frequently applied by the whites in order to keep Negro crime in check.\textsuperscript{36} The fear of Negro uprisings during this period is evidenced

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{33}Whitefield, Three Letters From the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield: Viz. Letter I. To a Friend in London, concerning Archbishop Tillotson. Letter II. To the same, on the same Subject. Letter III. To the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, concerning their Negroes (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1740). Hereafter referred to as \textit{Three Letters}.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{34}Bridenbaugh, in \textit{op. cit.}, 379.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{36}See for example: \textit{New York Gazette}, August 18, 1735.
by the mass executions of blacks in the "Negro Conspiracy" of 1741 in New York. In view of these circumstances it seems likely that the publication of Whitefield's letter created opposition which interfered with the effectiveness of his preaching.

Another event which occurred during his visit to Philadelphia exerted both an immediate and a more remote effect upon the influence of his preaching. On April 22 he persuaded William Seward to furnish twenty-two hundred pounds for the purchase of five thousand acres on the forks of the Delaware river in Pennsylvania. On this site he expected to erect a school for Negroes and to create a "refuge" for his followers who were being "persecuted" in England. Whitefield lacked sufficient capital for the successful culmination of such grandiose plans and after some years was forced to sell the land in order to pay the debts incurred by the orphanage. His plan to construct a Negro school gained for him additional publicity and offered another specific appeal for use in his sermons.

Whitefield's Journey to New York. About eight o'clock Wednesday morning, April 23, Whitefield, in the company of a large group of friends, set out for New York. Before leaving Philadelphia, he and Seward had endeavoured to insure a large attendance at the sermons along the way by submitting copies of the itinerary to the Philadelphia papers for publication and by making definite preaching appointments with the

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For primary references see the following newspapers for the late spring and early summer of 1741: American Weekly Mercury; Pennsylvania Gazette; New York Journal; New York Gazette.

Seward, Journal, 10.
ministers of the communities through which he intended to pass. While in Philadelphia Seward had served as a sort of "publicity agent" for the evangelist. During this time he wrote many letters to ministers and influential persons, concerning Whitefield's activities. Often he enclosed newspaper items and copies of the minister's sermons and religious tracts. Some of this "propaganda" was directed at achieving maximum gatherings for the sermons during the journey to New York. 39

Late in the afternoon of April 23, Whitefield preached in the churchyard of William Tennent, Sr., at Neshaminy; the next day he preached at Shippack, twenty-five miles from Neshaminy to "two thousand" persons. There he met Peter Boehler, the great Moravian "teacher" who had exerted a tremendous influence upon John Wesley several years earlier. 40 The two evangelists held a joint service: Whitefield preached first; then Boehler followed, speaking in Dutch. Whitefield apparently cared little that he was severely violating the customs of his church by preaching from the same platform with a Moravian teacher.

Early Friday evening, after riding about thirty-five miles, he arrived in Amwell, where he found that a large crowd had been assembled several hours awaiting his coming. Although the Reverends Gilbert Tennent and John Rowland had delivered three sermons to the congregation before he arrived, the people were "deeply moved" by Whitefield's exhortation. After the services he engaged in conversation with Tennent and Rowland until late that night. The next day he rode on to New

39Ibid., 9.
40See page 65.
Brunswick with his ministerial friends and spoke in the evening to several thousands who stood in the street before Gilbert Tennent's meeting-house. On Sunday, April 27, he preached in the morning to about "seven thousand" in a field; Tennent spoke in the afternoon; in the evening Whitefield addressed about the same number as attended the morning service. 41 According to Seward: "Tennent [sic] endeavour'd earnestly to persuade men by the Terrors of the Lord, and Mr. Whitefield chiefly by the Love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which melted down the audience into most sweet Tears of Joy." 42 During Whitefield's evening sermon, the cries and groans of the audience arose in such volume that he was forced to break off his sermon and comfort the weepers. One woman collapsed and fell to the ground; as those nearby bent to help her, a general cry swept through the audience. When he left the pulpit, "earnest seekers" milled about him, crying out that they could "see nothing but Hell." 43

The next morning Seward left the evangelist's party and rode back to Philadelphia, where he embarked for England. His specific mission in England was to raise funds for the proposed Negro school in Pennsylvania. 44 After the departure of Seward, Whitefield and his friends rode to Woodbridge, where he preached about ten o'clock, and then

41 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, May 1, 1740.
42 Seward, Journal, 16.
43 Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia, to a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 27.
44 Unfortunately for this cause, Seward insisted on preaching in the fields of England to crowds of Methodists; in October, during one of these occasions, he was stoned to death by anti-Methodist rioters.
continued to Elizabeth-town. He found a large congregation had gathered at the Presbyterian meeting-house, anticipating his arrival. When he entered the pulpit, ten dissenting ministers and two Anglican ministers were present in the audience. These clergymen so deeply resented Whitefield's violent denunciation of the "carnal Ministry" that they soon rose to their feet and stalked from the church. Whitefield described the situation in the following way: "GOD gave me much Freedom of Speech. I dealt very plainly with the Presbyterian Clergy; many of whom, I am persuaded, preach the Doctrines of Grace to others, without being converted themselves. No doubt some were offended: But I care not for any Sect or Party of Men." The conclusion is obvious from Whitefield's statement that he considered himself divinely motivated in his judgment of the religious convictions of the ministry. It appears never to have occurred to him that perhaps he had no right to assume the role of an infallible judge of the character of his fellow preachers. Such a censorious attitude created an extreme antipathy on the part of many persons and produced a vulnerable avenue of attack which his enemies pursued with considerable effect during his stay in America and for several years thereafter. Whitefield was so convinced he was reflecting the will of God in his condemnations of the ministry that during the ensuing months he grew even more critical in his preaching.

Whitefield's Second Visit to New York. About nine o'clock Tuesday morning, April 29, Whitefield took leave of his friends and embarked on a river boat for New York City. Upon his arrival there about noon he

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15Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia. To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 28.
was welcomed by William Tennent, Jr., who escorted him to his temporary lodgings. During the six days of his sojourn in the vicinity of New York City he preached eight times in churches or out-of-doors in the city, and once at Flat-Bush on Long Island, to audiences which varied between "three" and "eight thousand." His collections for this period totaled over three hundred pounds. 46

In his sermons in New York the evangelist was especially critical of the "conservative" ministers of all faiths. He cried out to his huge audiences that all preachers who were not "Flames of Fire" were false to their God and to humanity. He likewise spoke out strongly against Archbishop Tillotson and the author of The Whole Duty of Man. Whitefield was aware that these attacks deeply angered some of the ministry and that only his popularity with the people saved him from violent abuse. He sensed that before long their resentment would find voice. However, as he expressed his feelings in his Journal: "I care not, if I am thrown into a fiery furnace, or cast into a Den of devouring Lions." 47 Very often in his letters, journals, and theological writings he expressed his conviction that all those who truly believed in Christ would be persecuted by "carnal" men who were motivated by the Devil. This philosophy seems to have embued him with a paranoid complex. Any opposition was conceived to be persecution. Numerous times in his writings he claimed to "glorify" in suffering for Christ's sake." In


47 Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia, to a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 33.
New York, as elsewhere during the Great Awakening, he seemed deliberately to court opposition. It is possible that this was the result of his subconscious desire to be "persecuted" in order to "rise in the Eyes of the Lord." This antagonistic aspect of his preaching, in conjunction with his condemnatory attitude, lessened the effectiveness of his oratory with the conservative members of his audiences and created a steadily growing number of men who were opposed to the Awakening and who attempted to weaken the appeal which Whitefield's preaching had for the populace.

One of the more interesting comments concerning Whitefield's preaching in New York was expressed in a letter printed in the Boston Weekly News Letter:

"I was last Week at New-York, and had Opportunity of hearing the celebrated Mr. WHITEFIELD; but whether my Soul is of a different make from other Men's, or whether it was owning [sig] to my Expectations being too much raised by the Character I had heard of him, or whatever the cause might be, I must confess, I was not so much moved as I expected—Correct Preaching is what he professes not to aim at; bold and unguarded Expressions are too common with him. Zeal is his Characteristic, but I fear it has a degree of bitterness....Yet I could not but admire to see what Command he had of the Attention and Affections of a numerous Audience, composed of the most different sorts of Persons."48

Apparently the author of this letter, like many other persons of conservative inclination, was displeased by Whitefield's "excesses" in the pulpit. On the other hand, it was probably these "excesses" which attracted such tremendous audiences to his sermons and won for him such popular acclaim.

One of the most unfortunate incidents which occurred during the week of Whitefield's stay in New York was his meeting with John Davenport, who had been holding revival meetings on Long Island. Ignoring the fact that Davenport was regarded by many persons as an "Enthusiast and a Madman," Whitefield preached and wrote almost immediately that the Long Island minister had been "highly honored" by God. In his informal exhortations to his followers, he said that "of all Men living" he knew of no one who kept "a closer Walk with GOD." In his Journal, Whitefield described him as a "true Son of God," and contrasted his piety with that of the "generality of the Clergy." This hasty approbation of Davenport was typical of Whitefield's proneness to rash judgment.

Possibly because of such encouragement, Davenport, during the following months after his meeting the English evangelist, soon exceeded even Whitefield in the violence of his preaching. According to Charles Chauncy, he would scream at his listeners: "You poor unconverted Creatures, in the Seats, in the Pews, in the Galleries, I wonder you don't drop into Hell! It would not surprise me, I should not wonder at it, if I should see you drop down now, this Minute into Hell. You

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49 Davenport was a direct descendant of James Davenport, the founder of the settlement of New Haven.

50 See Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 32. See also his A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, on the 11th of March, 1741, Containing an Account of the Work of GOD at Georgia, Rhode-Island, New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania and South-Carolina (London: Printed by W. Strahan for R. Ret, 1741), 55, 56, 59. Hereafter referred to as: Journal from a few Days after his Return to Georgia to his Arrival at Falmouth.

51 Boston, Post Boy, October 5, 1741.
Pharisees, Hypocrites, now, now, now, you are going right into the Bottom of Hell. At times he would leap out of the pulpit, tear off his upper garments, and jump up and down in the pews crying: "the War goes on, the Right goes on, the Devil goes down." The congregations would respond to exhortations like these by "groaning, crying out, fainting, falling down, praying, exhorting, singing, laughing," and rolling upon the floor.

Such hysterical actions caused the civil authorities of Connecticut and Boston to banish Davenport from their jurisdiction. Even the ardent supporters of the Great Awakening issued public declarations against him. Although Davenport's worst excesses occurred after Whitefield's departure from the colonies in January, 1741, the enemies of the revival pointed out that Davenport was merely emulating Whitefield in his enthusiasm. To them Whitefield had set the pattern, and Davenport had followed it.

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52 Chauncy, Seasonable Thoughts, 98.
53 Ibid., 99.
54 Boston Post Boy, September 23, 1741. The worst extravagance which Davenport committed took place in 1743 when he persuaded a large group of his fellows at New London, Connecticut, to burn upon the town their wigs, cloaks, breeches, hoods, gowns, rings, jewels, necklaces, and books written by Increase Mather, Beveridge, Colman, Sewall, Chauncy, and several other so-called "enemies of Religion." As the books were being consumed by the flames, Davenport led the onlookers in chanting: "the Smoak of the Torments of such of the Authors...as died in the same Belief, as when they set them out," is "now ascending in Hell in like Manner, as...the Smoak of these Books rise." Boston Evening Post, April 11, 1743.
55 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, July 1, 1742.
56 See, for example: Boston Post Boy, September 23, 1741.
57 See, for example: Prince, The Christian History, 1744, 237.
by many of the sober citizens severely injured both Whitefield's reputation and the eventual influence of the sermons which he preached in America during the Great Awakening. The task of those who would align Whitefield and Davenport was made considerably easier by the eulogistic comments which Whitefield wrote in his Journal on May 2, during his stay in New York.

Whitefield's Fourth Visit to Philadelphia. About ten o'clock Sunday night, May 4, Whitefield left New York on his return journey to Philadelphia. He arrived at the Quaker City on Wednesday, after having preached at Amboy, Freehold, Allen's Town, and Bristol. During the next four days he preached seven sermons in Philadelphia and one at the small suburban town of Pennypack. His congregations were even larger than formerly. One of the reasons for this heightened interest was probably the printing in two installments in the Pennsylvania Gazette of Whitefield's second letter "proving" that Arch-bishop Tilletson knew no more about Christianity than Mohammed. Another cause was probably the sermons preached by the Commissary against Whitefield on Sunday, May 11. The Commissary's text in the morning was based upon Romans 19:2: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." That evening twenty thousand people gathered upon Society Hill to hear Whitefield's reply to the Commissary. The

58 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, April 24, and May 1, 1740.

59 This is the figure given in Whitefield's Journal and in various newspapers. See, for example: Boston Weekly News Letter, May 15, 1740.
...
thousand." After the sermon he went to Nottingham in company with the revivalistic ministers William Tennent, Craghead, and Blair. His Journal stated that the party "rode through the Woods, most sweetly singing and praising GOD." 62

On Wednesday, May 14, Whitefield preached two sermons at Nottingham to audiences which he calculated at about twelve thousand. 63 Both of these services must have been very "successful." According to his testimony:

Thousands cried out, so that they almost drowned my Voice. Never before did I see a more glorious Sight! Oh what strong Cryings and Tears were shed and poured forth after the dear LORD JESUS.—Some fainted; and when they had got a little Strength, they would hear and faint again. Others cried out in a Manner, almost, as if they were in the sharpest Agonies of Death! I think I never was myself filled with a greater Power. Oh what Thoughts and Words did GOD put into my Heart! 64

At the conclusion of the afternoon discourse he was apparently overcome by the strenuousness of his emotions. In his words: "I was so pierced, as it were, and overpowered with GOD's LOVE, that some thought (I believe) that I was about to give up the Ghost.—Oh how sweetly did I lie at the Feet of my JESUS! With what Power did a Sense of his All-constraining, Free and Everlasting Love flow in upon my Soul! It almost took away my Life." 65

The next day, Thursday, May 15, Whitefield preached at Peg's Manor to another immense out-of-doors-audience. Whitefield wrote that great

62 ibid., 42.
63 ibid., 43. This number seems to be unreasonably high.
64 ibid., 43.
65 ibid.
confusion was evidenced in the congregation:

Look where I would, most were drowned in Tears. The Word was sharper than a two-edged Sword, and their bitter Cries and Groans were enough to pierce the hardest Heart. Oh what different Visages were then to be seen? Some were struck pale as Death, others wringing their Hands, others lying on the Ground, others sinking into the Arms of their Friends, and most lifting up their Eyes towards Heaven, and crying out to God! I could think of nothing, when I looked upon them, so much as the Great Day.—They seemed like Persons awakened by the last Trump, and coming out of their Graves to Judgment. One would imagine, none but a Devil incarnate could have withstood the Power, or avoid crying out. Surely GOD is in this Place.66

It is obvious from Whitefield's description of the convulsions of his hearers that he thoroughly endorsed a most extreme physical and emotional response from his audiences. Although the manifestations of hysteria which sometimes characterized his auditors did not attain the violence often found later in the audiences of Gilbert Tennent and John Davenport, Whitefield did set the pattern. His later denials that he believed physical extravagance to be the necessary result of the "divine spirit's" working upon the "human soul," were easily refuted by those who had read his published Journal.

After the sermon at Yag's Manor he rode twenty-four miles to Newcastle and preached out-of-doors to several thousand. That night after supper he took leave of his friends Tennent, Blair, and Craghead, as well as those who had accompanied him all the way from Philadelphia, and went on board his sloop, which had remained docked in the Newcastle harbor during the preceding month.67

66Ibid., 44.

67Because of inclement weather, Whitefield's sloop did not sail for several days. During this time he preached four sermons at Reedy Island and three sermons at Lewis-Town.
During the forty days Whitefield had remained in the Middle Colonies he had preached sixty-eight times, and had collected about fifteen hundred pounds. He had greatly advanced the cause of the Great Awakening, but at the same time, he had set certain precedents which were later to destroy much of the eventual influence of his preaching upon colonial America. For the time being, however, Whitefield was extremely popular with the people. The regard with which they held the evangelist is perhaps typified in the following poem which congratulated him on his "68 Preachments" in the Middle Colonies.

Whilst GOD inspir'd the pious fervent Youth,  
In distant Lands to preach CHRIST's saving Truths,  
Whilst vaster Numbers he to CHRIST converts,  
Divinely charms and melts the hardest Hearts,  
Whilst Multitudes the crowded Temples fill,  
And are well pleas'd with his diviner Skill,  
Forsake their Sins and Virtue's Ways admire,  
Seek for their Heav'n and dread eternal Fire;  
Then the great Prince of Hell his Silence broke,  
Breath'd from his Mouth both sulph'rous Fire & Smoke,  
Address'd his Friends and all their Passions rais'd;  
And told them how the godlike Youth was prais'd;  
Then in full Council soon resolv'd to send,  
The worst, the curs'd, and the most angry Fiend,  
With a vast Throng of Hellish Volunteers, [sic]  
To crush this Youth, and dissipate their Fears.  
Just as they went, a Guardian Angel flies,  
All Heav'n alarm'd, the Thunder broke & shook the Skies,  
Angels of Light in Armies quick descend.  
The pious Youth from Satan's Rage defend.  
All Heav'n rejoice and nobler Anthems sing;  
To see the World obey the eternal King.  

[^68]: Ibid., 51.  
[^69]: Boston Weekly News Letter, June 5, 1740.  
[^70]: Boston Weekly Post Boy, September 1, 1740.
CHAPTER VII

OPPOSITION TO WHITEFIELD IN THE SOUTH

Whitefield's Return to Savannah. Whitefield arrived at Savannah early Wednesday, June 5, 1740. As was his custom while in Georgia, he made very few entries in his Journal, possibly because there was little to record. He preached two sermons each Sunday and read prayers occasionally on week days at the community church. (According to Stephens, Whitefield's sermons were characterised by monotonous stressing of the "New Birth, Conviction, Conversion, Free Grace," and "Justification by Faith." Only one instance has been recorded of unusual power attending his preaching during this visit. At a prayer service one afternoon shortly after his arrival, Whitefield was so "carried out" in his extemporaneous prayer that the sweat "poured most plentifully from" his face. Before he had finished, the entire congregation was weeping "most pitifully." After the services the caretakers of the orphanage, the orphans, and some of the parishioners walked with the evangelist from the church to the orphanage, crying and praying in loud voices. Upon entering the house, Whitefield called them all together and began to pray. He wrote later: "had I not lifted my Voice like a Trumpet, the groans and cries of the Children would have prevented my being heard." After the passing of an hour, he dismissed the distraught orphans, who retired to their rooms to sob out their

1Stephens, Journal, IV, 599.

2Whitefield, Journal After his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 53.
prayers. At this time it began to thunder and lighten, which in White-
field's thinking, "added much to the Solemnity of the Night, and
reminded" him "more of the Coming of the Son of Man." About an hour
after the parishioners had returned to their homes and the children
had become quiet in their rooms, the evangelist called the orphans
together again to sing hymns before going to bed. The next day the
agitation of the children increased, especially among the girls. White-
field found two of the little girls "in frequent Agonies, when lying
and groaning under the Sense of their original actual Sins... for near two Hours, they cried out as violently as they did the Night
before." One of them was so upset by the proceedings that she spent
the next few nights in prayer. She told the evangelist that she could
not sleep because her heart burned with a "longing Desire for the Sal-
vation of her dear Relations and Fellow-Creatures." During the fol-
lowing weeks, the excitement at the orphanage gradually abated, but not
before several of the children, according to Whitefield, were "brought
savingly home to Christ."3

Whitefield himself at various times during this period experienced
considerable emotionalism, as is witnessed by a letter he wrote on June
26.

I have a garden near at hand, where I go particularly to
meet and talk with my God, at the cool of every day. I
often sit in silence, offering my soul as so much clay,
to be stamped just as my heavenly potter pleases: and
whilst I am musing, I am often filled as it were with
the fulness of God. I am frequently at Calvary, and

3See: Ibid., 53, 54, 55; a letter dated June 7, 1740, at
Savannah, in his Works, i, 184, 185; a letter dated June 13, 1740, at
Savannah, Ibid., 186.
frequently on Mount Tabor; but always assured of my Lord's everlasting love...Jesus is love; Jesus willeth my perfection, Jesus hath died for me; Jesus can deny me nothing. He hath given me himself; will he not then freely give me all things besides?...The whole Godhead now fills my soul. O grace, grace! O Jesu, Jesu! was ever love like thine! Lord, I abhor myself in dust and ashes. O that I could praise thee! that I could love thee as I ought!4

In order to obtain more converts and to break the monotony of his stay in Savannah he left Savannah on Monday, June 30, for an evangelistic visit to Charlestown.

Whitefield's Ecclesiastical Trial. Whitefield arrived in Charlestown Thursday evening, July 3. He preached at the Independent meeting-house once on Friday, and twice each on Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday morning he attended the Episcopal services and heard Commissary Garden speak violently against him. According to Whitefield, the speech was "as virulent, unorthodox and inconsistent a Discourse as" he had ever heard. Following the sermon, Garden refused to administer the Sacrament to the evangelist.5

During the next week Whitefield preached twice a day in Charlestown and in nearby settlements. On Friday, July 11, he received from Commissary Garden a formal summons which ordered him to answer charges of ministerial irregularity before an ecclesiastical court in Charlestown,

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5Whitefield, A Continuation Of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, on the 11th of March 1741, Containing An Account of the Work of GOD at Georgia, Savannah Island, New-England, New York, Pennsylvania and South-Carolina (London: printed by W. Strahan for R. Hett, 1741), 4. Hereafter referred to as Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth.
July 15. 6 Sunday, July 13, Garden preached another sermon against the evangelist. In Whitefield's words: "had some infernal Spirit been sent to draw my Picture, I think it scarcely possible he could paint me in more horrid Colours. I think, if ever, then was the Time that all Manner of Evil was spoken against me falsely for Christ's Sake.

The Commissary seemed to ransack Church-History for Instances of Enthusiasm and Grace abused. He drew a Parallel between me and all the Oliverians, Ranters, Quakers, 8 and "French Prophets." This sermon, as well as that of the previous Sunday, was printed in 1741 in Boston. 7 The influence exerted by the publication of Garden's sermons is unknown; however, the immediate effect of their delivery was to stimulate the people to crowd the churches to hear Whitefield preach.

On Tuesday, July 15, the evangelist appeared at St. Philip's church in Charlestown before the ecclesiastical court which consisted of Commissary Garden and the Reverends Millichamp, Eoe, Orr, and Guy. 8 Many of the curious and the pious came to witness the trial. 9 Upon his arrival at the church, Whitefield was handed a long list of charges

6Whitefield, a letter dated, July 11, 1740, at Charlestown, found in his Works, I., 197.


8Andrew Creswell, An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Garden's Three First Letters to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. With an Appendix Concerning Mr. Garden's Treatment of Mr. Whitefield. &c (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1741), 56. Hereafter referred to as An Answer.

9Boston Weekly News Letter, August 21, 1740.
against his "unseemly" ministerial conduct. The evangelist refused to
answer the accusations and protested that the jurisdiction of the Com-
issary did not extend to him, since he was a resident of Georgia. In
answer to his plea for additional time in order to ascertain the extent
of Garden's legal authority, the court was dismissed until the next
morning. Whitefield utilized the delay to preach two sermons that
afternoon and evening at the Independent church.

Wednesday morning he presented the court with a "recusatio judicis,"
or an exception against Commissary Garden, charging that he was preju-
diced in the case and therefore should not serve as a judge. After
considerable argument, the court was adjourned for the day. That after-
noon Whitefield went up the Ashley river to James Island, where he
preached and read prayers.

Upon returning to court the next morning, Whitefield was informed
that Commissary Garden had refused to accept his "recusatio"! The
evangelist then determined to appeal the Commissary's decision to the
authorities in England. He was placed under oath and required to deposit
ten pounds sterling as guarantee that he would lodge his appeal within
twelve months.10

The immediate effect of the trial was to create considerable
excitement in Charlestown, and steadily increasing numbers came to hear
Whitefield's daily sermons.11 The eventual consequences, however, were
of considerable importance to the total influence of Whitefield's

10Groszwell, An Answer, 58.
11Boston Weekly News Letter, August 21, 1740.
preaching in America. During the ensuing months of 1740, newspapers from Charlestown to Boston contained accounts of the trial. Early in the fall Garden published in pamphlet form Six Letters To The Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 12 which he had previously written as private letters to the evangelist. 13

In these letters Garden accused Whitefield of trying to turn "the World upside down." "Alas (Sir) the Fire you have kindled is that of Slander and Defamation. A Fire! which no Devil in Hell, no nor Jesuit nor Deist on Earth, will ever go about to extinguish; but fagot and foment it with all their Might, as too effectually serving their Interests or Turn."14 He attempted to refute Whitefield's often repeated cry of "persecution" by turning the same charge back upon the evangelist:

"You and your Brethren cry out Persecution! 'Tis true, Persecution there is in the Case; but are not you the Persecutors? Is it not you that falsely accuse the Brethren; disturb the Peace of the Church;—trample on her Laws and Canons, (tho' solemnly engaged to obey them)


13 These six letters, written in 1740, bore the following dates: (1) March 17; (2) March 18; (3) April 8; (4) April 15; (5) April 21; (6) July 30. Whitefield's reply to the first letter, dated March 18, was printed along with Garden's letters.

14 Garden, Six Letters To The Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 21.
and despise her Authority? But still Persecution you cry out....And
are not the Clergy of a strange persecuting Spirit, to deny such Men
their Pulpits, to insult, traduce, and defame them in!"¹⁵

Garden characterized Whitefield's published letter on the Negroes
as "sinful, and dangerous to the publick Safety." He stated that "More
Virulence and Falsehood" could not be "contained in so few Lines."¹⁶
Ridicule and personal abuse was the chief method of refutation used by
the Commissary in disposing of Whitefield's attacks upon Archbishop
Tillotson and the author of The Whole Duty of Man: "Had you observed
comen Decency of good Manners in them, you had then been only an
Object of common Pity; but your contrary Behaviour, exposes you to the
utmost Scorn and Contempt of every Reader." You "knew how, pretending
the Sense of God, to bring railing Accusations (which an Archangel
durst not do against the Devil) to support some Crotchets you have got
in your own Brains; how to insult and abuse the Memory and Writings of
two of the most sound, pious and learned Authors that ever adorned the
English Church or Nation."¹⁷

One of the more abusive portions of Garden's defense of Tillotson
was the following:

Alas, my old Friend, whither is your poor Head now a
wandering? And thus, Sir, (in your Mountebank Way) you
have, young David like, as you fancy, slain your Goliath:
But whether it be not in the Pride and Naughtiness of
your Heart, you have made so absurd an Attempt, and so
foolishly managed it, the World is at no loss to deter-
mine; for the great and good Archbishop is still quite
alive and well (his Works and Memory I mean) and will

¹⁵Ibid., 21, 22.
¹⁶Ibid., 53.
¹⁷Ibid., 32, 33.
doubtless long survive in the highest Honour and Esteem, after you and your dirty Pamphlets are sunk into Oblivion. 18

No ridiculed Whitefield's superficial examination of The Whole Duty of Man: "You have look'd over the general Titles and Index, and cannot find the WORD Regeneration so much as once mentioned. ——A Fatal Defect indeed! I have just been looking into my Concordance, and almost tremble to tell you, that I found this WORD but twice mentioned in the whole Bible; and in neither Place any wise to your Purpose!" 19

Although Garden characterized Whitefield as a "foul and partial Writer," there was more than a touch of billingsgate in his Six Letters. His exposé of Whitefield's radical emotionalism and superficial reasoning would have been more worthy of an ecclesiastic dignitary if he had resorted less to vituperation. The slanders nature of this publication served as a model for the enemies of the Great Awakening, who, somewhat later, flooded the presses of the colonies with dozens of scurrilous pamphlets. The frequent allusions in such tracts to the Six Letters indicate that Garden's pamphlet was widely read in the colonies. Its influence in undermining the influence which Whitefield's oratory had exerted upon the people must be viewed in respect to the stimulation it afforded the conservative element who opposed the excesses of the Awakening. 20

18 Ibid., 36.
19 Ibid., 39.

20 Early in 1741 Andrew Croswell published a reply to Garden in An Answer. (See footnote 8 on page 175.) Garden answered with: The Doctrine of Justification According to the Scriptures, and the Articles, and Familes of the Church of England, explained and vindicated. In a
A further development of the altercation between Garden and Whitefield was the reopening of the case by the Commissary in 1741. Whitefield had taken an oath and posted a bond to lodge and prosecute an appeal to the proper authorities in England before the elapse of twelve months. However, after waiting five additional months without receiving official notification of the result of the appeal, Garden again summoned Whitefield to stand trial in Charlestown. The evangelist, who was in England at this time, presented neither himself or any witnesses. Nevertheless, he was tried in absentia and was suspended from his office as a minister of the Church of England. The decree itself did not curtail Whitefield’s preaching, because it was not recognised by the Anglican authorities in England, and because in his later visits to America he preached over the colonies without entering an Episcopal church. However, this edit of expulsion presented a vulnerable point of attack

Letter to Mr. A. Grosse will of Groton, in New-England. Being a Reply to the said Mr. Grosse well’s Answer to Mr. Garden’s three first Letters to Mr. Whitefield. With a Postscript. By Alexander Garden, M.A. Rector of St. Philip’s Charles-Town, and Commissary in South-Carolina (Charles-Town: P. Timothy, 1742). Hereafter referred to as The Doctrine of Justification. After this, the Garden versus Grosse well controversy became merged in the general agitation over the merits of the Great Awakening.

The fate of the appeal which Whitefield sent to England is obscured by conflicting evidence. Since Whitefield returned to England in January, 1741, he had ample opportunity to prosecute the appeal in the proper channels. However, from the very rare allusions to the appeal found in his letters for the period, it appears that he was too busy evangelising to give much attention to this matter. For examples of conflicting evidence see the following: Boston Weekly News Letter, August 21, 1740; Grosse well, An Answer, 58-60; Whitefield, a letter to the Bishop of London (written on board the Savannah, bound for Boston), September, 1740, in his Works, 1, 206, 207; Whitefield, a letter dated July 18, 1740, at Charlestown, in his Works, 1, 200, 201; Garden, The Doctrine of Justification, 68-70; Arthur L. Cross, The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies, 83-87.
which the enemies of Whitefield and the Awakening were prompt to utilize. To some persons, Whitefield's failure to prosecute his appeal was convincing proof that he was a "Liar," and a "polite Deceiver."

His suspension was thought to indicate that he was a "renegade in Priest's clothes." Numerous sneering references to Whitefield's expulsion were printed in the newspapers and pamphlets in 1743, 1744, and 1745. Although the suspension of the evangelist was pronounced late in 1741, almost a year after his departure from the colonies, it exerted an appreciable effect upon the ultimate influence of his preaching in America. Without the magnetism of his oratory to stir their passions, many of the people, especially the learned and conservative classes, became repelled by the excesses which characterized the Awakening. Whitefield's trial and suspension by Garden was one of the many contributing factors which accounted for this shift of opinion.

But to go back to the original trial: on Sunday morning, July 20, 1740, five days after Whitefield's trial began in the ecclesiastical court, the evangelist attended the Episcopal services and heard Garden preach a virulent sermon upon the text: "Take heed how ye hear." In his speech the Commissary attempted to vindicate his procedure against Whitefield; he condemned all those who were followers of the evangelist and held out the promise of Salvation for all those who believed in Christ and followed a life of "good works," in accord with the Episcopal Church. That evening at the Independent Meeting-house Whitefield preached a farewell sermon in which he urged the people to leave the

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church of the Commissary and attend the "dissenting" churches where Christ was taught. According to Whitefield's Journal, a visible alteration had appeared in the people of Charlestown as the result of his preaching during the preceding sixteen days. Even "the Jewellers and Dancing Mastes began to cry out, That their Craft was "in Danger." He found that the women dressed more conservatively: "A vast Alteration is discernable in the Lady's Dress: And some, whilst I have been speaking, have been so convinced of the Sin of wearing Jewels, that I have seen them, with blushes, put up their Hands and cover their Jewels with their Nobs." He believed that "many" persons had been "gloriously awakened" under his preaching "to seek after Christ." Newspaper reports stated that the size of his audiences increased daily during his visit. However, even assuming these reports to be true, Whitefield's evangelistic visit to Charlestown was not successful when viewed from a long-range perspective. Although he attracted numerous persons to his sermons and won a few converts to his beliefs, his quarrel with Carden had later a blighting effect upon the influence of his preaching during the Awakening.

Whitefield's Return to Savannah. Early Monday morning, July 22, Whitefield set out for Savannah, arriving Friday evening. During the next four weeks he suffered a general bodily fatigue, resulting from the intense strain of his visit to Charlestown. In his Journal he recorded a few "glorious meltings" in his congregations, but he preached

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23 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 9.
24 Ibid. "Mob" refers to a cap or hood; a mobcap.
only rarely at the Savannah church. Upon several of these occasions, his illness forced him to break off in the midst of a sermon. Colonel Stephens thought him to be extremely sick. Yet despite his physical infirmities, the evangelist was determined to preach the Gospel in New England before winter would prevent out-of-doors preaching. On Monday evening, August 17, he went on board his sleep and sailed down the river from Savannah. Arriving in Charlestown on Friday, he preached four sermons in the "dissenting" churches during the next three days. People "flocked more than ever" to his services. On Monday, August 24, Whitefield left Charlestown on his way to New England.


27 Whitefield estimates one of these congregations at four thousand. Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 15, 16.
The religious enthusiasm engendered by the preaching of George Whitefield waxed stronger and had more violent repercussions in New England than in any other section of the colonies. Although the first stirrings of the Great Awakening occurred in the Middle Colonies, "where German pietism had prepared the way by its emphasis upon inner, personal religion," the first genuine ground swell of the Awakening was set in motion by the religious upheaval in Jonathan Edwards' community of Northampton in 1734.

Nowhere else in the colonies was the popular response to Whitefield's preaching so spontaneous and universal; the excesses produced by the Awakening reached their climax in the churches of New England. For several years after religious emotionalism had greatly subsided in the other colonies, it continued to disturb New England. According

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1 Sweet, op. cit., 274.

2 So pleased was Whitefield with his reception in New England that his letters for the following two decades are replete with references to this "glorious harvest of souls." See his Works, Vol. I, II, III.

3 The great bulk of contemporary printed matter about the Great Awakening deals with the revivals of New England. Most of the controversial pamphlets, newspaper articles, declarations of ministerial associations, notations in diaries, etc., concern the happenings there.

4 Whitefield's second visit to America in 1744 caused little stir in the Middle or Southern Colonies. In New England, however, his coming produced a violent war of words in pamphlets and in newspapers. This controversy between the "Old-lights" and Whitefield's followers, the "New-lights," continued for several years.
to Ola Winslow, at the time of Whitefield's coming to America "New England was the likeliest soil in the whole world for his particular gospel." To appreciate fully such a statement, it is necessary to examine the genetic background of the Great Awakening in New England.

The Decline of Piety in Early New England. The true Puritans of early New England were "swayed by a religious conviction and purpose that held most of them harmoniously and unselfishly in devotion to a common cause." The Puritan ministry and the civil magistrates were in common agreement upon molding a Calvinist Zion in New England. According to Charles M. Andrews, Massachusetts, for the first half century of its history, "was practically an independent religious commonwealth, representative of a single purpose—the erection of a City of God in the wilderness, in which God, not man, was to be served."7

Modeled upon Old Testament theology and the cold autocracy of Calvinism, the church-state of Massachusetts Bay permitted no unorthodoxy among its members. In the attempt to prevent a decline of piety, Massachusetts and the other New England colonies adopted repressive measures. Citizenship was limited to church members in 1631; in 1636 every colonist, whether a church member or not, was taxed for the support of the ministry.8 So reluctant were the church stewards to lessen their authority by enfranchising the populace that by 1643 there were

5Winslow, op. cit., 177.


7Ibid., 64.

only seventeen hundred voters in Massachusetts, out of a total population of about fifteen thousand;\(^9\) in 1674, only one out of five adult males possessed voting privileges.\(^{10}\)

The first major manifestation of a decline of "Puritan piety" came in the form of a protest by the unfranchised and unchurched in May, 1646, when seven prominent citizens petitioned the general courts of Massachusetts and Plymouth to bestow religious freedom and the franchise upon all true Englishmen and to base future judicial decisions upon the common law of England.\(^{11}\) Thoroughly alarmed, the magistrates immediately imprisoned and heavily fined the remonstrants.\(^{12}\) The Puritan divines set about to preserve their "sacred institutions" by tightening the framework of their theocracy. In 1648 the General Court printed *The Book Of The General Lawses and Libertyyes*, which codified the existing law in Massachusetts. Two of the fifteen "Capital Laves" provided for:

\(^9\)In 1640 an irate colonist expressed this opinion: "Here is required such Confessions, and Professions, both in Private and Publique, both by Men and Women, before they be admitted, that three Parts of the People of the Country remains out of the Church, so that in short time most of the People will remaine unbaptized." Thomas Lechford, *Plain Dealing, or News from New England* (London: 1642), 150.

\(^{10}\)George E. Ellis gives the number of freemen in Massachusetts in 1674 as 2527. See, George E. Ellis, *The Puritan Age and Rule in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1629-1685* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1868), 203.

\(^{11}\)The most influential of these was Dr. Robert Child, a physician who held degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and Padua. The others were: Samuel Maverick, Thomas Fowle, John Dand, Major John Child, and William Vassall. See Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*, 256-264.

the death penalty for anyone who should "BLASPHEME the holy Name of God, Father, Son, or Holy Ghost," or who should "attempt the Alteration and Subversion of" the "Politic, or Government."\(^\text{13}\)

That same year representatives from the various churches in Massachusetts, New Haven, Plymouth, New Hampshire, and Connecticut assembled at Cambridge and issued the famous Cambridge Platform. Greater concentration of authority in the Elders and in synods was the key-note of the Platform. The emphasis upon church consociations was "about as far in the direction of centralization as Congregationalism could go without abandoning its basic premises."\(^\text{14}\) The Platform received a generous reception in the New England churches and served as a pattern for ecclesiastical government in Massachusetts for thirty years.\(^\text{15}\)

The grave weakness of the Platform lay in its unwillingness to deal forthrightly with the problem of church membership. The essence of Puritanism was the manifestation of a deep feeling of religious conversion by the individual and the open profession of that experience before the church congregation. Many of the second generation Puritans were unable or unwilling to make such professions. This knotty point, which presented a most serious threat to the Church, was brushed aside by the Platform with the assertion that the children of the members


\(^\text{14}\)Perry Miller, Orthodoxy In Massachusetts 1630-1659 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 193.

should be baptized and accepted into the Church as their birthright.\textsuperscript{16}

By 1650 death had taken many of the original Puritans, and piety was already on the decline. The "alarming decrease" in church membership and the growing indifference of young people to the Church resulted in the calling of the Boston Synod of 1657. The outcome of the convention was the Half-Way Covenant, which admitted into limited church membership the children of the baptized but unconverted members, upon their public profession of faith.\textsuperscript{17} William W. Sweet has said that the Half-Way Covenant "worked great injury to the Church, since it failed to hold the half-way members to any real attachment to the Church, and instead of settling the issue it inaugurated a controversy within New England Congregationalism which was to continue in one form or another until well along in the nineteenth century."\textsuperscript{18}

The last half of the seventeenth century was characterized by a growing confusion in the churches, the gradual disintegration of theocracy, and a steady decline of piety. Controversies over the Half-Way Covenant, split many churches into warring factions. Popular revulsions followed in the wake of the Baptist "purges," the Quaker hangings, and the witch burnings. Increasing numbers preferred "half-way communion" to full church membership. The Arminian philosophies, fostered

\textsuperscript{16}For additional discussion of the Cambridge Platform see: Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts 1630-1650, 177-210.


\textsuperscript{18}Sweet, op. cit., 107.
and spread by the influential minister of Northampton, Solomon Stoddard,\(^{19}\) gradually undermined the Calvinist temple.\(^{20}\)

The official demise of the Puritan theocracy came in 1691, when the Crown forced Massachusetts to accept a new charter which specifically provided that "liberty of conscience" should be a fundamental right for all Christians residing within the Colony. Thus shorn of its legal authority, Puritanism was soon to face a challenge to its religious supremacy in a growing sentiment of liberalism and indifference to religion. In 1698 the "ultra liberal" independent Brattle Street Church was organized.\(^{21}\) Three years later the liberal wing of the Harvard trustees gained control of the University.

Thoroughly alarmed, "old-line" Calvinists, led by Increase Mather, attempted to meet the problem by devising stricter ecclesiastical


\(^{21}\) The Brattle Street Church was founded by a group of Harvard University trustees who were deeply opposed to the "crusted conservatism" of the day. Some of the innovations sponsored by the group were: all individuals who professed faith were to be accepted into full communion of the church without the necessity of their making a public narration of a special religious experience; infant baptism was advocated, all contributors toward the maintenance of the church were to have a vote in the selection of the minister whether church members or not. See John W. Plantner, "The Congregationalists," *The Religious History of New England, King's Chapel Lectures* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), 28-30.
controls within the church. The Massachusetts Proposals, adopted by the Boston synod of 1705, abandoned much of what remained of the old "democratic" principles of congregationalism in favor of a presbyterian-like system of church government. In Connecticut, the founding of Yale College in 1701 and the adopting of the Saybrook Platform in 1708 were direct manifestations of the determination to keep the church, ministry, and populace hewed to the "crabbed form of orthodoxy" of the past. The Platform organized churches into consociations, and ministers into associations. Formalism and centralized ecclesiastical authority were expected to bring about a resurgence of faith. The utter failure of this hypothesis is described well by Mary H. Mitchell:

As the churches became formalized under the influence of this constitution (Saybrook Platform) and secularized through the connection with the civil state, which must give final permission for constituting churches and which passed laws for their support by general taxation, the Puritan ideal of the need for spiritual religion seemed about to disappear. Avoidance of openly scandalous conduct was considered sufficient by many people, churches grew lax in discipline, and there came to be little difference between many who were church members and many who were not.

Beginnings of the Great Awakening in New England: A few ministers, such as John Wise of Ipswich, fought against the growing "evils" of


formalism,\textsuperscript{24} and almost all the clergy lamented the increasing indifference to religion among the people of New England. In the eyes of the pious and the elderly, there was a "great Decay of Godliness in the Lives and Conversations of People both in Town and Land, from what they had seen in the Days of their Fathers."\textsuperscript{25} Benjamin H. Trumbull has portrayed in the following manner the general picture of religion in New England during the early decades of the eighteenth century:

There was a general ease and security in sin. Abundant were the lamentations of pious ministers and good people, poured out before God, on this account. Many days of fasting and prayers were kept by the churches, to seek the special influences of the holy Spirit, in the awakening and sanctification of the people.

The forms of religion were kept up, but there appeared but little of the power of it...The young people became loose and vicious, family prayer and religion was greatly neglected, the sabbath was lamentably profaned; the intermissions were spent in worldly conversation. The young people made the evenings after the Lord's day, and after lectures, the times for their mirth and company keeping. Taverns were haunted, intemperance and other vices increased, and the spirit of God appeared to be awfully withdrawn. It seems also to appear that many of the clergy, instead of clearly and powerfully preaching the doctrines of original sin, of regeneration, justification by faith alone, and the other peculiar doctrines of the gospel, contented themselves with preaching a cold unprincipled and lifeless morality.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Wise advocated a greater share in religion by the masses in two powerful tracts: The Churches Quarrel Expoused (Boston, 1710); and Vindication of the Government of the New England Churches (Boston, 1717). These pamphlets helped prepare the way for the great mass movement—the Great Awakening. See Herbert W. Schneider, The Puritan Mind (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1930), 96-98.

\textsuperscript{25} Prince, The Christian History, 1745, 375.

\textsuperscript{26} Trumbull, in op. cit., II, 135.
To many New Englanders this decline of piety seemed to indicate "a
decay, a falling away from the ideals of the fathers, a sinking to a
lower social level." It is little wonder that the clergy of New
England longed for a rekindling of the religious zeal which had
prompted the Puritan forefathers to cross the seas and seek a home in
an uncharted wilderness.

It is reasonable to assume that the religious environment in
Boston during this period was fairly typical of New England in general.
Even prior to 1720, numerous Bostonians lamented the decay in religion.
In almost every public prayer the elder ministers complained of the
wide indifference to matters of the "soul." In their sermons they
frequently "mourn'd it," and the younger ministers usually followed
their example. In the spring of 1721 eight ministers, perturbed by
the "lamentable Defects of Piety," determined to preach a course of
revivalistic sermons at the public lecture. The audiences were "large,"
but "little good" was accomplished. A deadly smallpox epidemic came to
Boston a little later that year and lasted until the spring of 1722.
Although scores of youths died in the scourge, most of the people were
so "unreformed" by the tragedy that the churches appointed a "Day of
Prayer and Fasting to ask of God the Effusion of his Holy Spirit,
particularly on the rising generation." 29

During the early months of 1726 the Boston pastors delivered a

27 Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century, III,
411.


29 Ibid.
series of public lectures on family religion to sparsely filled meeting houses. Late the following year a minor earthquake frightened a few individuals into a religious conversion, a few more were added to the church during the smallpox scare of 1729, but the great bulk of the people remained "uninspired." The religious condition of Boston became so "dismal" by the summer of 1734 that the ministers declared another 'day of prayer and fasting. All persons were urged to "humble" themselves "before GOD for" their "Unfruitfulness under the Means of Grace, and to ask the Effusion of his SPIRIT to revive the Power of Godliness among" the people of Boston. The same year a plague of "throat-distemper" appeared in the parishes in the vicinity of Boston. So deadly was the disease that in some of the small towns all of the younger children died. Early the next year the "distemper" appeared in Boston and took the lives of many children. There was considerable "flocking to the churches" but little concern for the "soul." Later that year news of a "wonderful" revival in Northampton created a considerable stir among the pious of Boston. The words "Jonathan Edwards" and "Northampton" were on everyone's lips.

Although Northampton had experienced five minor revivals during

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30Ibid., 376. Prince lists the preachers and their subjects as follows: Dr. C. Mather—Household Piety; Mr. Thacher—Family Instruction; Mr. Sewall—Family Government; Mr. Prince—Family Sabbathizing; Mr. Webb—Family Example; Mr. Cooper—On improving the Covenant relating to Children; Mr. Foxcroft—Conjugal Duties; Mr. Cheever—The Duties of Children and Servants; Mr. Waldron—The Character and Doom of Wicked Houses; Mr. Gee—Family Providences.

31Ibid., 1745, 378.

32Ibid., 379.
the fifty-year pastorate of Solomon Stoddard, an "extraordinary Dullness in Religion" had been evident at the time of his death in 1729. Jonathan Edwards, who became the new minister at Northampton, has described the religious environment which confronted him in the following manner:

Likeentiousness for some Years greatly prevailed among the Youth of the Town; they were many of them very much addicted to Night walking, and frequenting the Tavern, and lewd Practices, wherein some, by their Example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their Manner very frequently to get together, in Conventions of both Sexes, for Mirth and Jollity, which they called Frolicks: and they would often spend the greater part of the Night in them, without regard to any Order in the Families they belonged to; and indeed Family-Government did too much fail in the Town....

The first indication that Edwards was to play a major role in the Great Awakening came in 1731, when he was invited to deliver the Public Lecture on July 8, to the Boston clergy. His sermon, "God Glorified in Man's Dependence," was a closely reasoned, mildly eloquent discourse. He preached the old Calvinistic doctrine "with such fervor as to make it appear the more desirable." So stern was his rebuke to the "backslidings" of the populace that the clergy "were delighted." It is likely, however, that Edwards' oration aroused but little stir in

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33 Edwards, A Faithful Narrative, 3.

34 Edwards came to Northampton as an associate pastor in 1727, at the age of twenty-three. Upon the death of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, Edwards was placed in charge of "the most important parish in western Massachusetts." See Winslow, Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758, 118.

35 Edwards, A Faithful Narrative, 4.

36 Winslow, in op. cit., 153.
Boston, and probably few persons read the printed version which was shortly published in Boston. It is important to note, however, that this sermon served to crystallize Edwards' thinking, and also introduced him to the New England ministers as a man of "evangelical zeal."

Returning to his pulpit at Northampton, Edwards poured out his fervor in demands for a "reform in manners." During the fall months of 1733 the young people began to evidence a greater concern for religious matters. There was less of "night-walking" and "tavern-haunting."

During the spring and summer of 1734, a gradual increase in piety developed under Edwards' stern preaching. Finally late in the year Edwards lashed out at his congregation in a most condemnatory sermon. The title, The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners, is indicative of the contents. With scant respect for social sensitivities, Edwards

37 Prince did not mention this speech in his account of the revival of religion in Boston. See the copies of The Christian History for 1744 and 1745.

38 A highly complimentary preface to the sermon was signed by Thomas Prince and William Cooper, both of whom were later to become outstanding champions of George Whitefield and the Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards, God Glorified in the Work of Redemption. By the Greatness of Man's Dependence upon Him, in the Whole of it. A Sermon preached on the Publick Lecture in Boston, July 8, 1731. And Published at the Desire of several Ministers and Others, in Boston, who heard it (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland and T. Green, for D. Hanchman, 1731).

directed specific charges of sin at the individual members of his congregation. He narrated the different "kinds of wickedness," then applied them to his hearers with telling force. So powerful was this sermon that the common cry in Northampton now became: "What must I do to be saved." In the words of Jonathan Edwards: "The Noise amongst the Dry Bones waxed louder and louder: All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things, was soon thrown by..."Other Discourse than of the things of Religion, would scarcely be tolerated in any Company."  

One of the most important publications of this period of Colonial history resulted from the Northampton revival. In Boston in 1736 the first draft of Jonathan Edwards' *A Faithful Narrative Of The Surprising Work of God In The Conversion Of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton* was published as an appendix to an evangelistic sermon which had been written by the Reverend William Williams of Hatfield. The *Narrative* met with almost instantaneous popular approval. After revision and amplification by Edwards, editions were printed in London, Edinburgh, and in cities on the continent. In 1738 at Boston three editions were

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41 William Williams, The *Duty and Interest of a People. Among Whom Religion has been planted, to Continue Stedfast and Sincere in The Profession and Practice of it. From Generation to Generation. With Directions for such as are Concerned to obtain a true Repentance and Conversion to God.—Preach'd at a Time of General Awakenings.* By William Williams, M.A. Pastor of the Church in Hatfield, To which is added, Part of a large Letter from the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Edwards of Northampton. Giving an Account of the late wonderful Work of God in those Parts (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1736).
published which varied slightly among themselves. All of the American copies contained an extended preface by the English dissenting ministers Isaac Watts and John Gutee. They also included a very enthusiastic preface written by four Boston ministers who were later to be outstanding champions of Whitefield and the Great Awakening: Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince, John Webb, and William Cooper. The two prefaces were followed by a brief attestation, signed by six additional ministers, as to the truthfulness of the facts reported in the Faithful Narrative.

According to Winslow, 42 this was the most potent piece of writing Jonathan Edwards ever penned.... As all of New England and presently all of America read his account, revivals seemed more possible to those who had previously prayed in vain for just such a spectacle as he described. His story also established a technique of revival behavior for pulpit and pew which endures to the present day. 43

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43 These ministers were: William Williams of Hatfield; Ebenezer Devotion of Suffield; Stephen Williams of Long Meadow; Peter Reynolds of Enfield; Nehemiah Bull of Westfield; and Samuel Hopkins of West Springfield.

44 Winslow, Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758, 166.

obsessions of Abigail Hutchinson and of little Phoebe Bartlett, four years old, and of other persons under "the influence of the spirit," as related by Edwards, became household talk in New England homes. A Faithful Narrative not only helped prepare the way for the Great Awakening a few years later, but it also rendered popular emotional excesses under the guise of divine inspiration.

In 1735 the distraught people of Northampton were not the only New Englanders who felt the "dread hand of Damnation upon their Hearts." Numerous small awakenings appeared almost simultaneously in various villages throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut. However, public excitement continued for only a short time before it began to abate.

The influence which these revivals exerted in preparing New England for the more extensive "awakening," which began late in 1739, has not been definitely established. Thomas Prince, Jr., asserted that after the Northampton revival, Bostonians "generally seem'd to grow more stupid and hard than ever." He admitted that while the awakenings "seem'd to prepare the Way in diverse Places for" the Great Awakening, "the general Decay of Piety seem'd to increase among us in Boston." The Reverend Mr. Hall, pastor of Sutton, a small village

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46 Prince declares that many revivals appeared in the westerly part of Massachusetts and lists twelve congregations in the County of Hampshire and fourteen in the Colony of Connecticut. The Christian History, 1745, 379.


49 Ibid.
forty miles southwest of Boston, found that "the great Concerns of Religion, in some considerable Degree appeared to move upon the Hearts of many among" his congregation. Yet, "in about five years space, the general Face of Religion...was sunk down to a very low and melancholy Ebb indeed." According to the Reverend Mr. Leonard, pastor of the first church of Plymouth, the Northampton revival had no effect upon religion at Plymouth. In fact, "Iniquity prevailed, and" the people "were in Danger of losing the very Form of Godliness." Despite conflicting evidence, it appears that the revival at Northampton in 1734 and 1735 created a considerable stir in New England, but that this religious enthusiasm died away in the space of a year or two. Herbert L. Osgood has written: "The excitement...abated and to all appearance would not have extended further" had it not been for Whitefield's visit to New England in the fall of 1740.52

It is evident that most of the clergy prayed for a "new birth" of religion. Miss Winslow has gone so far as to state that "all church-going New England...yearned for a revival to match Northampton's."53 While this statement may be somewhat exaggerated, probably William Sweet is correct in saying that the "Times were ripe for some new

50 A letter from the Reverend Mr. Hall to Thomas Prince, Jr., printed in Ibid., 1744, 163-166.
51 A letter to Thomas Prince, Jr., from the Reverend Mr. Leonard, printed in Ibid., 1744, 313.
53 Winslow, Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758, 177.
emphasis in religion as well as a new type of religious leadership.\(^5^4\)

From 1737 on, as reports poured into Boston of tremendous throngs which gathered to hear Whitefield's sermons in England, Wales, Gibraltar, and in some American colonies, the clergy thought that at last they had found the proper leadership which would bring about a revival of religion in New England. In the summer of 1740 Benjamin Colman and William Cooper characterized Whitefield to the people of Boston in the following glowing terms: "He is the wonder of the Age; and no one Man more employs the Pen, and fills up the Conversation of People, than he does at this Day: None more admir'd and applauded by some, contemn'd and reprove'd by others: The common Lot of the most excellent Men the World has ever had to show!"\(^5^5\) So laudatory and so abundant was the propaganda that flooded New England prior to Whitefield's arrival in Rhode Island in September of 1740 that the minds of the people were "greatly prepossess'd in his favour as a "Worthy of Piety, a Man of God, so as no one was like him."\(^5^6\)

In addition to furnishing the "leadership" to which William Sweet has referred, Whitefield also furnished "the new emphasis" which was necessary to produce a religious awakening in New England. Such a "new emphasis" had to be based upon the known and the familiar. Whitefield's theology was grounded upon traditional Puritan Calvinism. New Englanders

\(^{54}\)Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 273.

\(^{55}\)Preface to Josiah Smith, The Character, Preaching, &c. Of The Reverend Mr. George Whitefield.

\(^{56}\)Boston, Evening Post, October 29, 1744.
had always been taught that heavenly rewards could be secured only by a deep, personal sense of conversion. A life of sincere conformity and "good works" would not entitle one to "God's blessings."

Man, according to general acceptance, was held to be a depraved being. Arminianism had not yet succeeded in searing this belief from the minds of the people. Since the founding of Plymouth, all possible emphasis had been laid on authority, on trust and belief, and the possibility of independent inquiry, to say nothing of its methods, was unknown. It was consciously or implicitly held that the great mass of humanity was destined to an endless existence of misery unless saved therefrom by an act of grace which their wills alone were powerless to induce.57 Whitefield, Edwards, and the other evangelists of the Great Awakening preached a "terrible" doctrine of "eternal righteousness" for the damnation of mankind, of original sin, and of justification by faith alone. It must have taken a rugged individualist indeed to withstand Edwards' description of Godly anger:

...every unconverted Man properly belongs to Hell; that is his Place; ...The Wrath of God burns against them, their Damnation does not slumber; the Pit is prepared, the Fire is made ready, the Furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the Fires do now rage and glow. The glittering Sword is whet, and held over them, and the Pit hath opened its Mouth under them...There is laid in the very Nature of carnal Men, a Foundation for the Torments of Hell....Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as Lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards Hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless Gulf, and your healthy Constitution, and your own Care and Prudence, and best contrivance,
and all your righteousness, would have no more influence
to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's
web would have to stop a fallen rock.56

In addition to being based upon the known and familiar, the "new
emphasis" in religion had to possess the elements of novelty. Austeres
ministers had been trying unsuccessfully for several generations to
arouse religious enthusiasm by reading formalized, logical sermons.
Whitefield brought a new experience in religion to the masses by
delivering emotional extemporaneous sermons. During the month he spent in
New England, Whitefield preached almost constantly from one hamlet to
the next. New England had never witnessed itinerant evangelism before:
preaching on the Commons and in the streets was excitingly different.
Here was an orator who needed no notes or manuscript, and whose elo­
quent simplicity of delivery could stir the learned as well as the
simple-minded. Winslow has vividly described the novelty Whitefield
brought to New England in 1740:

The innovations of his [Whitefield's] method were half the
source of his magic. In a week he had changed the whole
definition of preaching and pulpit behavior. Instead of
doctrine logically stated, proved, applied, according to
a carefully prepared plan of argument, he dramatized both
the biblical narrative and the application, spoke entirely
without notes, made violent gestures, laughed, sang, shed
public tears, and literally took New England by storm.
Nothing like this had ever happened in the name of reli­
gion. American meetinghouses had often enough been the
scene of drama, but it had never before come by way of the
sermon. Preaching had been a solemn exercise. Sermons
had been made according to pattern. Here was a preacher
who substituted human interest stories for sober logic,
turned his pulpit into a stage and gave churchgoing

56Excerpts taken from Jonathan Edwards, Sinners In The Hands
of an Angry God. A Sermon Preached at Enfield, July 8th, 1741. At a
Time of great Awakenings; and attended with remarkable Impressions on
many of the Hearers (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1741).
America its first taste of theatre under the flag of salvation. Boston's whole routine of life was distorted by the strangeness of going to meeting at three A.M. in order not to be shut out at six, of closing shops at midday in order to hear another sermon, and, perhaps strangest of all for men and women accustomed to decorum in all things churchly, of hearing the gospel preached in the open fields. 59

Of more importance than uniqueness in ministerial manner was Whitefield's ability to fuse his Calvinism with the liberal philosophies of Pietism. 60 He brought religion to the great masses of the indifferent, by minimizing the logic and "reasonableness" of the Calvinist doctrine, and by magnifying the emotional appeal for personal redemption. 61 Old line Calvinism had long since run out its dynamic course, as witnessed by the generations of unsuccessful exhorting by the clergy. But now, Calvinism, tinctured with an emotional, personalized plea for conversion, brought a spiritual transformation in many New England communities. 62


60 This was true of evangelical preaching in general during the Great Awakening. Even Edwards, often thought of as an orthodox Calvinist, disclaimed any dependence on Calvinism. See his Preface in "The Freedom of the Will," in The Works of Jonathan Edwards with a Memoir of His Life (New York: G., C., and R. Carvill, 1830), III.

61 For an authoritative statement of this point of view, see Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 272-273, 281-282.

62 Thomas J. Wertembaker has characterized the role of Pietism during the Great Awakening in the following manner: "Originating in the Pietism of the European Continent, the demand for a vital and practical religion spread to almost every part of the British Empire. In England its chief exponents were Wesley and Whitefield, two emotional evangelists who awakened the people to the hollowness of mere ritual and form in religion. Although Pietism reached the shores of America even in the seventeenth century...its chief impetus came by way of England and New England in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century. Whitefield himself came to America, touring through the colonies and preaching to enormous throngs of excited listeners." The Founding of American Civilization The Middle Colonies, 178.
Whitefield landed at New-Port, the capital of Rhode Island. He was received graciously by the Church of England minister, who offered the free use of his church. Shortly after his arrival, the evangelist called upon Governor Spence, and was pleased to find him "a very pious man" who lived simply in an unostentatious home. Into the same day the evangelist met Nathaniel Clap, an elderly retired minister, who had served as a preacher for forty years in Rhode Island. He followed him about the town during his stay and invited him into his house to hold public prayers. To have had a man of Clap's local reputation so obviously an admirer must have added to Whitefield's stature.

According to his Journal, the Anglican church, which could hold three thousand persons, was filled for each of the four sermons he preached during his three-day visit in New-Port. The Pennsylvania Gazette stated that "Great Numbers of People Flocked from all Quarters both in Town and Country to hear his Sermons and Exhortations, and many of them could not refrain shedding tears." He preached on Monday morning from Romans 16:17; in the afternoon from John 17:18; on Tuesday morning his text was taken from 2 Corinthians 5:17, and in the afternoon from Luke 18:14. The size of the audiences for these sermons was remarkable, if his figures are reasonably authentic, because at this time the population of New-Port was only about six thousand.
Although besiegéd with requests to remain longer in New-Port, Whitefield refused to delay further his arrival in Boston, and set out by horseback about nine o'clock, Wednesday morning. Early in the afternoon he preached in the Congregational meeting-house at Bristol. Following the sermon, he rode ten miles farther on, then stepped to spend the night at a wayside inn. He set out before dawn the next morning and, after traveling almost fifty miles, came to the outskirts of Boston, where he was met by Governor Jonathan Belcher's son and several "Gentlemen" who had ridden out to welcome him to the city. About eight o'clock that night, the weary minister arrived at the home of a brother-in-law of Benjamin Colman, where he was to live during his stay in Boston. The news of his arrival soon spread about the city, and a stream of preachers and townsmen came to pay their respects. Whitefield was too tired from his long ride to preach, however; so he dismissed them after a brief prayer.

The next morning he was escorted to the Governor's office, where he met Jonathan Belcher, who was to become his most stalwart supporter in New England. Whitefield was pleased with the "utmost Respect" with which he was received. At eleven o'clock he attended the prayer services of the Episcopal church, and afterwards accompanied Commissary

64Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, 303.

65For Whitefield's discussion of his stay in New-Port see his Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Nalmouth, 17-22.

Wessey home. This being the day upon which the officials of the Anglican church customarily met to consider ecclesiastical matters, Whitefield was soon introduced to five Episcopal clergymen. Although they treated him politely, they subjected him to a searching catechism for almost an hour. At the conclusion of the discussion, he refused their invitation to dinner, because he believed them to be "inconsistent" in their theology. In the afternoon he preached to about three thousand persons in Dr. Colman's Brattle Street Church. His text was taken from Christ's prayer at Consecration, John xvii. 2: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." According to Thomas Prince, Sr., pastor of the South Church:

[Whitefield] gave us a plain, weighty regular Discourse representing that all our Learning and Morality will never save us; and without an experimental Knowledge of GOD in CHRIST we must perish in HELL for ever.---He spake as became the ORACLES of GOD in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. And especially, when he came to his Application, he address'd himself to the Audience in such a tender, earnest and moving Manner, exciting us to come and he acquainted with the dear REDEEMER, as melted the Assembly into Tears.

That evening he exhorted and prayed to scores of the pious who jammed into his house, asking "what they should do to be saved."

The next morning, Saturday, September 20, he preached to about six thousand in Dr. Joseph Sewall's South Church. In this sermon Whitefield insisted upon the "absolute Necessity of Regeneration by the HOLY

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Whitefield estimated this audience at four thousand. Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 26. Prince, The Christian History, 1745, 379, gave the size of the audience as between two and three thousand.

GHOST; and of believing in CHRIST, in order to obtain "Salvation from Hell and an Entrance into Heaven." He spoke of the "preciousness of the Souls of his Hearers," and of the "extrem Danger the unregenerates were in." He proclaimed that "good works" would not insure "Justification," because, as he expressed it: "the Tree of the Heart is by original Sin exceedingly corrupted, and must be made good by Regeneration, that so the Fruits proceeding from it may be good likewise: that where the Heart is renewed, it ought and will be careful to maintain good Works." The Reverend Mr. Thomas Prince, Sr., believed that "He spoke with a mighty Sense of GOD..." now and then he dropped some Expressions that were not so accurate and guarded as we should expect from aged and long studied Ministers.69

Saturday afternoon he preached upon the Boston Common to about eight thousand;70 throughout most of the evening he prayed and exhorted in his lodgings to a large group of people. On Sunday morning he attended Brattle Street Church to hear Dr. Benjamin Colman; at noon he dined with William Cooper, the associate pastor of the Brattle Street Church; later in the afternoon he spoke to a "thronged Auditory" at the Reverend Mr. Thomas Foxcroft's Old Church. Immediately after this sermon, he preached upon the Commons to a vast audience of over eight thousand.71 After the sermon many admirers followed him through

69Ibid.

70This is Whitefield's estimate. See his, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 26. The Boston Weekly News Letter, September 25, 1740, offered the more conservative figure of five thousand.

71The Boston Weekly News Letter, September 25, 1740, estimated the attendance at eight thousand or more. Whitefield in his Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, p. 26, gave the number of auditors as fifteen thousand.
the streets to his lodgings; they filled the house, and numbers stood
outside the doors and windows; all listened in awed silence while the
evangelist told of his experiences during his evangelical tours in
England, Wales, Gibraltar, and America.

During these first three days of Whitefield's visit to Boston,
his preaching so thrilled the populace that the "whole Business of the
Town" seemed to be "to run from Place to Place to hear him preach."

Many of the people regarded him as an "Angel of God," who had been
sent by "divine Providence" to Boston. Some believed him to be "a God
come down in the likeness of Man," or an "Angel flying over the Earth
with the everlasting Gospel." According to the Reverend Benjamin
Colman, "God gave him a wonderful Manner of Entrance among us; and...
we received him as an Angel of God for Jesus sake, as the Apostle St.
Paul was received by the Churches in Galatia." Another minister
wrote: "we own, now that we have seen and heard him, that our expecta-
tions are all answered and exceeded, not only in his zealous, and

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72 Boston Evening Post, October 29, 1744; and Charles Chauncy,
The Late religious感动sions in New England considered; An Answer to
the Reverend Jonathan Edwards' sermon entitled, "The Distinguishing
Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God" (Boston: 1743), 6.

73 The State of Religion In New England, Since the Reverend Mr.
George Whitefield's Arrival there. In A Letter from a Gentleman in
New England to his Friend in Glasgow. To which is subjoined an Appendix,
containing Attestations of the principal Facts in the Letter. By
The Reverend Mr. Chauncy, Pastor of the first Church of Christ in
Boston, Mr. John Caldwell, in New-Londonery, Mr. John Bernard Pastor
of a Church in Marblehead, Mr. Turell, Mr. Jonathan Parsons Minister
at Lyme, and Dr. Benjamin Colman, Minister in Boston (Glasgow: Robert
Foulis, 1742), 4. Hereafter referred to as, The State of Religion In
New England, Since the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival there.

74 Boston Evening Post, August 18, 1746.
fervent, abounding labours, but in the command of the hearts and
affections of his hearers.--He has been received here as an angel of
God, and servant of Jesus Christ." Merchants closed up their stores,
housewives left their household chores, and farmers came from the
fields to attend his services.

About "six thousand" persons crowded into the meeting-house of
the Reverend John Webb Monday morning, September 22, to hear White-
field's sermon. That afternoon a most spectacular and tragic acci-
dent occurred at the Reverend Samuel Cheekley's New South church, where
Whitefield had appointed to preach. Before the sermon the church was
very crowded, many persons standing in the aisles and in the rear of
the church. Someone in the gallery broke a board in order to make a
seat; another person, startled by the noise of breaking wood, cried out
that the balcony was collapsing. Almost immediately the whole congre-
gation was thrown into hysteria. Some jumped out of the windows;
others leaped off the gallery onto the people below; all screamed and
pushed toward the exits. As a result of the brutal shoving and push-
ing, four woman and one servant boy were killed. Whitefield came to
the church in the mist of the confusion and saw the crippled bodies
upon the ground. Instead of ministering to the stricken, he announced
that he would preach immediately upon the Common. Several thousands
followed him, and he spoke from the words, "Go out into the Highways

75 A letter quoted in John Gillies, Memoirs of the Life of the
Rervenidr George Whitefield, 63.

76 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to
Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 27.
and Hedges and compel them to come in." During the course of the speech, he endeavoured to point out that everyone should be ready at all times to die and "meet Christ."

The tragedy at the meeting-house served to accentuate the emotionalism produced by the preaching of Whitefield at Boston. In addition, almost every newspaper in New England and in the Middle Colonies carried articles relating to the affair. Such spectacular reading could not help but whet the public appetite for seeing the man who kept no regular pulpit, but who evangelised from church to church.

Whitefield preached two sermons at the Reverend Joshua Gee's Old North Church on Tuesday. On Wednesday morning he preached at Harvard College in Cambridge from the words, "We are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God." (II Corinthians 2: 17) Near the conclusion of his sermon, he made a close application of his text to the "backslidings" of the tutors and students. In Whitefield's own words: "God gave me great Boldness and Freedom of Speech." That afternoon he preached again at the Harvard court to an audience which he estimated at seven thousand. This time, however, he did not make specific reference to the "sinfulness" of the university.77

The chiding remarks which Whitefield directed toward the students and faculty were received with approbation, for it had been the custom of ministers for over a generation to complain that New Englanders were losing the religious piety that had driven their ancestors to seek a new home in the American wilderness. But he made a very serious blunder of putting his beliefs about the "low moral" condition of the

77Ibid., 29.
university into his Journal, which was published as soon as he
returned to England early in 1741. Whitefield wrote that Harvard was
"not far superior" in "Piety and Godliness" to the universities of
England. The American colonists well knew that the evangelist regarded
English universities as "mere halls of Paganism" where Christ was
"rarely if ever thought of." The evangelist stated categorically in
his Journal: "Tutors neglect to pray with and examine the Hearts of
their Pupils. Discipline is at too low an Ebb. Bad Books are become
fashionable amongst them. Tillotson and Clarke are read instead of
Sheppard, Stoddard, and such like evangelical Writers."\(^7^8\) Although
Whitefield had had no opportunity to determine personally the true
character of the university, it was typical of him to take the advice
of a few, perhaps biased individuals, without attempting to investigate
their dependability or the veracity of their statements. His willing-
ness to believe the worst of human nature led him to preach and write
immediately of Harvard's "low" standard of morality.

During the remainder of his New England tour Whitefield had little
further opportunity to observe the true nature of Harvard University
and almost no chance to analyse the moral tones of Yale College. Yet
his habits of censorious judgment were so strong that in the conclusion
of his visit to New England he condemned the colleges in sweeping terms:
"As for the Universities, I believe it may be said, their Light is
become Darkness, Darkness that may be felt, and is complained of by
the most godly Ministers. I pray God those Fountains may be purified.

\(^7^8\)Ibid., 28, 29.
and sent forth pure Streams to water the Cities of our God." 79

The subsequent effects of these two comments about the New England colleges, which Whitefield recorded in his Journal, illustrate how the rashness of his pen severely limited the ultimate influence of his preaching. As the astute Benjamin Franklin wrote in his Autobiography: "if [Whitefield] had never written any thing, he would have left behind him a much more numerous and important sect, and his reputation might in that case have been still growing, even after his death, as there being nothing of his writing on which to found a censure and give a lower character, his preseleyts would be left at liberty to feign for him as great a variety of excellences as their enthusiastic admiration might wish for him to have possessed." 80 Whitefield's slighting remarks concerning Harvard and Yale Colleges were unnecessary and, from the point of view of many New Englanders, untrue. Whitefield's printed Journal did not appear in New England until the spring of 1741. By this time some of the popular enthusiasm for the evangelist had begun to wane. Some of the anti-Whitefield publications which began to appear in America in 1742 contained references to his "insult" to the universities of New England. When the evangelist returned to Massachusetts in the fall of 1744, after an absence of three years, the opposition had developed to such a degree that Harvard

79 Ibid., 55.

80 Franklin, Autobiography, 122.
issued a testimonial against him and his Conduct. A few months later a similar declaration was printed by the faculty of Yale University. Whitefield's attempt to defend his statements about the low moral standards of the universities and to answer the other charges which these pamphlets advanced, appeared lamentably weak when Yale's president, Edward Holyoke, and its professor of divinity, Edward Wigglesworth, published a seventy-page Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield By Way of Reply. The publications by the faculty of the two colleges presented a thorough categorizing of all the charges against the evangelist which had been advanced by his enemies, and a refutation of Whitefield's own charges against the universities. A few persons attempted, by means of the press and the pulpit, to

81 The Testimony of the President, Professors, Tutors, and Hebrew Instructor of Harvard College in Cambridge, Against the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, And his Conduct (Boston: T. Fleet, 1744).

82 The Declaration of the Rector and Tutors of Yale-College in New Haven Against the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, His Principles and Designs, In a Letter to him (Boston: T. Fleet, 1744).

83 Whitefield, A Letter to the Reverend the President and Professors, tutors and Hebrew Instructor of Harvard College, in Cambridge, in Answer to a Testimony Published by them against the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, and his Conduct (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1745). Hereafter referred to as: A Letter to Harvard College.

84 Edward Wigglesworth and Edward Holyoke, A Letter to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, by way of reply to his Answer to the College Testimony against him and his Conduct. By Edward Wigglesworth, to which is added, the Rev. President's Answer To the Things charg'd upon Him by the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, as Inconsistencies (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745).

85 See for example, A Vindication of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, against the Charges which some have lately endeavoured to fix upon him; more especially, the Testimony of the Gentlemen at the College (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745).
defend Whitefield, but the majority of the printed matter which arose out of this dispute strongly supported the educators. It is extremely unlikely that the faculties of the universities would have worked so strenuously against him if he had not slandered them in his Journal. Much of the tremendous response which Whitefield's magnetic preaching received while he was in Boston was eventually weakened by the tactless remarks about Harvard and Yale in his Journal.

To resume the narrative of Whitefield's preaching in Boston: on Thursday morning, September 25, 1740, the day after his visit to Cambridge, and the sixth day of his visit to Boston, the evangelist preached at the Reverend Thomas Foxcroft's church. According to his Journal, Whitefield was reluctant to enter the pulpit: "Satan would fain have tempted me to hold my tongue, and not invite poor Sinners to Jesus Christ, because I was so great a Sinner myself. But God enabled me to withstand the Temptation, and since Jesus Christ had shewn such Mercy to, and had not withdrawn his Holy Spirit from me the chief of Sinners, I was enabled more feelingly to talk of his Love." 36 After the services he, along with most of the Boston ministers, was invited to dine with the Governor. Before the meal Belcher called him aside, wept as he told the evangelist of his sins, and pleaded with him to pray often for the Governor and the people of Boston. 37 Immediately after dinner Whitefield was carried in Belcher's coach to the ferry,

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36Whitefield, Journal from a few Days after his Return to Georgia to his Arrival at Falmouth, 29.
37Ibid.
by means of which he crossed over to Charlestown, where he preached a
sermon in a filled meeting-house. 88

On Friday, September 26, he preached two sermons out-of-doors at
Roxbury, a small settlement a few miles from Boston. Saturday he
preached in the morning at the Reverend William Welstead's meeting-
house, and in the afternoon upon the Commons to about "fifteen thousand"
people. 89 Sunday morning he preached at Joseph Sewall's Old South
church "to a very crowded Auditory" and collected 555 pounds in cur-
pency for his orphanage. In the afternoon he preached in Benjamin
Colman's meeting-house and received 470 pounds. 90 At this sermon he
told his hearers that he was leaving Boston the next morning for a
brief evangelistic tour of northeastern Massachusetts. He spoke so
powerfully, and the people offered their contributions so willingly,
that the Reverend Benjamin Colman stated publicly that "It was the
most pleasant Time" he "ever enjoyed in that Meeting-House through
the whole Course of his Life." 91

Shortly after Whitefield had returned to his lodgings, Governor
Belcher called to wish him a pleasant and successful journey. Later
that evening Whitefield preached to a "great Number" of Negroes upon
the conversion of the Ethiopian from Acts 8, 27-39. Before going to

89Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to
Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 31.
90 Boston. Weekly News Letter, October 2, 1740.
91Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Arrival at
Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 31.
bed that night, he delivered a final exhortation to a mass of people who had filled his house. It must have been a trying day for the young minister. His journal recorded that he had sweated profusely and had vomited several times. Yet despite these physical ordeals he wrote, just before retiring, that he felt "greatly refreshed with divine consolation." 92

Mindful of the enthusiastic crowds which had constantly followed Whitefield about during his stay in Boston, the evening post stated:

"This morning the Rev. Mr. Whitefield set out on his progress to the Eastward, so that the town is in a hopeful way of being restored to its former state of order, peace and industry." 93 Three days later, on Thursday, October 2, the Boston weekly news letter took exception to an "implied slur" in this item:

What is insinuated in this article, is by no means esteem'd the sense of the town; for we are very certain, that the generality of sober and serious persons, of all denominations among us, (who perhaps are as much for maintaining order, peace, and industry, as Mr. evening post and company,) have been greatly affected with Mr. Whitefield's plain, powerful and awakening preaching.----And as for those comparatively few, who appear to oppose, and speak evil of Mr. Whitefield and his preaching, we hope it will be thought no breach of charity, if we say,------That they discover too much of the spirit of those Jews, who, when the apostle preach'd at Antioch, [sic] were filled with envy, and spoke against those things which were spoke by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.------And of the spirit of the seducers, who when Christ had preached and wrought miracles among them,---desired Him to depart out of their coasts. 94

92 Ibid., 32.
93 Boston evening post, September 29, 1740.
94 Boston weekly news letter, October 2, 1740.
At this time, the few who were opposed to the "excesses" of Whitefield's preaching were afraid to voice their thoughts because popular approbation of the young minister had reached such heights that to speak harshly of him was considered to be almost synonymous with committing a "Sin against the Holy Ghost." Three years later, however, the Episcopal minister, Timothy Cutler, was to write the following somewhat prejudiced report of Whitefield's initial preaching in Boston:

When Mr. Whitefield first arrived here, the whole Town was alarm'd. He made his first visit to church on a Friday, & conversed first with many of our Church together, and belayed them, me especially when he had done....And immediately the Belle rung, and all hands went to Lecture, and this Show kept on all the while that he was here. The Town was ever alarm'd, the Streets filled with People, with Coaches & Chaises, all for ye Benefit of that holy Man. The Conventicles were crowded, but he chose rather our Common where Multitudes might see him in all his awful Postures, besides that in one crowded Conventicle before He came in 6 were killed in a fright. The Fellow treated the most Venerable with an Air of Superiority.----But he forever Caaf [? castigated] and Anathematized the Ch[ ] [Church] of England.

Whitefield's Evangelism in Northeastern Massachusetts. During the eight days following his departure from Boston on September 29, Whitefield itinerated along the coast through Marble-Head, Salem,

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95Boston Evening Post, October 29, 1744.

96A letter written by Timothy Cutler, September 24, 1743, now contained in the manuscript files of the Boston Public Library.

97Whitefield delivered two sermons at each city on his tour, with the exception of Mauiden, where he preached only once, and Salem, where he spoke three times.
Maulden, Ipswich, Newbury, Hampton, Portsmouth, and York. On this tour he traveled 178 miles and preached sixteen times.

**Whitefield's Second Visit to Boston.** On October 7 the *Weekly News Letter* informed its readers that Whitefield had returned to Boston, listed the places where he had preached during his trip, and stated that "Great Multitudes attended at every Place. Sometimes he preached in open Air, and sometimes in the Meeting Houses, [sic] Much of the divine Presence was visible in most of the Congregations." In addition, the article listed the time and place of his sermons during the rest of the week; announced his intentions to leave Boston the next Monday, and gave the itinerary of his tour through the following week. Such notices were new to Bostonians and created a considerable amount of excitement.

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98Whitefield's first sermon at Portsmouth, Wednesday, October 1, 1740, was presented to a polite congregation, but one "so very unconcerned" that he wondered if he "had been preaching to rational, or brute Creatures." *Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth,* 33. The audience for his second oration, Friday, October 3, was considerably different from his first audience. In his words: "I had now Reason to believe I was preaching to living Men. People began to melt soon after I began to pray, and the Power increased more and more during the whole Sermon. The Word seemed to pierce through and through, and carried such Conviction along with it, that many, who before had industriously spoken Evil of me, were ashamed of themselves." *Ibid.*, 35.

99An entry in his *Journal* for Tuesday, October 2, contained the following reference to his preaching in York: "when I came to preach, I could speak little or no Terror, but almost all Consolation.... The Hearers looked plain and simple; and Tears trickled apace down most of their Cheeks. Indeed we saw the Outgoings of the Lord in his Sanctuary." *Ibid.*, 34.

of interest. But of more importance, these notices helped insure large attendances for Whitefield's sermons.

On Tuesday, October 7, Whitefield preached both morning and evening at Benjamin Colman's Brattle Street Church. Governor Belcher called for the evangelist at his lodgings on Wednesday morning and escorted him to the New North Church, where he preached at both morning and evening services. He directed a large portion of both sermons to the small children in the audience. According to his Journal: "But, oh how were the old People affected, when I said, 'Little Children, if your Parents will not come to Christ, do you come and go to Heaven without them.' There seemed to be but few dry Eyas. Look where I would, the Word smote them, I believe through and through, and my own Soul was very much carried out. Surely it was the Lord's Passover. I have not seen a greater Commotion since my Preaching at Boston." 103

Thursday morning before Whitefield left his lodgings to preach at the Old South Meeting-house, he selected a particular text for his sermon. However, as he entered the church he saw a "great Number of Ministers" sitting in the pews and determined to preach upon the dangers of an unconverted ministry. When, in the course of the sermon he came to the words: "Art thou a Master in Israel, and knowest not these

101 Nathanael Henchman, Reasons Offered By Mr. Nathanael Henchman, Pastor of the first Church of Christ in Lynn, For declining to admit Mr. Whitefield into his Pulpit (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745). Hereafter referred to as: Reasons Offered.

102 Boston Weekly News Letter, October 7, 1740.

103 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 37.
thing* (John 3: 10), he felt that the Lord ordered him to open his
mouth boldly.”

His strictures upon the clergy apparently created little offence
among the hearers. Governor Belcher, well pleased with the discourse,
invited the minister to dinner, and "seemed more kindly affected than
ever." However, one of the most grievous blunders which Whitefield
committed during the Great Awakening arose out of this speech. Ani-
madversions against the clergy and the laity for a lack of sufficient
religious passion had been one of the dominant themes of Whitefield’s
sermons since he had arrived in Boston. His extravagant statements
were forgiven by his auditors as being extempore expressions, given in
the heat of the moment. It was a different matter though, when, in
discussing this speech in his Journal, Whitefield expressed the fol-
lowing estimation of the New England ministry:

I am verily persuaded, the Generality of Preachers talk
of an unknown, unfelt Christ. And the reason why Congre-
gations have been so dead, is because dead Men preach to
them. O that the Lord may quicken and revive them for his
Names’ sake. For how can dead Men beget living
Children? 'Tis true, God may convert People by the Devil,
if he pleases, and so he may by unconverted Ministers;
but I believe he seldom or never makes Use of either of
them for this Purpose: No: The Lord will choose Men who
are Vessels made meet by the Operations of his blessed
Spirit, for his sacred Use.

If Whitefield had not put into print his opinion of the New Eng-
land clergy, it is probable that he would not have been held so gravely

104 Ibid., 38.
106 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to
Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 38.
accountable for the excesses which characterized the aftermath of the Great Awakening. When his Journal was published during the spring of 1741, a number of the ministers were already growing sensitive to the railings of Gilbert Tennent, John Davenport, and other devotees of the revival who had followed Whitefield to Boston. After the distribution of his Journal, increasing numbers condemned the evangelist for having set the precedent of animadverting upon the clergy. Proof that Whitefield's comments were widely read and resented is shown in the innumerable times they were mentioned in the scores of anti-revival pamphlets which came from the presses in 1743, 1744, and 1745.

Thursday afternoon, several hours after his attack upon the clergy at the Old South Meeting-House, Whitefield preached to "fifteen thousand" upon the Common. The next day he went with the Reverend William Cooper to Charlestown where he collected 156 pounds for his orphans; after dinner the two ministers rode twelve miles to Reading, where Whitefield preached to "many thousands"; then, late in the evening, they returned to Boston. Saturday he preached at Harvard College from 2 Peter 2: 5: "Noah the eighth Person, a Preacher of Righteousness," and endeavoured to "shew the Qualifications proper for a true evangelical Preacher of Christ's Righteousness." As he expressed it: "The

107Davenport, who used somewhat less restraint than had Whitefield, assured his hearers on various occasions that the great majority of the Boston ministers were "carnal and unconverted Men; that they... knew nothing of Jesus Christ, and that they were leading their People blindfold down to Hell, and that they were destroying and murdering of Souls by Thousands." He went to the extreme of warning his followers that to hear a sermon by unconverted ministers was as dangerous to their souls as swallowing rat-poison was to their bodies. Boston Evening Post, September 6, 1742.

108Boston Evening Post, August 27, 1744.
Lord opened my mouth, and I spoke very plainly to Tutors and Pupils.\textsuperscript{109} Despite his plain speaking, Whitefield's oration was exceedingly well received in Cambridge. Public approval of Whitefield's preaching rose so high that several months later Nathaniel Appleton, pastor of the first church in Cambridge, preached two sermons entitled: "God, and not Ministers to have the Glory of all Success given to the preached Gospel." In his desire to minimize the importance of Whitefield in the revival of religion in Cambridge he chose for his text I Corinthians 3:6: "I have planted, Apollos [referring to Whitefield] watered; but God gave the increase."\textsuperscript{110}

After he returned to Boston from Cambridge about four o'clock, he preached immediately at the Old South Church, and, after supper, exhorted a large group that came to his lodgings.

Sunday, October 12, was the last day of Whitefield's stay in Boston. In the morning he preached "with great Power and Affection" at the Old South Church, which was so crowded that he secured entrance by crawling through a window. Following the sermon, Governor Belcher invited him to dinner, and, while tears ran down his cheeks, begged the evangelist to pray often for him. After dinner the evangelist attended Joseph Sewall's afternoon sermon at the Old South church.

\textsuperscript{109}Whitefield, \textit{Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth}, 40.

\textsuperscript{110}Nathaniel Appleton, \textit{God, and not Ministers to have the Glory of all Success given to the preached Gospel...Occasioned by the late powerful and awakening Preaching of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, and published at the Desire of many of the Hearers} (Boston: G. Rogers and B. Fowle, 1741).
Then he was taken by the Governor in his coach to the Common, where he preached to about twenty-three thousand persons, the largest audience assembled during the Great Awakening. According to Whitefield, it was "A Sight I have not seen since I left Blackheath, and a Sight, perhaps never before seen in America. It being duskist before I had done, the Sight was more solemn. Numbers, great numbers, melted into Tears, when I talked of leaving them. I was very particular in my Application, both to Rulers, Ministers, and People: commended what was commendable, blamed what was blameworthy, and exhorted my Hearers steadily to imitate the Piety of their Forefathers." After the sermon the Governor drove Whitefield home and stood in the hall while the evangelist delivered his final exhortation.

The effectiveness of Whitefield's oratory in Boston is indicated by the tremendous crowds who attended his sermons, by the numerous

111Boston Weekly News Letter, October 16, 1740. Whitefield believed the audience consisted of almost thirty-thousand: Journal from a few Days after his Return to Georgia to his Arrival at Falmouth, 41. John Gillies, Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield, p. 64, stated that twenty-three thousand was a "modest computation." A similar estimate may be found in the appendix of the anti-Whitefield pamphlet: The Wiles of Popery: Or the Popish Emissary Instructed. A Conference Twixt a famous Roman Casuist and an Emissary (Charlestown: P. Timothy, 1740), 11. Hereafter referred to as: The Wiles of Popery.

112A suburb of London. See Part I, Chapter IV.

113Whitefield, Journal from a few Days after his Return to Georgia to his Arrival at Falmouth, 41.

114The magnetic appeal of Whitefield's preaching can be appreciated only by remembering that in 1740 Boston possessed only seventeen thousand inhabitants. Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, 303.
eulogistic sermons which were preached about him throughout New England, and by the large donations which he received for the support of the Savannah orphanage. The *Weekly News Letter* reported that during his stay in New England Whitefield collected the amazing sum of 2,871 pounds.116

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Collection</th>
<th>Amount of Collection in Pounds</th>
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<tr>
<td>Old South Church</td>
<td>555</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brattle Street Church</td>
<td>470</td>
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<td>York</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Portsmouth</td>
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<td>Hampton</td>
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<td>Salem</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>Marblehead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Barnard's church</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Broadstreet's church</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>New North church</td>
<td>440</td>
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<tr>
<td>On the Common</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlestown</td>
<td>146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Contributions</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts in goods</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,871 pounds</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps the following statement by Thomas Prince best describes the results of Whitefield's preaching in Boston: "Multitudes were greatly affected and many awakened with his lively Ministry."117 The influence of his eloquence was felt by the people of Boston long after his departure. There was a great "flocking" to the weekly lectures;


117 *Prince, The Christian History*, 1744, 381.
religion was a dominant theme of conversations; ministers preached with more vigor, many of whom discarded their manuscripts and spoke extemporaneously; numerous eulogies of the young evangelist were offered from the pulpits.

During the next few years many sermons were preached with the purpose of maintaining the evangelistic fervor produced by Whitefield's preaching. A few months after the evangelist's departure from Boston, Gilbert Tennant came to New England and stirred the emotions of the people even more than had Whitefield. Then came John Davenport, the erased evangelist, and other zealots of the Great Awakening. Under the promptings of these over-ardent ministers, religious emotionalism in some of the people progressed steadily toward hysteria.

Timothy Cutler, a vigorous opponent of the Great Awakening, recorded in a private letter the turmoil caused by the preaching of Whitefield.

118 Boston Evening Post, October 29, 1740.
119 For example see: The State of Religion In New England, Since the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival there. 3.
120 A typical eulogistic sermon is Dr. Colman's "lecture" found in The Christian History, 1745, 362-384.
121 An illustration of this type of sermon is the following:

Thomas Foxcroft, Some Seasonable Thoughts on Evangelic Preaching; its Nature, Usefulness, and Obligation. A Sermon Deliver'd (in Part), at the Old-Church-Lecture in Boston, Thursday, Oct. 23, 1740. To a numerous Audience. Occasion'd By the late Visit, and uncommon Labours, in daily and powerful Preaching of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield.---The Brother, whose Praise is in the Gospel, throughout all the Churches. Published at the general Motion of the Hearers (Boston: Printed by G. Rogers and D. Fowle for S. Eliot, 1740).

122 Boston Evening Post, January 30, 1744.
and the evangelists who followed him to Boston:

It would be an endless attempt to describe that scene of Confusion and Disturbance occasion'd by him [Whitefield], the divisions of Families, neighborhoods & Towns, the Contrariety of Husbands and Wives, the undutifulness of Children & servants, the Quarrels among ye Teachers the Disorders of ye Night, the Interruption of Labour & Business, the Neglect of Husbandry, and of gathering ye Harvest. Our Presses are for ever teeming with Books, and our Women with Bastards; the Regeneration & Conversion is ye whole cry. The Teachers have many of them left their particular Cures, & strolled about ye Country. Some have been ordained by them Evangelisers as they call'em, and had their armour bearers and Exhorters; and in many Conventicles & Places of Rendezvous there has been chequed [!] work indeed, several Preaching & several Exhorting praying at ye same time, the rest crying or laughing, yelping, sprawling, fainting; and the Revel maintain'd in some Places many days and nights together without Interruption; and then there were the blessed out pourings of the Spirits. The New Lights [Whitefield's followers] have some overdone themselves by Ranting and Blaspheming and are quite demolish'd, others have extremely weakened their Interest & others are terrified from going the long Lengths they incline to: on the other hand, the Old Lights (thus are they distinguished) have been many of them forced to trim, and some have cost their Congregations. For they will soon raise up a new Conventicle in any new Town where they are opposed, and I don't know but we have 50 in one place or other, and some of them large and much frequented....

After him [Whitefield] came one Tennent—a Monster! imprudent & noisy; and told them all they were dam'd, dam'd, dam'd! This dam'd them! And in ye dreadfullest Winter that I ever saw, people wallowed in ye Snow night & day for ye Benefit of his beastly Prayings...Both of them carried more many out of these parts than ye poor could be thankful for.

Many more visited us, but one Davenport was a non-pareille.—The madder the Better, the less Reason ye more Spiritual.123

The newspapers at this period contained hundreds of references to the prevailing religious excesses; 124 dozens of pamphlets were written

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123 A letter by Timothy Cutler, September 24, 1743. In the manuscript files of the Boston Public Library.

124 See for instance: Boston Post Boy, September 23, 1741.
Although a heavy rain was falling after the service, the
warden, after Governor Boldizer, who had ridden from Boston to hear the
preacher, arrested the door of the church. When he entered the door of the church
in the afternoon to hear the preacher, where, after a brief rest, he went to
the balcony after the singing of the more militant, he came about noon, or at
least, after a short rest, he went to

1270. Thursday morning about ten the preacher
bore and rode westward. That noon he preached at Concord to some

the tabernacle. From landings at Charterstown, Waltham and Malden, he

took forty in the coach, crossed the river, and drove a year-

October 17, Governor Boldizer took the Young Republicans to the Charter-

1271. Thursday evening, Nov., 1847, Waltham, Massachusetts.

universal executive of Waltham's preaching.

preached effectually upon the minds of the people, and earned to win the
people of the period may have been plucked, their verdicts did not
serve as gone-ported and unrect. 1270. Although Chamber and the other

On the other hand Waltham, sweet has characterized Chamber's

example, for example, please me when that change, '_decay temper-

in Boston and in New England he still subject to debate among

the accuracy with which Chamber wrote of the religious conditions

1274. }

examples of religious hypocrisies into a powerful book: Seemingly

comments on the American Church: Especially the more speculatior
elderly Governor accompanied Whitefield and his party of admirers fifteen miles on to Worcester. The next morning Belcher and the evangelist rode together to the village square, where Whitefield preached in the open air to several "thousands." According to his Journal: "The Word fell with much Weight indeed: It carried all before it. [After the sermon] the Governor said to me, 'I pray God, I may apply what has been said to my own Heart. Pray, Mr. Whitefield, that I may hunger and thirst after Righteousness.'...With Tears in his Eyes he kissed me, and took Leave of me." 128

Whitefield's Visit to Northampton. After preaching at Leicester, Brackfield, Cold-Spring, and Hadley, he arrived in Northampton Friday afternoon. Here he met Jonathan Edwards, the famed promulgator of the Northampton revival of 1734 and 1735, whom he judged to be the most outstanding minister "in all New England." After preaching in the afternoon at Edwards' meeting-house, Whitefield recorded in his Journal: "When I came into his Pulpit, I found my Heart drawn out to talk of scarce any Thing besides the Consolations and Privileges of Saints, and the plentiful Effusions of the Spirit upon the Hearts of Believers. And, when I came to remind them of their former Experiences, 129 and how zealous and lively they were at that Time, both Minister and People wept much; and the Holy Ghost enabled me to speak with a great deal of Power." 130 At Edwards' request Whitefield "exhorted" that evening in

128 Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 44.

129 The Northampton Awakening in 1734 and 1735.

130 Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 45, 46.
the parsonage.

Saturday morning he spoke to a group of children at the parsonage, before riding to Hadfield to deliver a sermon. Upon his return to Northampton about four o'clock, he preached a sermon in the meetinghouse. On Sunday, he preached twice with such "great power" that Edwards and the congregation wept. The evangelist himself believed that he had not seen "four such gracious Meetings" since his arrival in New England. 131 The Pennsylvania Gazette reported that "A visible Presence of God attended the Word" in Northampton "with such Power as gave People hope that GOD would again revive his Work in the Hearts of the Inhabitants." 132 Another attestation as to the effectiveness of Whitefield at Northampton is found in a letter which Jonathan Edwards wrote a few years later to a Boston clergyman:

"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 a just reproof of our backslidings; and in a most moving and affecting manner, making use of our great professions, and great mercies as arguments with us to return to God, from whom we had departed. Immediately after this, the minds of the people in general appeared more engaged in religion, shewing a greater forwardness to make religion the subject of their conversation, and to meet frequently for religious purposes." 133

One of the most interesting descriptions of Whitefield's preaching written during the Great Awakening is found in a letter penned by Mrs.

131 Ibid., 47.


Jonathan Edwards to her brother in New Haven, requesting that he provide a hospitable shelter for the evangelist when he journeyed through Connecticut:

He [Whitefield] is truly a remarkable man, and, during his visit; has, I think, verified all that we have heard of him. He makes less of the doctrines than our American preachers generally do, and aims more at affecting the heart. He is a born orator. You have already heard of his deep-toned, yet clear and melodious, voice. It is perfect music. It is wonderful to see what a spell he casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob. He impresses the ignorant, and not less the educated and refined...our mechanics shut up their shops, and the day-labourers throw down their tools, to go and hear him preach, and few return unaffected. A prejudiced person, I know, might say that this is all theatrical artifice and display; but not so will any one think who has seen and known him. He is a very devout and godly man, and his only aim seems to be to reach and influence men the best way. He speaks from the heart all aglow with love, and pours out a torrent of eloquence which is almost irresistible.

An important development grew out of Whitefield's visit to Northampton. In the summer of 1743, while Whitefield was in England, Jonathan Edwards and the Reverend Thomas Clap, rector of Yale College, had a conversation about the young evangelist. A year later, when he learned that Whitefield was planning to return to the colonies from England, Clap stated publicly, giving a conversation of the preceding summer with Edwards as an authority, that Whitefield had advocated during his visit to Northampton the removal of "unconverted" American

ministers from their pulpits and the substitution of "converted" English ministers. After sending several letters to Clap, protesting the "untruthfulness" of this report, Edwards published a Letter to a Friend in Boston, in which he denied that Whitefield had mentioned anything of this nature to him in Northampton. He also disclaimed having ever spoken to Clap about the matter. Clap replied in a public letter, in which he "misquoted" certain statements made by Edwards in private correspondence with him. Edwards immediately endeavoured to show how he had been misquoted, by publishing the letters to which Clap referred. Clap's defense against this evidence was to publish a pamphlet accusing Edwards of "misrepresentation." The end of this debate came late in 1745, after Whitefield's return to the colonies, with Edwards' Expostulatory Letter, which reviewed the entire

The exact title of this pamphlet is not known. None of the standard check lists of early Americana mention this work, and apparently no copies have been preserved. However, both Clap and Edwards refer to this publication in their letters.

Thomas Clap, A Letter from the Rev. Mr. Thomas Clap, Rector of Yale College at New Haven, to a friend in Boston; concerning what Mr. Edwards told him that Mr. Whitefield said...about turning out the generality of Ministers (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745).

Jonathan Edwards, Copies of the two Letters cited by the Rev. Mr. Clap...in his last printed Letter to a Friend in Boston concerning what he has reported, as from Mr. Edwards of Northampton, concerning the Rev. Mr. Whitefield (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1745).

Thomas Clap, A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Clap, Rector of Yale College, in New Haven, to the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Northampton, expostulating with him for his injurious reflections in his late letter to a friend (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745).
argument from his point of view.\textsuperscript{139}

According to Winslow, these publications by Clap and Edwards "let loose a torrent. Civil as well as religious authorities were in a rage...It was a case of American countrymen against a British invasion, and particularly against Whitefield for having suggested it. No previous charge had raised such a furor against him."\textsuperscript{140}

Examination of newspapers, journals, and pamphlets at the time of this controversy would indicate that Miss Winslow has made the matter seem more sensational than it actually was. Nevertheless, it did serve to create additional enemies for Whitefield, and, in conjunction with other charges currently being lodged against him, helped ultimately to weaken the influence of his preaching in America.

**Whitefield's Journey Toward New York.** Late Sunday evening, October 20, 1740. Whitefield left Northampton in company with Jonathan Edwards and, after riding eighteen miles, spent the night in Westfields. The next morning he preached to a "considerable Congregation," then hastened on to Springfield, ten miles to the south, where he preached two sermons. Late that afternoon his horse stumbled while attempting to cross a broken bridge and threw the evangelist head first into a mound of soft sand. Suffering no injury, Whitefield mounted his horse and continued on his way. The shock of the fall produced a religious exultation which is worthy of notice. He wrote in his Journal: "After I had recovered myself and mounted my Horse,


God so filled me with a sense of his sovereign, distinguishing love, and my own unworthiness, that my eyes gushed out with tears; but they were all tears of love. Oh! how did I want to sink before the High and lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity! I felt myself less than nothing; and yet knew that Jesus was my All in All. The Divine presence was strong upon me all the evening. It was characteristic of the man to make a religious experience out of the most commonplace event.

Tuesday morning on his way to Suffield he met a minister who insisted that it was unnecessary for a preacher to be converted in order to teach the gospel. As a result of this conversation, when Whitefield preached at Suffield about eleven o'clock, he insisted strongly upon the doctrine of the "New Birth" and the absolute necessity for a "converted ministry."

In the middle of the afternoon he preached at Windsor; leaving immediately after the services, he rode to East Windsor and preached in the pulpit of the Reverend Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan. That evening Whitefield had supper in the home of the elder Edwards, before taking leave of them and of Jonathan Edwards, who had accompanied him from Northampton.

Whitefield preached at Hartford on Wednesday morning and at Weatherfield in the afternoon. At eleven o'clock Thursday morning he preached to "about four thousand" people at Middletown. One of the

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141 Whitefield, Journal from a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 48.

142 Boston Weekly News Letter, November 6, 1740.
most vivid descriptions of the intense anticipation with which the common people of New England "flocked" to hear Whitefield's sermons is found in a letter written by a Connecticut farmer who heard the evangelist preach here. He had heard of Whitefield's preaching at Philadelphia, New York, and Boston "like one of the old apostles, and many thousands flocking after him to hear ye gospel and great numbers... converted to Christ." Long before the evangelist came to Connecticut, the farmer "felt the spirit of god drawing" him "by conviction;" he "longed to see and hear" Whitefield "and wished he would" pass through Middletown. In the farmer's own words:

then one morning all on a suding about 8 or 9 o'clock there came a messenger and said Mr. Whitfield preached at hartford and weathersfield yesterday and is to preach at middletown this morning (October 23, 1740) at 10 o'clock i was in my field at work i dropt my tool that i had in my hand and run home and run thru the house and bad my wife get ready quick to goo and hear mr. whitfield preach at middletown and run to my pasture for my hors with all my might fearing i should be late to hear him i brought my hors home and soon mounted and took my wife up and went forward as fast as i thought the hors could bear, and when my hors began to be out of breath i would get down and put my wife on ye saddel and bid her ride as fast as she could and not stop or slak for me except i bad her and so i would run untill i was almost out of breth and then mount my hors again and so i did several times to favour my hors we improved every moment to get along as if we were fleeing for our lives all this while fearing we should be too late to hear ye sermon for we had twelve miles to ride dubble in littel more than an hour.143

As the farmer and his wife approached Middletown, they met numerous other persons on foot and on horseback, hurrying to the city. "Every hors seemed to go with all his might to carry his rider to hear ye news from heaven for the saving of their souls." Soon the farmer came

to the Connecticut river where "ferry boats" were "running swift forward and backward bringing over loads of people ye ores roed nimble and quick every thing men horses and boats all seemed to be struggling for life." When he arrived in the field appointed for the sermon, he was put in "a trembling fear" at the sight of the young evangelist, mounting the improvised, wooden "Scaffold." In the words of the farmer: "he looked as if he was Cloathed with authority from ye great god and a sweet solemnity sat upon his brow and my hearing him preach gave me a heart wound by gods blessing...my old foundation was broken up & i saw that my righteousness would not save me."

After his sermon at Middletown, Whitefield preached to another large congregation in the afternoon at Wallingsford, about fourteen miles south of Middletown. That evening when he arrived at New-Haven, he was "most affectionately received" by Mr. Pierpoint, brother of Mrs. Jonathan Edwards. During the three days the evangelist remained in New-Haven he dined once with President Clap and preached five sermons in the New-Haven churches. In at least two of these speeches he "spoke very close to the Students" of Yale College, "and shewed the dreadful ill-consequence of an unconverted Ministry." After Whitefield's Sunday evening sermon, the Governor thanked him for his "message." The evangelist later wrote in his Journal: "His Heart was so full that he could not speak much. The Tears trickled down his

144 Ibid.

145 Mrs. Edwards had written previously to her brother, notifying him of the evangelist's coming to New-Haven. See page 230.

146 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 51.
aged Cheeks like Drops of Rain. 'He was thankful to God, he said, for such Refreshings in our Way to our Rest.'

After leaving New-Haven, he preached on Monday at Milford and at Stratford, and on Tuesday at Fairfield and at Newark. Late Tuesday night he arrived in Stanford, spattered with mud and drenched from the rain which had fallen intermittently all day. Perhaps because of this exposure, the next morning when he arose he was "visited with a great inward Tryal" and was so dejected before going to the meeting-house that he was unable to settle upon a text for his sermon. As he described his feelings in the Journal: "I was...distressed for a Text after I got up into the Pulpit; but the Lord directed me to one: And tho' I looked for no Power or Success, being somewhat low by my last Night's Tryal, yet before I had preached half an hour, the blessed Spirit began to move on the Hearers Hearts in a very awful Manner."

By recording this statement and others of similar character in his Journal, Whitefield again exposed himself to attacks from his enemies. It is obvious the evangelist believed that divine inspiration had directed him to the text of his sermon and even to the very words he uttered. Such claims to "supernatural" guidance later formed one of the chief sources of complaint against him. Almost every one of the dozens of pamphlets written against him during the aftermath of the Great Awakening condemned strongly his supposed reliance upon

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147Ibid., 51, 52.

148Whitefield's Journal gives "Stanford," but it should probably be spelled "Stamford."

149Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 53.
divine motivation. This passage from his Journal also proved that he indulged in impromptu preaching. In the months following his departure from New England, many persons objected in the press to such a method of pulpit delivery. When Whitefield attempted to defend his preaching as being extemporaneous and not impromptu, his opponents had only to quote from his own Journal to refute him.

In the afternoon of October 29, Whitefield crossed from Connecticut into the colony of New York. His evangelistic tour of New England was now completed. In the preceding fifty-five days he had preached more than one hundred times and had collected over three thousand pounds for his orphanage. He had brought a new zeal for religion to the common people of New England and had introduced a new era of emotional preaching in place of the severely logical pulpit style then prevalent. He had set the pattern of religious emotionalism which was to grow in intensity for a brief period after his departure, before its excesses brought it into disrepute.

150 For example, see the declarations by Harvard and Yale Universities and Wigglesworth, A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield By Way of Reply.

151 Whitefield, A Letter to the Reverend the President and Professors, Tutors and Hebrew Instructor, of Harvard College, in Cambridge, in Answer to a Testimony Published by Them Against the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, and his Conduct (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1745).
Whitefield’s Third Visit to New York. After entering the colony of New York early Wednesday afternoon, October 29, 1740, Whitefield rode several miles further to Rye, where he preached in the Anglican church to a small congregation. After the services he rode ten miles to Eastchester, spent the night in a private home, and preached in the morning to about three hundred people. Early in the afternoon at King’s Bridge he delivered his thirty-first sermon since leaving Boston. Continuing on southward, he arrived at the home of his friend the Reverend Mr. Noble in New York City about suppertime. His evening was devoted to a reunion with Noble, John Davenport, and other admirers who arrived from nearby sections to welcome him back from his New England travels.

Friday morning, October 31, Whitefield encountered for the first time a highly critical pamphlet, entitled The Querists, which contained “objectionable” extracts from his published journals, sermons, and letters, along with certain queries to the evangelist. The quotations and questions discussed in this pamphlet were items which had been considered by the Presbytery of New-Castle in its annual meeting:


2. The Querists, or, An Extract of Sundry Passages taken out of Mr. Whitefield’s printed Sermons, Journals and Letters: Together with some Scruples propos’d in proper Queries rais’d on each Remark. By some Church-Members of the Presbyterian Persuasion. 2 Tim. 1. 11. Held fast the Form of sound words (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1740), (Reprinted in Boston: T. Fleet, 1740).

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at Whiteclay Creek, September 9, 1740. Whitefield immediately com­
posed a hasty pamphlet in rebuttal. These publications probably
exerted a limited effect upon the influence of Whitefield’s preaching,
as they were referred to only infrequently in writings of contemporar­
ies. However, the printing of The Querists is important because it
indicates that opposition to Whitefield was becoming more outspoken
in the Middle Colonies.

Whitefield preached twice on both Friday and Saturday at one of
the Presbyterian churches. On Sunday morning he spoke with “Freedom
and some Power” but was “much dejected” before the evening sermon.
When he entered the pulpit, he believed himself to be so weak he could
hardly stand. However, after a stumbling introduction he thought that
“the Spirit of the Lord gave” him “Freedom, till at length it came
down like a mighty Rushing Wind, and carried all before it.” Accord­
ing to his Journal: “Immediately the whole Congregation was alarmed.
Shrieking, Crying, Weeping and Wailing were to be heard in every Corner.
Men’s Hearts failing them for Fear, and many falling into the Arms of
their Friends. My Soul was carried out till I could scarce speak any
more.”

When he walked down from the pulpit, he noticed a little girl,
who, apparently in “great Agony” was crying “Oh my Jesus, my Jesus!”

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3Whitefield, A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Whitefield to Some
Church Members of the Presbyterian Persuasion, in Answer to Certain
Scruples and Queries Relating to Some Passages in His Printed Sermons
and Other Writings (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1740). (Reprinted
in Charlestown: P. Timothy, 1741). See also: The Querists, the Rev.
Mr. Whitefield’s Answer, the Rev. Mr. Gardin’s Letters, and the Casuist
(New York: J. P. Zenger, 1740).

4Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia
To his Arrival at Haliworth, 57.
Nearby a small boy was so hysterical that "he could scarce stand."
When someone asked him what was the matter, he sobbed: "'Mr. White-
field's Words cut me to the Heart.'"

Upon returning to his lodgings, the evangelist prayed before a
large company, and believed that he had laid "hold on God." In his
Journal Whitefield later recorded his remarkable emotional experience:
"Jesus Christ was called, and he was present in a remarkable Manner....
I was in a very great Agony, and the Holy Ghost was remarkably
present...After this, Divine Manifestations flowed in so fast, that
my frail Tabernacle was scarce able to sustain them." He felt so
weak that he was forced to retire to bed. In his words: "My dear
Friends sat round me on the Bed-sides. I prayed for each of them
alternately with strong Cries, and pierced by the Eye of Faith, even
within the Veil. I continued in this Condition for about half an Hour,
astonished at my own Vileness, and the Excellency of Christ, then rose
full of Peace, and Love, and Joy." 5

About seven o'clock Monday evening, November 3, after having
preached in the morning and afternoon at New York City, Whitefield
crossed over to Staten Island with several of his followers. He
closed his Journal for that day by writing: "about Midnight retired
to sleep, still longing for that Time when I should sleep no more.
Lord keep me from a sinful and too eager Desire after Death. I desire
gently to wait till my blessed Change come." 6

5Ibid., 58.
6Ibid.
Whitefield's Journey to Philadelphia. About noon on Tuesday he preached from a wagon on Staten Island to approximately four hundred people. Just before the sermon he was "much refreshed" by the coming of Gilbert Tennent and the Reverend John Cross of Baskingridge. After the service Whitefield and his ministerial friends crossed over to the New Jersey shore and rode about ten miles to Newark, where he spoke to a "considerable Congregation." That night, following supper, he exhorted to a "large Company" who gathered in the home where he was to spend the night. As he related it in his Journal: "O how did the Word fall like a Hammer and like a Fire! What a Weeping was there! One poor Creature in particular was ready to sink into the Earth. His Countenance was altered till he looked, as it were, sick to Death." Another listener became so hysterical that his body remained nearly rigid the remainder of the night. 8

After setting out about eight o'clock the next morning, Whitefield's party got to Baskingridge, the pastorate of the Reverend Mr. Cross, about one in the afternoon. When they arrived at the church, they found John Davenport preaching to about "three thousand" persons assembled in the churchyard. At the conclusion of Davenport's sermon Whitefield climbed onto a wagon and began to speak. So wrought up were the people already, that he had hardly started his exordium before persons throughout the congregation began to "utter cries of despair," and "almost all melted into Tears." One little boy near the front of

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7 The character of Gilbert Tennent is interestingly illustrated by a comment in Whitefield's Journal: Tennent "has lately lost his Wife, and tho' dear unto him, yet he was enabled with great Calmness to preach her funeral Sermon, whilst the Corps [sic] were lying before him." Ibid., 59.

8 Ibid., 59, 60.
the audience "cried out exceeding piteously," and appeared on the verge of fainting. The Reverend Mr. Cross, feeling sorry for the child, took him up into the wagon and attempted to comfort him. Almost overcome with his own emotions, Whitefield broke off his oration and told the people that the boy would preach to them. The youngster managed to stammer some expressions of faith, upon which Whitefield explained that since "old Professors would not cry after Christ" God was "perfecting Praise," by means of an infant's tongue. The unusual sight of a boy standing in a wagon between two ministers, attempting to preach to a crowd of several thousands, caused additional excitement in the listeners. Some individuals fainted and fell to the ground; others began to scream and weep; the general cry increased until the evangelist stopped speaking and climbed down from the wagon.9

As soon as Whitefield concluded his sermon, the Reverend Mr. Cross announced to the congregation that both Tennent and Whitefield would preach later in the afternoon at his ham, about two miles away. A considerable caravan of horses, wagons, and pedestrians set out for the parsonage. Shortly after their arrival, Gilbert Tennent preached in the barn "upon the Necessity and Benefit of spiritual Desertions." When he had concluded, Whitefield began to preach. In his words: "The Lord's Presence attended" the sermon "in a surprising Manner. One in about six Minutes cried out, 'He is come, he is come,' and could scarce sustain the Discovery that Jesus Christ made of himself to his Soul. Others were so earnest for a Discovery of the Lord to their Souls, that their eager Crying obliged me to stop, and I prayed over them as I saw

9Ibid., 60.
their Agonies and Distress increase."\(^{10}\)

After the sermon, Whitefield, followed by a large portion of the congregation, went into Cross' house and began to pray once more. The man who had believed he saw the coming of Christ continued until midnight, talking and praising his "sweet Christ," his "free-hearted Christ."\(^{11}\) Two or three young ministers preached alternately during the night; here and there throughout the house persons prayed aloud as "the Lord gave them Utterance"; and most of the people remained at the parsonage engaged in "Prayer and Praises" until morning.\(^{11}\)

The next morning, Thursday, November 6, 1740, Whitefield exhorted a few persons and then rode to New Brunswick, where in the evening he preached at Gilbert Tennant's church. Early the next morning William Tennant arrived to visit with the evangelist. Following an extended discussion, the ministers (William and Gilbert Tennant, Cross, Davenport, and Whitefield) determined that it was "God's Will" for Gilbert to visit New England in order to help maintain the Great Awakening there.\(^{12}\) This was an extremely important decision, because Tennant's "terrible" preaching of "Hell and Damnation" in New England that winter continued still further the excesses which were soon to bring the Great Awakening into disfavor.

About eleven o'clock that morning Whitefield, John Davenport, and

\(^{10}\)Ibid., 61; a letter dated November 10, 1740, from Philadelphia, in his Works, I, 222.

\(^{11}\)Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 61.

\(^{12}\)Whitefield, a letter to Governor Jonathan Belcher of Boston, dated November 9, 1740, from Philadelphia, in his Works, I, 220, 221.
several followers left New Brunswick on their way toward Philadelphia. After having preached at Trenton Saturday morning, the party arrived in the Quaker City about eight o'clock Saturday night, November 8.

Whitefield's Fifth Visit to Philadelphia. The evangelist found soon after his arrival in Philadelphia that religious enthusiasm had not abated during his absence. The Log College evangelists and other revivalists had done much to help maintain this spirit. During the latter part of May and the first weeks of June in 1740, when the Philadelphia Synod held its annual meeting, at least fourteen sermons were preached on Society Hill by the Tennents, Davenport, Rowland, and Blair, in addition to numbers of "special sermons" delivered in the churches, and "Expounding and Exhortations" in private homes. Late in the fall the Pennsylvania Gazette announced: "The Alteration in the Face of Religion here is altogether surprising. Never did the People show so great a willingness to attend Sermons, nor the Preachers greater zeal and Diligence in performing the Duties of their Functions. Religion is become the subject of most Conversations. No Books are in Request but those of Piety and Devotion; and instead of idle Songs and Ballads, the People are every where entertaining themselves with Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs. All which, under God, is owing to the successful Labours of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield."¹³

At the same time, however, opposition to the Awakening was likewise growing. Unlike the clergy in New England, who offered Whitefield almost no opposition, the conservative ministers in the Middle Colonies were by this time growing angry at the constant railing of the revivalists against the "unconverted" preachers. The publication of Gilbert

¹³Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, November 13, 1740.
Tennent's Nottingham sermon on the dangers of an unconverted ministry was one of the causes of this rising feeling, which was to culminate in the expulsion by the anti-revivalistic Philadelphia Synod of the revivalistic New Brunswick presbytery in 1741. This was one of the most slanderous sermons delivered during the Great Awakening. As a result of the increased opposition by the conservative ministers, Whitefield found most of the pulpits closed to him when he arrived in Philadelphia.

During the eight days that Whitefield remained in the Quaker City, he preached twice each day in a building constructed especially for his services. The structure, the largest in Philadelphia, was one hundred feet long and seventy feet wide. It was only partially completed.

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14Chauncy in his Seasonable Thoughts, 249-250, collected the following list of slanderous names which Tennant bestowed upon the "Body of the Clergy": Hirelings; Caterpillars; Letter-learned Pharisees; Men that have the Craft of Foxes, and the Cruelty of Wolves; plastered Hypocrites; V unintelligible; the Seed of the Serpent; foolish Builders; whom the Devil drives into the Ministry; dry-Nurses; dead Pigs that cannot bark; blind Men; dead Men; Men possessed with the Devil; Rabals and Enemies to God; Guides that are Stone-blind, and Stone-dead; Children of Satan, that, like their Father, may do good to Men's Souls by Chance-Edley; Dabbers with untempered Mortar; moral Bezzees; Salt without Savour, that stink in the Nostrils of God and Men; JUDAS'S, whose chief desire is to finger the Penny, and to carry the Bag; murderous Hypocrites, that are to take Care lest they feel the Force of a Halter in this World, or an aggravated Damnation in the next; subtle selfish Hypocrites, that would not let one honest Man come into the Ministry if they could help it; Swarms of Locusts; Crowds of Pharisees, that have as covetously, as cruelly, crept into the Ministry, in this adulterous Generation, who as nearly resemble the Character given of the old Pharisees, as one Crow's Egg does another, whose Hearers are as blind as Holes, and dead as Stones; Successors of ANGO-DENIS; blind leaders of the Blind; Formalists; dead Drones; Sons of BOMZIA, with a fine long String of Prayers; false Apostles; deceitful Workers...".

at the time—the roof was not up, and a temporary flooring covered
the ground. According to Benjamin Franklin: "Both house and ground
were vested in trustees, expressly for the use of any preacher of any
religious persuasion who might desire to say something to the people
at Philadelphia; the design in building not being to accommodate any
particular sect, but the inhabitants in general; so that even if the
Mafti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedan-
ism to us, he would find a pulpit at his service."

The construction of this building was significant. It was an
evidence of the democratic spirit of freedom of speech. Although the
conservative ministers were completely within their rights in closing
their pulpits to Whitefield when it was too cold to preach out-of-
doors, by doing so they were attempting to suppress free expression of
religious views. Hence, the establishment of this building devoted to
the philosophy of free speech was a not inconsequential step in the
establishment of the American heritage of democracy.

Another important result of the erection of the hall (which was
also to serve as a charity school) was the beginnings of the movement
which, after passing through the stages of an academy, and the College
of Philadelphia, finally culminated in the establishment of the Univer-
sity of Pennsylvania. A third result was that the building served
as a shelter for the great mass audiences which heard Whitefield's ser-
mons, and, after his departure, remained as a monument to the evangelic
religion.

16 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, November 13, 1740; Boston
Weekly News Letter, November 27, 1740; Whitefield, Works, I, 222.

17 Franklin, Autobiography, 119.
As usual, Whitefield's preaching in Philadelphia was highly effective, although at times it was impromptu. According to his Journal upon one occasion: "The Lord gave me the Text I preached on just before Meeting; directed me to a Method as I was going up the Pulpit-stairs; and enabled me to discourse with an uncommon Clearness, Freedom, and Power." His lack of preparation for this sermon had little apparent effect upon his eloquence: "The Effects plainly showed that it was of God.—The Word seemed to smite them like so many pointed Arrows." Another time he was ill before sermon time and could not decide upon a suitable text. In his words: "I went on, began Preaching, and found my Heart somewhat refreshed, but all on a sudden, my Soul was so carried out to talk against depending on our natural reason, that my Friends were astonished, and so was I too! For I felt the Holy Ghost come upon me at that Time, and never spoke on that wise before." Upon ascertaining that a "Cluster" of "unconverted Reasoners" were present in the congregation, Whitefield believed that his "strange behavior" in the pulpit had been the result of a divine direction to preach against "Deism."

One afternoon Whitefield spoke on the topic, "What shall I do to be saved?" This sermon created the greatest turmoil he had yet seen among his Philadelphia audiences. He was forced to break off in the midst of his sermon because of the loud wailing and weeping in the congregation.

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18 Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 66.

19 Ibid., 67.
On Sunday, November 16, he collected about one hundred pounds sterling at each of his two farewell sermons. At the afternoon service he spoke from the words of St. Paul: "But ye, Beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life." The congregation, while large, was nevertheless considerably smaller than the auditory which had heard his valedictory sermon in the spring.


The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Gazette, December 18, 1740, published the following poem entitled: "On Hearing GEORGE WHITEFIELD at the New Building in Philadelphia."

Long have the learned Pastors of the Age
Their Hearers pleas'd by copying from the Stage.
The Gospel dropp'd, and introduc'd a Scheme
By which we Savours to ourselves became:
Taught moral Precepts in a pleasing Strain,
So complaisant, they never gave us Pain;
DO THIS AND LIVE, was all we had in View;
The Preacher pleas'd, and pleas'd the Hearers too.

But lo! a WHITEFIELD come with Zeal divine,
In whose strict Life the Christian Graces shine,
In Doctrine sound, in Faith and Virtue Strong,
With soft Persuasion dwelling on his Tongue.

He comes by Heaven's Command, to chase away
Those Mists and Clouds that long have hid the Day;
To pull a long prevailing Error down,
Which takes from off Emanuel's Head the Crown;
To rouse with an awakening Trumpet, those,
Who sit supinely in a false Repose:
To harden'd Sinner Terror to impart,
And probe with Skill divine the wounded Heart:
To preach a Truth which Nicodemus heard
Spoke by the Mouth of Him who never err'd;
A great and certain Truth, but too severe
For a degenerate sensual Age to bear.

Go, wond'rous Youth! thy heav'nly Task pursue,
Be not dismay'd at what the World can do;
The' Libertine, when sacred Truths they hear,
Heaven for Comfort to the Scoffers Chair,
Or by the Bowl, or by the Bottle cheer'd,
Laugh at the Danger which before they fear'd:
Whitefield's Itinerary to Ready Island. Monday morning, November 17, 1740, Whitefield parted with his Philadelphia friends, crossed the Delaware river to the New Jersey shore, and spoke at nearby Gloucester. About midnight Thursday he arrived in Newcastle, after having preached once at Greenwich, and twice at each of the following: Piles-Grove, Cohansie, and Salem. Friday morning he spoke at the Newcastle courthouse, met Charles Tennent, and rode on with him to Whiteclay Creek, where Whitefield preached to "many thousands." At this sermon, according to his Journal: "the greatest Part of the Congregation was exceedingly moved. Several cried out in different Parts, and others were to be seen wringing their Hands, and weeping bitterly. The Stir was ten Times greater than when I was here last." 22

Whitefield preached at York's Manor on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday morning at Nottingham, where a large congregation stood in the rain to hear him. On Monday afternoon he believed that his audience of "two thousands" displayed the most "solid melting" he had yet seen

And while the Blood runs swift thro' every Vein,  
And none but gay Ideas fill the Brain  
Each does the others impious Wit applaud,  
Nocks at Religion, and blasphemes his God.  
The' some, who to Religion make Pretence,  
Want only Pow'r to send thee bleeding hence;  
The' Earth and Hell should with united Force  
Employ their Malice to impede thy Course:  
Yet fear thou not, be to thy Master true!  
He will direct thee, and preserve thee too;  
He will the Counsels of thy Foes confound,  
And lay their boasted Glory with the Ground.  
Then journey on, the Light of Truth display.  
Bid harden'd Sinners hearken and obey;  
To Realms that now in midnight Darkness dwell,  
The joyful Tydings of a Saviour tell.  

22 Ibid., 73.
The members from Jamaica who, with appropriate epithets such as:

- The number which L. J. tells me was 
- of the funds entrusted to his care, but that the direct interest
- amounts for the assistance. It is doubtful that the contribution
- that be given a complete account of the money he had collected
- the members, who were soon demanding in the press and in the parlors

- He's suggested financial statements did not exist, some of
- of the experience was to weaken severely the influence of the preacher.
- from the collection and the expense for the performance
- contrary to Boston. Pittsfield's failure to report accurately and in
- made in Pittsfield's, and almost three thousand pounds in collects
- that he had collected two hundred pounds exceeding at the last two or-
- several collections seems to be extremely low, when it is considered

- A great deal of the
- the Inspector and the Press Association's report, had collected "over
- had delivered over one hundred and seventy dollars to

- Your Lordship has had hidden more than eight hundred miles by cable

- Next the seventy-eighth day, since he had landed at New-Port.

- and a week later embarked on the schooner for Charleston.
"thief," "pirate," "highwayman," "spiritual pickpocket," and "fleecer."

For example, in 1744, one scurrilous article, printed in the South Carolina Gazette and reprinted in the New York Post Boy and the Boston Evening Post, contained the following slanderous remarks:

with all the fanatic Artillery (Doctrines) of the Oliverian times, open mouthed and handed to preach, beg, and receive for the poor Orphans of Georgia!...becoming all Things to all Men, not that he might gain some, but make some Gain of All! scattering the Terrors of the Lord, Death and Damnation all around Him, and driving all before him quick and alive into Hell Fire, that either doubted his Doctrines, or refused Contributions to the Orphan-House!... That thus open mouthed and handed, crying give, give, he has run raving, once and again, all over the British Dominions; and with much Success, that he has collected first and last, in publick and in private, some say Ten, others Eight, but most agree not less than Seven thousand Pounds Sterling: the 10th Penny of which never was applied to the Use of any Orphans or real Objects of Charity whomsoever; nor indeed the 5th Penny either to their Use, or of the House, or any the Triumphery contained in it.

Similar comments frequently appeared in the press during the years 1743, 1744, and 1745. In conjunction with the rest of the propaganda then prevalent in newspapers, pamphlets, and sermons, the repetitious charges of dishonesty exerted a negative influence upon the total effectiveness of Whitefield's preaching during the Great Awakening.

Whitefield's Return to the South. Upon landing in Charlestown, Tuesday night, December 9, Whitefield learned of the conflagration which had destroyed much of the city three weeks earlier. As a

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26 Charlestown, South Carolina Gazette, September 10, 1744; New York City, New York Post Boy, November 5, 1744; Boston Evening Post, November 19, 1744.

27 Bridenbaugh has stated that the Charlestown holocaust, which occurred in November of 1740, was the most disastrous fire suffered by any of the colonies up to this time. Over three-hundred buildings were destroyed and a loss of over 200,000 pounds sterling was sustained. Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, 372.
result, on Wednesday morning he selected as a text for his sermon at the Independent Church Isaiah 1: 9: "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been like unto Sodom." In the course of his sermon he pointed out the Biblical sins which provoked God to punish the Israelites. Then, he attempted to draw an analogy between the Israelites and the people of Charleston, by telling his hearers that their sins had "compelled the Lord" to chastise them by burning their city. That evening he preached another sermon, and, on Thursday morning boarded a ship for Savannah.

Whitefield arrived at the Georgia city about midnight, Saturday, December 13, and found that the orphans had been removed to the nearly completed orphan-house at Bethesda. The text of his Sunday morning sermon was St. Luke 4: 18, 19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." The evangelist expressed "grave doubts" that more than a "very few, who received Ordination, were thereby called by the Holy Ghost," and he "gave thanks to God" that he was one of the few divinely directed to

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28 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return To his Arrival at Falmouth, 76.

29 It is to be remembered that Bethesda was the name given by Whitefield to the orphanage, which was located about ten miles from Savannah.

30 Although Whitefield had notified the Trustees of Georgia in January, 1740, that he wished to be relieved of his duties as chaplain of Savannah, no other minister had yet been sent over to take his place. See, Lord Bamentos, Journal, 382.
In his peroration he informed his hearers that he should remain in Georgia only a brief time before returning to England.

After dinner, Whitefield, with some of his Savannah followers, rode to Bethesda, where he found the buildings almost completed, and a complement of almost ninety orphans and custodians. He discovered also that the expenses of construction and maintenance had placed him over five hundred pounds in debt.

During the next two weeks, orphanage concerns kept the evangelist closely confined to Bethesda. A number of persons came from various parts of Carolina and Georgia to the orphan-house to visit with him before he returned to England. Hence, he preached only three times during this period at Savannah. Two of these sermons were delivered on Sunday, December 21, and are of considerable importance because in them Whitefield dwelt upon the Calvinist doctrine of "Election." Here for the first time we find contemporaries stating definitely that Whitefield preached "Election" in a particular sermon. Colonel Stephens has written that the dominant theme of these sermons "was to

31 Stephens, Journal, supplement to IV, 52, 53.
33 Stephens, Journal, supplement to IV, 62.
34 For copies of letters by Whitefield to Wesley in which he defends the doctrine of "Election" see: his Works, I, 140, 155, 181-183, 210-212, 213-214, 216-217, 219, 225; and IV, 55-73. Two of these letters were published in pamphlet form by presses in London, Philadelphia, and Boston: (1) A Letter from the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley in Answer to His Sermon Entitled Free Grace; (2) Free Grace Indeed! A Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, Relating to his Sermon Against Absolute Election, Published Under the Title of Free Grace.
maintain the Doctrine of a peculiar Election, of such as were predesti-
tated 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
throu' his Mediation."35

Whitefield's third sermon at the Savannah church was presented
at the Monday afternoon prayer service on December 29. In the midst
of reading from The Book of Common Prayer he delivered an impromptu
lecture on "Election" and "Reprobation." He drew a picture of the
"State of Damnation" so pathetically that "he not only dropt Tears
himself, but drew many Tears and Groans from great Part of his audi-
ence." In conclusion, according to Stephens:

"he laid aside the...Prayer-Book; and instead of those
Prayers that remained to be read, he fell into a long
extemporary prayer of his own, full of Platus and Enthusi-
asm, and uttered with a Stentor's Voice, bewailing the
little Number of Converts he had been able to make, dur-
ing the Time of his Ministry; lamenting the forlorn State
of the Colony through the Hardness of their Hearts, which
he plainly saw would never prosper till this Generation
was all worn out, like the Israelites in the Wilderness;
and intimating, that his Orphan-House was a Work of God,
from whence future Blessings might be derived to this
Place: Then cautioning all to beware of such as preached
soft Things, he dismissed his Audience, taking final
leave of them."36

Tuesday afternoon, December 30, the evangelist left Savannah by
boat and arrived in Charlestown late Saturday night, January 3. During
the next week and a half he preached twice each day and exhorted in
the evening to companies of pious folk in private homes.

36Ibid., 63.
At this time Whitefield used poor judgment in correcting for the press a pamphlet written by Hugh Bryan, in which the author charged the clergy of South Carolina with breaking the Canons of the Church of England. On January 10, Benjamin Whitaker, Chief Justice of South Carolina, issued a warrant to both Bryan and Whitefield, accusing them of committing libel upon the ministers. The evangelist confessed he had revised the publication, and was forced to deposit a one hundred-pound bond that he would appear by his attorney at the next quarter-session of the court. Very shortly afterwards, Bryan sent long lists of prophecies to the South Carolina House of Assembly. Camping out in the wilderness, he amassed about him a motley crew of Negroes and whites, smuggled firearms in to them, and was apparently about to start a revolution when he was apprehended and declared insane.

The affair created a great deal of interest in Charlestown and throughout the colonies. How much effect it had on diminishing the influence of Whitefield's preaching is matter for conjecture. It did, however, constitute an additional embarrassing situation for his friends to explain.

On Sunday, January 11, the day after he received his summons to answer the charges of slander, Whitefield preached upon "Herod's sending the wise Men to find Christ under the pretence that he intended to come and worship him, when in reality he intended to kill him." His purpose was to show by means of a Biblical analogy "how dreadful it was to persecute under the "guise" of religion. In the afternoon


38 Boston Post Boy, May 3, 1742.
he used for a text I Kings 21: 12, 13: "They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the King. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died." By this analogy he attempted to show that Commissary Garden and the civil authorities were "abusing the power which God had put into their hands." In the evening he expounded upon the Biblical story of Orpah and Ruth, and pleaded with his hearers "to follow the Lord Jesus Christ tho' his cause be never so much persecuted and spoken against."

On Thursday, January 15, Whitefield preached a valedictory sermon in Charlestown, and went on board the Minerva, expecting to sail immediately for England. Because of adverse winds, however, the ship did not sail for about a week. When the small vessel slipped across the bar in the full tide of morning on January 23, she carried at her rail a young man twenty-six years old, whose personal magnetism and eloquent oratory had stirred the religious heart of colonial America. Perhaps, not again for generations would the spoken eloquence of one man so deeply affect the lives of so many. With tenacity of purpose and a supreme faith in his ideal, George Whitefield had endured trials and fatigue beyond the strength of any but the hardiest of men, to bring the work of God, as he saw it, to the people of America. Tens of thousands in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were yet to thrill to his oratory. He was to visit the colonies five times more, but these

39 Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia to his Arrival at Falmouth, 81-82.
American visits were anticlimactic ventures. Never again in America would he enjoy such power over the bodies and minds of men as he had in 1740 when he helped stir the Great Awakening into vigorous life.

There can be little doubt that the preaching of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening made him one of the most important figures in the history of modern religion. His talents were similar to, but much greater than the evangelists Amie Semple McPherson, Buddy Robinson, Dr. Massey, Billy Sunday, and Gilbert Tennent. He possessed no great mental capacities, but was blessed with the ability to arouse the non-critical to emotional heights. His importance lies, first, in bringing a new zeal for religion to the great masses in America; second, in introducing a new era of fiery, emotional preaching in place of the dull, logical pulpit style then prevalent; third, in stimulating waves of emotional fervor which swept colonial America, and which in turn motivated the rapid development of the Methodist, Baptist, and other evangelical denominations; and fourth, in helping to develop the democratic sentiment by creating the first important social movement common to all the American colonies.

40Among the historians who agree with this point of view are S. E. Morison and H. E. Commager, who have written: "The Great Awakening...was the first important and spontaneous movement of the American people—far more pervasive than the wars and political squabbles of the period. Altogether outside the sphere or influence of government, it crossed colonial boundaries, emphasized class lines, and stimulated democracy." The Growth of the American Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), I, 110.
PART III

WHITEFIELD THE ORATOR

Chapter I. Some General Aspects of Whitefield's Oratory
Chapter II. Whitefield's Speech Preparation
Chapter III. The Organization of Whitefield's Sermons
Chapter XIV. The Content of Whitefield's Sermons
Chapter XIV. Whitefield's Manner of Delivery
SOME GENERAL ASPECTS OF WHITEFIELD'S ORATORY

In the fifteen months (October 30, 1739, to January 23, 1740) that Whitefield remained in America during the Great Awakening, he delivered over five hundred sermons as well as several hundred "exhortations" to small groups in private homes. Often his chapel was the out-of-doors, although at times he preached in the Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, Congregational, Quaker, and Episcopal churches. Frequently his rostrum was a rude platform hastily constructed in some open field, or merely a mound of earth, tree stump, wagon, horse's back, or convenient balcony. Upon various occasions he preached in the rain, snow, or under the summer sun. In evangelizing from Boston to Savannah he traveled more than two thousand miles by horseback through the colonial wilderness and over three thousand miles by boat. Most of his sermons were delivered in the large cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charlestown or on tours between them, with only a limited number being presented at the Savannah parsonage to which he had been appointed by the Trustees of Georgia.¹

¹See Whitefield's American journals: (1) Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo to his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia; (2) A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, after his Arrival at Georgia, to a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia; (3) Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth.
pounds sterling during his American sojourn. Following one sermon in Boston he received 555 pounds in currency. Benjamin Franklin testified in his Autobiography that Whitefield "had a wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers." The Philadelphia printer did not approve of the construction of a large orphanage in Georgia, because that colony was "destitute of materials and workmen." Instead, he proposed that the evangelist establish an orphan-house in Philadelphia and send the orphans to it. When his suggestions received no consideration, he refused to contribute. Somewhat later he attended one of Whitefield's sermons and, upon perceiving that a collection was to be taken up, resolved that he should give nothing. He had in his purse a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five gold pistoles. As the sermon proceeded, he began to "soften" and concluded to give the coppers; a few minutes later he determined to give the silver; the orator finished his speech "so admirably" that Franklin emptied his entire pocket into the plate.

One of Franklin's friends who attended the same sermon had left all of his money at home as a precautionary device. Toward the end of the discourse he felt an overwhelming desire to contribute and attempted to borrow from a person standing nearby. As related in the Autobiography: "The application was unfortunately [made] to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected

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²Whitefield, An Account Of Money Received and Disbursed For The Orphan-House In Georgia. To which is prefixed A Plan of the Building. 79.

³Boston Weekly News Letter, October 2, 1740, and October 16, 1740. See page 215.

⁴Franklin, Autobiography, 120.
by the preacher. His answer was, 'At any other time, Friend Hopkinson,
I would lend to thee freely; but not now, for thee seems to be
out of thy right senses.'

A further evidence of the effectiveness of Whitefield's preaching was that the Governors of most of the Colonies attended his sermons and entertained him. Governor Ogle of Maryland set aside court business to hear him preach. Governor Belcher of Massachusetts, his staunchest supporter in New Englander, carried him about Boston in his coach, and upon his departure followed him forty miles by horseback in a heavy rain.

When Whitefield condemned the works of Archbishop Tillotson some of the evangelist's followers burned the "degrading" volumes. When he branded various ministers as "unconverted," people began to leave their churches. After his visit to Boston, various of the city's ministers emulated him by preaching extempore instead of reading their sermons from manuscript.

Perhaps the best proof of the power of Whitefield's oratory is revealed by the tremendous size of the audiences which gathered to

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5 Ibid.
6 See pages 127, 128.
7 See pages 204-228.
8 For example, see: Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 17.
9 Boston Evening Post, November 9, 1744, and other newspapers and pamphlets printed 1742-1746. Charles Chauncy in his Seasonable Thoughts stresses this result of Whitefield's preaching.
10 The State of Religion In New England, Since the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival there, 4.
hear him. It may appear that, since many of these sermons were delivered out-of-doors, a large congregation could not hear distinctly. However, Franklin stated that Whitefield "might be heard and understood at a great distance, especially as his auditoriums, however numerous, observ'd the most exact silence." One evening, when the evangelist preached from the top of the Philadelphia court house steps, Franklin retreated down the street until he could no longer understand the spoken words. Imagining "a semicircle, of which" his "distance should be the radius, and that it were fill'd with auditors, to each of whom" he "allow'd two square feet," he computed that Whitefield "might well be heard by more than thirty thousand." 

Unfortunately, the colonial literature of the period recorded only generalized estimates of the size of Whitefield's congregations. Innumerable articles in newspapers, journals, letters, pamphlets, and in the magazine Christian History referred to audiences of many thousands. For example, it was reported by various sources that over twenty-three thousand persons had attended his valedictory address upon the Boston Common.

Such figures may be unreasonably high in view of the scattered population of the Colonies. Another reason for regarding contemporary reports with skepticism is that estimates of a particular audience sometimes varied considerably. It was not unusual for Whitefield to

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11 Franklin, Autobiography, 121.

12 Ibid., 121, 122.

13 For a "scientific" estimate of the size of one of his English audiences see pages 79-80.
record in his Journal a calculation one or two thousand higher than that found in a newspaper report. At times his estimates were greatly exceeded by those of his traveling companion, William Seward.

One reason for questioning contemporary estimates is that they were often made by friends of the revivalist. Both Whitefield and Seward sent accounts to newspapers, which apparently printed them without further investigation. Probably both of these correspondents were high in their calculations. The Christian History referred to great mass audiences of ten thousand persons. However, this magazine was not a disinterested organ, since its main purpose was to foster the religious "awakening." The authors of various journals and letters may have been influenced in their estimates by the emotionalism of Whitefield's preaching.

Although the exact size of Whitefield's audiences cannot be determined, obviously he addressed tremendous congregations. Not one

14 For example, Whitefield believed that his audience at German Town, Pennsylvania, November 27, 1739, contained six thousand listeners. (Journal From His Embarking after the Embarco To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 48.) The Boston Weekly News Letter, December 13, 1739, gave the figure of five thousand.

15 An instance of differing estimates by the two men concerned Whitefield's afternoon sermon in Philadelphia, April 16, 1740. The evangelist set the number of auditors at eight thousand. (Journal after his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 19). Seward recorded an estimate of ten to twelve thousand. (Journal, 6). Seward apparently arrived at his computations independently, as he stated in the preface of his Journal that he was unacquainted with the contents of Whitefield's Journal.

16 See page 79 for an illustration of Whitefield's proneness to over-estimate the size of his auditoriums.

of hundreds of vituperative newspaper articles, pamphlets, and published sermons challenged either the printed estimates of Whitefield's audiences or the effectiveness of his oratory upon the populace. Instead, his enemies acknowledged his power over the emotions of the masses and admitted that "thousands" followed him from church to church to hear him preach.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Reasons for the Large Audiences.} In addition to the magnetism of Whitefield's oratory there were other reasons why great numbers "flocked" to his sermons. Perhaps the most important was the fact that the "Times were ripe for some new emphasis in religion as well as a new type of religious leadership."\textsuperscript{19} For several decades New England ministers had been working zealously to promote a general revival; the Northampton revival and associated "awakenings" of 1735 were the forerunners of the Great Awakening. In the Middle Colonies a revival spirit, engendered by Theodorus Frelinghuysen, the Log College evangelists, and the German Sectaries had produced sporadic revivals in the 1730's. In the Southern Colonies there was little emphasis upon an emotional religion prior to Whitefield's coming, which may explain his relative lack of success in the South.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18}See Timothy Cutler, letter dated September 24, 1743, in manuscript files of the Boston Public Library; The State of Religion in New England, Since the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival there; in the appendix of one of the most virulent attacks upon Whitefield, The Wiles of Popery, it was stated that twenty-three thousand persons heard Whitefield's farewell sermon in Boston.

\textsuperscript{19}Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 273.

\textsuperscript{20}Large congregations attended Whitefield's sermons in Charlestown, but throughout the rest of the Southern Colonies the response to his oratory was not spectacular. One of the best sources for the effectiveness of his preaching in Georgia and South Carolina is William Stephens' Journal.
Another reason for his large audiences was the immense amount of publicity afforded the young evangelist in the press and the pulpit. The "almost incredible stories of the success of George Whitefield in the home land" began to arouse attention in the Colonies early in 1737.\(^{21}\) Such a flood of material was printed that, upon his arrival in Philadelphia in the fall of 1739, his name was well known from Boston to Savannah. According to Winslow, the colonists were so favorably predisposed towards him that he "did not even plant; he merely put in his sickle and claimed the harvest."\(^{22}\) The advance publicity was especially effective in New England. Upon his arrival there he was received as an "angel of God." As Timothy Cutler expressed it: "the whole Town" of Boston "was alarm'd at his coming...all Hands went to Lecture, and this Show kept on all the while he was here. The Town was ever alarm'd."\(^{23}\) During his stay in America his activities were widely publicized throughout the Colonies. Newspapers frequently devoted front pages to him; preachers eulogized him;\(^{24}\) pamphlets were printed about him.\(^{25}\) As a result, he was probably one of the most widely known men in America.\(^{26}\)

\(^{21}\) Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 39.

\(^{22}\) Winslow, Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758, 179.

\(^{23}\) Timothy Cutler, letter dated September 24, 1743, in manuscript files of the Boston Public Library.


\(^{25}\) See Bibliography.

\(^{26}\) Benjamin Colman and William Cooper, Preface to Josiah Smith, The Character, Preaching, &c. Of The Reverend Mr. George Whitefield.
Both Whitefield and his friend Seward were skilled propagandists.\textsuperscript{27} They sent to newspapers and influential persons numerous letters, which included accounts of his ministerial activities, the size of his audiences and the eagerness with which they listened, and also copies of his journals and printed sermons.\textsuperscript{28} They likewise inserted in the newspapers the location and dates for his sermons. This was something new to the colonists and created considerable excitement.\textsuperscript{29} During Whitefield’s tours, Seward or some other friend of the evangelist would ride ahead and spread the news of his coming.\textsuperscript{30}

Another method used by Whitefield to keep public attention focused on him was the printing and wide distribution of his numerous journals, tracts, and sermons.\textsuperscript{31} Many of these writings were injudicious and later weakened the influence of his preaching, but at the time they stimulated the curious as well as the pious to attend his sermons.\textsuperscript{32}

One of the major reasons for the large attendance at Whitefield’s sermons was his spectacular method of itinerating almost constantly.

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\textsuperscript{27}It is to be remembered that Seward returned to England in the spring of 1740.

\textsuperscript{28}For example see Seward, \textit{Journal}, 10.

\textsuperscript{29}Henchman, \textit{Reasons offered by Mr. Nathanael Henchman, pastor of the First Church of Christ of Lynn, for declining to admit Mr. Whitefield into his pulpit} (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745), 5. Hereafter referred to as \textit{Reasons offered}.

\textsuperscript{30}Seward, \textit{Journal}, 10.

\textsuperscript{31}See Bibliography.

\textsuperscript{32}As an illustration see Prince, \textit{The Christian History}, 1744, 359.
from place to place. Except at Savannah, he rarely spent more than a few days in one place. The fame of the evangelist caused the villagers to "come to preaching" with a holiday spirit. Even in large cities such as Charlestown and Boston, business would almost cease, as people flocked to hear his morning, afternoon, and evening orations. Although there had been a few colonial traveling ministers such as Frelinghuysen and Charles Fox, itinerating was sufficiently novel to catch the fancy of the people. It was excitingly new—preaching on week days in the streets and parks.

Probably the most important reason for the great crowds which gathered to hear Whitefield was the magnetic quality of his delivery and the emotionalism of his sermon content. (In Chapters XII, XIII, and XIV his rhetorical methods are analyzed to determine the sources of his oratorical power.)

Whitefield's Adaptation of Sermons to Audience and Occasion.
Whitefield's skill in extemporaneous delivery, his keen imagination and his insight into human nature enabled him to adapt his orations readily to the moods of his audiences. Proof that he adapted his sermons to the particular circumstances of his hearers is found in the Preface to his volume of speeches entitled Nine Sermons, written during his voyage from America to England in the early months of 1741: "They [the printed sermons] contain the Sum and Substances, I

33See his American journals. For an abbreviated chronology of his journeys through the colonies see pages 93, 94.

34See page 202.

35Garden, Take heed How ye Hear, Preface, 25.
will not say Word for Word of what was delivered from the Pulpit; for as I had Occasion in America, Scotland, and England, to preach upon the same Subjects, I was obliged, according to the Freedom and Assistance given me from Above, to enlarge, or make Excursions, agreeable to the People’s Circumstances amongst whom I was preaching the Kingdom of God."  

There are numerous instances of Whitefield’s adjustment of sermons to his audiences. At York, Massachusetts, he found his hearers to be such “plain,” “simple,” “God-fearing” persons that he “could speak little or no Terror, but almost all Consolation.” The audience responded by crying silently under his eloquence.  

When he spoke in Hadley, Massachusetts, a community which had experienced a revival five years earlier as a part of the Northampton Awakening, he alluded closely to “what God had done for their Souls formerly.” The result “was like putting Fire to Tinder.—The Remembrance of it quickened them, and caused many to weep sorely.”  

At Savannah, March 25, 1740, upon the occasion of the laying of the first stone at the orphanage, Whitefield gave “a Word of Exhortation to the Labourers.” He bid them to work earnestly because they worked for God.  

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36Whitefield, Nine Sermons, Preface.  
37Whitefield, Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth.  
38Ibid., 45.  
39Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield’s Journal, after his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia.
the construction of the orphanage progressed rapidly, and at least one worker left his family and farm to labour at the orphanage permanently, in return for food and shelter.

While Whitefield was willing to adapt his speaking to the circumstances of the listeners, he was unwilling to compromise on his theological beliefs. He made little attempt to preach doctrines which would please the "ungodly." For example, when, upon his arrival at Annapolis, Maryland, he found that the people were "too much devoted" to the "Pomps and Vanities of the Age," he condemned "Cards, Dancing, and such like" as contrary to "the whole Tenour of the Gospel of CHRIST." At New Brunswick, he preached so strenuously against "unconverted ministers" that ten preachers in the audience stalked out of the church.

During one of his cross-country tours, Whitefield stopped to rest late on the evening of January 1, 1740, at a tavern in South Carolina. As was customary in that locale, the neighbors had gathered at the inn to celebrate New Year's day by "dancing Country Dances." Upon the minister's arrival, he found a woman dancing a "Jigg" in the middle of the room. He walked immediately into the happy group and began to preach against the "Folly of such Entertainments."

After exhorting for some time, he prevailed over them, and the fiddler "reluctantly" laid aside his bow. Whitefield continued to discourse on the theme of baptism and regeneration until the audience was

40Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 59.

41Whitefield, Journal After His Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 28.
"melted down." One of his hearers tearfully requested him to baptize a small child. Then, with his audience at least temporarily "over-awed," Whitefield retired to his room.\textsuperscript{42}

Upon many occasions Whitefield lashed out against the "damna-
tory principles" of Archbishop Tillotson and the author of \textit{The Whole
Duty of Man}, although he knew that many in his congregation were opposed to his beliefs.\textsuperscript{43} Whitefield once epitomized his refusal to compromise his religious principles in these words: "I [endeavour] to come in all Plainness of Speech, without any Respect of Persons."

\textbf{Summary.} In the fifteen months that Whitefield remained in America during the Great Awakening, he delivered over five hundred sermons as well as several hundred "exhortations." The effectiveness of his preaching is evidenced by his collection of over fifteen hundred pounds sterling, by the fascination he possessed for magis-
trates and common people alike, and by the large audiences which gathered to hear him. In addition to the magnetism of his oratory there were other reasons why great numbers "flocked" to his sermons:

(1) The "Times were ripe for some new emphasis in religion as well as a new type of religious leadership."

(2) Advance publicity prior to his arrival in Philadelphia in the fall of 1739 made his name well known throughout the colonies.

(3) During his stay in America widespread publicity, partially engendered by his skillful use of the techniques of propaganda, helped maintain popular interest in his activities.

(4) His spectacular method of itinerating

\textsuperscript{42}Whitefield, \textit{Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo To his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia}, 77.
almost constantly from place to place created considerable attention. His ability to adapt the same sermons readily to many different preaching occasions was essential to the success of his preaching on such tours.
CHAPTER XI

WHITEFIELD'S SPEECH PREPARATION

The Scantiness of Whitefield's Speech Preparation. Very little is known about the character of Whitefield's speech preparation during the Great Awakening, since his writings contain few references to this phase of his oratory. It is obvious, however, that, because his time was almost completely occupied with preaching and the giving of religious advice, he had little opportunity for formal speech composition. Frequent references in his journals to the presentation of impromptu sermons caused his enemies to condemn his preaching as "lazy," and "very dangerous to the Souls of Men."

Chiefly because of his rich background of intense religious experiences and speech activities, Whitefield needed little formal preparation. From early childhood his environment had groomed him for the role of an itinerant evangelist. As a small boy, he acquired a sense of the dramatic element by reading and acting in plays at home and at school. He became acquainted with the ministerial method through reading aloud to his friends from the Bible and from other books, and through imitating ministers in their reading of prayers and in their delivery of sermons. In grammar school and later at Oxford he wrote several sermons and prepared extemporaneous exhortations which he delivered to his friends and to the inmates of the

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For instance, see Richard Pateshall, Pride humbled, or Mr. Hobby chastised: Being some Remarks on said Hobby's Piece, Entitled, A Defence of the Itinerancy and the Conduct of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, In a Letter to the Reverend Mr. William Hobby, Pastor of the First Church in Reading (Boston: J. Draper, 1745), 11.
Gloucester and Oxford jails. Extensive reading of religious tracts at Oxford gave him a storehouse of reference material which he utilized many times in orations during the Great Awakening.\(^2\)

In the eighteen months following his ordination in June, 1736, Whitefield developed the ability to compose emotional orations that could sway the minds of the uncritical. He mastered the technique of soliciting contributions by incorporating pleas for charitable donations into the hundreds of sermons which he preached to great throngs in the churches of London, Bristol, and Gloucester.\(^3\)

In 1738 an international crusade which took him from London to Gibraltar, Savannah, Charlestown, and Dublin, gave him additional practice in preparing extemporary sermons and in adapting "set speeches" to different speaking situations.\(^4\)

During the nine months (November 30, 1738, to August 13, 1739) after his return to England, Whitefield delivered to vast audiences three hundred sermons, most of them with very little immediate preparation. At this time his substitution of extempore prayers in place of the Episcopal ritual of reading from the Book of Common Prayer, enabled him to acquire a mastery of improvising emotional prayers. The experience gained through the presentation of numerous sermons with little immediate preparation during several extended tours in England served as excellent training for similar tours in the Colonies during the Great Awakening.\(^5\)

\(^2\)For a fuller discussion of his youth see Part I, Chapter I.
\(^3\)For further details see Part I, Chapter II.
\(^4\)See Part I, Chapter III.
\(^5\)See Part I, Chapter IV.
Whitefield's manifold experiences were probably of tremendous importance to him in the preparation of his sermons in America. He had sung hymns upon the deck of a troop transport; he had been drenched with waves that broke over the bridge and flooded the cabins; he had made converts out of rough "sea-dogs," soldiers, colliers, masons, and printers; he had dined with governors, generals, majors, magistrates, carpenters, stove-keepers, convicts, farmers, bishops and archbishops; he had made friends with Anabaptists, Moravians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers and Presbyterians; he had met life in its rawest forms; he had seen men fight, swear, and die; he had felt slow starvation and thirst. His wide acquaintance-ship with the problems, thoughts, and emotions of the common people gave him a keen insight into human nature, enabling him to play more readily upon the emotions of his hearers.

Another reason Whitefield needed little immediate preparation for his sermons was that, since he was almost constantly itinerating, he could adapt the same sermon to a variety of occasions. In the preface of a volume of sermons preached during the Great Awakening he admitted that he had delivered the "Sum and Substance" of these sermons many times in America.6

Benjamin Franklin, who heard the evangelist speak a number of

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6 Whitefield, Nine Sermons Upon the Following Subjects: Viz. I. The Lord, Our Righteousness. II. The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Servant. III. Persecution every Christian's Lot. IV. Abraham's offering up his Son Isaac. V. Saul's Conversion. VI. The Pharisee and Publican. VII. Christ, the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. VIII. The Holy Spirit convincing the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment. IX. The Conversion of Zaccheus (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1743). Hereafter referred to as Nine Sermons.
times, believed that he could "distinguish easily between sermons newly compos'd and those which" Whitefield "had often preach'd in the course of his travels." Perhaps an explanation for Whitefield's infrequent reference to sermon topics in his journals was that each sermon was often repeated. It seems obvious that there must have been considerable repetition, inasmuch as he presented five hundred sermons and several hundred "exhortations." Such totals are amazing, when it is considered that these speeches were delivered within the span of fifteen months, during which he traveled five thousand miles by horseback and sailboat.

Whitefield needed little speech preparation because he modeled his orations closely upon those previously delivered in England, which were all very similar in content and in method of development. Alexander Garden once wrote: "I have been often told by Mr. Whitefield's Hearers, that however he shifted his Texts, yet generally his Discourses were still much the same, and that many of them would equally have suited any other Texts in the Bible as those from which they were preached." Another contemporary, Nathanael Henchman,
stated that the evangelist's "Sermons" were "mostly one Sett of Expressions, from variable Texts." With some exaggeration, Winslow wrote: "He repeated himself endlessly. Everything he had to say in a lifetime he said in any one sermon. Yet he was content to say it over three times daily, if only he had opportunity." In almost all of his sermons, Whitefield stressed the principles of "Original Sin," "Justification by Faith only," "Regeneration," and "the inward feelings of the Spirit." He customarily dwelt at length upon an emotional appeal to "sinners" to "let God enter into" their hearts. Judging from his printed sermons and from contemporary reports, such exhortations were all much alike. Many of his sermons contained violent tirades against "unconverted ministers" or the "sinful pastimes" of the people. Comments in his journals and letters indicate that he delivered the same type of sermon in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia that he did in Charlestown and Savannah. In Savannah, the only locale in which he remained for an appreciable period, he was criticized for the invariable character of his sermons.

Whitefield's confidence that God would cause his eloquence to "triumph" was an additional cause for his spending little time in

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10Henochman, Reasons offered, 7.


12For example, see Josiah Smith, The Character, Preaching, &c. of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, 3-11.

13For example, see Harvard's Testimony, 12.

14See the abbreviated chronology of Whitefield's visit to America on page 93, 94; or see his American Journals.

15For instance, see William Stephens, Journal, 510.
This belief is epitomised in the following statement: "I believe my Lord never lets me preach in vain."\(^\text{16}\) Another time he wrote: "the blessed Spirit of God...I believe...frequently gives his Ministers Utterance, and enables them to preach with much Wisdom that all their Adversaries are not able to gainsay or resist."\(^\text{17}\) His journals are replete with references to his being "filled with the Holy Ghost," his being "upon the Mount," his feeling his "Soul enlarged with the Presence of God," or his being given utterance "by the Lord." So confident was Whitefield that the Divine Being would take care of his content and manner of presentation that at times he did not choose a text until entering the pulpit. Upon such occasions, he believed that God directed him to an appropriate text, stirred within him a "holy Fire," and caused him to speak eloquently in an apostolic manner. Following is an example of Whitefield’s reliance upon "Divine inspiration," taken from one of his journals: "I cried out mightily to the Lord in my secret Devotion, and in the Afternoon when I read Prayers and preached, he was pleased to shew that he had heard me, for I scarce know when we have had a more visible Manifestation of the Divine Presence...the People were uncommonly attentive, most melted into Tears, and shewed what a great Impression the Word made upon their Hearts.—I myself was much carried out, I felt the Power of God come upon me, and I spoke with Demonstration of Spirit to the Hearers Souls."\(^\text{18}\)

\(^\text{16}\) Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 53.

\(^\text{17}\) Whitefield, A Letter to Harvard College, 15.

\(^\text{18}\) Whitefield, Journal From his Embarking after the Embargo to his Arrival at Savannah in Georgia, 72.
Another important reason why Whitefield needed little specific preparation for individual sermons was that his entire existence during the time he was in the Colonies was devoted to religious purposes. He was fond of stating in his journals and letters that his only desire in living was to help bring men to Christ. He wrote many times that he refrained from all conversation and thinking except that directly connected with religion. It seems reasonable to assume that an orator whose intense emotional nature was directed almost entirely into religious channels would not need to spend extended periods in sermon composition.

**Whitefield's Method of Speech Preparation.** Although Whitefield sometimes preached impromptu, he firmly believed in the necessity of adequate preparation for speaking. In one of his religious tracts he wrote: "I am of Luther's Opinion, that Study, Prayer, Meditation and Temptation are necessary for a Minister of Christ." In a public letter to "some Church-Members of the Presbyterian Persuasion" he said: "you should not censure me as one that would lay aside reading. I am of Bishop Anderson's mind: 'Study without prayer, is atheism; prayer without study, presumption.'" He defended the manner of preparation for his extempore discourses by claiming that it took him as much "close and solemn Thought as well as Faith and Confidence in God, as preaching by Notes."

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It appears that Whitefield's sole method of speech preparation was to spend a short time in meditation before preaching. His journals contain numerous references to his having retired to pray and to "wrestle with God," prior to sermon time. During his meditation he would choose a text and formulate a general plan of procedure, leaving the exact wording to the exigencies of the occasion. He refused to write his thoughts down in the form of notes, because he believed that the use of notes in preaching was an indication of insufficient religious zeal. He wrote no sermons in manuscript form for presentation during the Great Awakening; all of his published sermons were taken from drafts written in his "spare moments," some time after the delivery of the sermon. As such, they represented only an approximation of the style and the context of what was said.

Summary. Constant preaching and the giving of religious advice afforded Whitefield little opportunity for formal speech composition. There were definite reasons, however, why the evangelist needed little immediate preparation for preaching: (1) His rich background of intense religious experiences, speech activities, and widely variant contacts with life had groomed him since early childhood for his role as an itinerant evangelist. (2) Since he was almost continually itinerating, he could use the same sermon, with minor adaptations, upon many occasions. (3) He modeled his sermons closely upon those delivered previously in England. (4) His supreme confidence that

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22Whitefield, Journal From a Few Days after his Return to Georgia to his Arrival at Falmouth, 55.

23For example, see the Preface to his Nine Sermons.
God would cause his eloquence to "triumph" led him to depend greatly upon the exigencies of the speaking situation for his actual expressions. (5) Since his entire existence during his stay in the Colonies was devoted to religious purposes, he was incessantly gathering illustrative materials for his sermons. Whitefield's sole method of immediate sermon preparation was to spend some time in meditation before speaking.
CHAPTER XII

THE ORGANIZATION OF WHITEFIELD'S SERMONS

An analysis of the organization of Whitefield's sermons during the Great Awakening is severely limited by a scarcity of speech texts. His contemporaries made no attempt to analyze the context or the construction of his sermons. They referred only to his theological principles, the emotionalism with which he spoke, and the effect of his preaching upon his hearers. No critical rhetorical analysis of his preaching has been made. Whitefield himself made very few comments in his journals or letters about the subject matter of his orations. As has been mentioned before, he wrote out no manuscript sermons for delivery in America. There are extant only thirteen printed sermons which he definitely preached in America. Even these, however, do not constitute a valid source of material, for, as Whitefield admitted, they represent merely "the Sum and Substance" of the discourses, because they were written for the printer weeks after their delivery.

Although his Works, compiled in 1772, contain sermons bearing the same titles as some preached during the Great Awakening, they are not reliable versions. These sermons show considerable variations from the copies originally published during the Great Awakening.

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1This statement is based upon personal research in the libraries containing the most outstanding collections of eighteenth century Americana: American Antiquarian Society, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston Public Library, Boston Athenaeum, Harvard University, New York Public Library, Library of Congress, and through correspondence with Yale and Brown Universities.
Despite the scarcity of documentary material, it is possible through an analysis of the extant sermons to draw certain conclusions as to Whitefield's method of organization, usage of personal, logical, and emotional proof, and, to a lesser extent, to the general style of his discourse.

Organization of Whitefield's Sermons: Whitefield's printed sermons display clear-cut organization; each of them falls naturally into three divisions: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.

As was typical of the sermons of this time, Whitefield's Introductions were short, usually about five hundred words. In none of his sermons did he introduce himself to his hearers by any personal references. He presented no dramatic material nor any references to occasion, surroundings or persons in the audience. The outstanding characteristic of his introductions was that they always gave sufficient information concerning the text and the purpose of the sermon so that the audience could follow the ensuing discussion easily. His typical Introduction consisted of an opening statement, explanation of the text, and a specification of the main heads of the body.

2 The analysis of Whitefield's sermon content is based chiefly on these eleven sermons: "A Lecture on the Prodigal Son" (Delivered in Boston, September 27, 1740); "The Marriage of Cana" (Philadelphia); "The Lord Our Righteousness" (Philadelphia, November 25, 1739); Boston, October, 1740); "The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent"; "Persecution every Christian's Lot" (Philadelphia, April 16, 1740); "Abraham's offering up his Son Isaac" (Levistown, Pennsylvania, May 25, 1740); "Saul's Conversion" (Maidenhead, Pennsylvania, November 21, 1739); "The Pharisee and the Publican"; "Christ, the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption"; (Abingdon, Pennsylvania, April 17, 1740); "The Holy Spirit convincing the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment"; "The Conversion of Zaccheus" (Newcastle, April 13, 1740; Philadelphia, April 20, 1740; New Brunswick, April 27, 1740).
(1) Opening statement: Whitefield sometimes followed the text with a general assertion based upon the scripture. For example, in his speech on the conversion of Saul he stated after reading the text: "It is an undoubted Truth, however it may seem a Paradox to natural Men, that 'Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution.'"3

Frequently he would refer immediately to the text just read by stressing its importance to his hearers. The opening statement in the sermon "Christ, the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption" illustrates this technique: "Of all the Verses in the Book of God, this which I have now read to you is, I believe, one of the most comprehensive—What glad Tidings does it bring to Believers! What precious Privileges are they herein invested with! Now are they here led to the Foundation of them all."4

A third type of opening statement found in the eleven sermons analysed was an attempt to establish common ground with his audience by asserting confidence in their religious convictions. He used this method in "The Pharisee and the Publican": "THO' there be some who dare wholly deny the Lord Jesus, and disbelieve the Revelation as has been pleased to give us, and thereby bring upon themselves swift Destruction, yet would I charitably hope there are but few, if any such among you, to whom I am now to preach the Kingdom of God."5

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4Whitefield, Ibid., 130.

5Whitefield, Ibid., 154.
In general, Whitefield's Introductions were patterned closely upon the sermon style then prevalent. There was little striking or challenging material in his openings; they were typically non-dramatic, and, as printed, contained no attention-getting devices. The opening sentences were typically long, rather involved, and possessed little power.

(2) Explanation: Following the opening statement Whitefield usually made a general explanation of the text, stressing its importance, applicability to the hearers, and its validity. This part of the Introduction was accomplished in three hundred words or less. Like the opening statement, it was, in the printed sermons, dry and uninteresting. It served the purpose of preparing the audience for the main body of the sermon by giving necessary information, but it is difficult to conceive how it could have gained much of an emotional response from his hearers.

(3) Statement of the main heads of the body: After the text, the opening statement, and the general explanation of the text, Whitefield concluded the Introduction by telling his audience exactly what he wished to accomplish in the Body and Conclusion. Sometimes he listed the main heads of the Body in a formal order, as he did in his sermon on "Persecution every Christian's Lot".⁶

The Words, [of the text]...contain a necessary and important Truth, viz., that Persecution is the common Lot of every godly Man.—This is a hard Saying, How few can bear it?—I trust God, in the following Discourse, will enable me to make it good, by shewing

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⁶Whitefield, Ibid., 60.
I. What it is to **live godly in CHRIST JESUS**.

II. The different kinds of **Persecution** to which they, who **live godly**, are exposed.

III. Why it is, that **godly Men** must expect to suffer **Persecution**?

Lastly, We shall apply the whole.

In "The Lord Our Righteousness" he used the following formal listing of the main divisions of the Body and Conclusion:

1. To consider who we are to understand by the Word *Lord*.

2. How the *Lord* is *Man's Righteousness*.

3. I'll consider some chief Objections that are generally urged against this Doctrine.

4. I shall shew some very ill Consequences that flow naturally from denying this Doctrine.

5. Shall conclude with an Exhortation to all to **come to Christ by Faith**, that they may be enabled to say with the Prophet in the Text, the *Lord our Righteousness*.

The second method Whitefield used to give his hearers a definite conception of the ensuing Discussion was an informal statement of the main ideas he intended to develop. For example, in "The Conversion of Zaccheus" he said: "It is my design (God helping) to make some Remarks upon Zaccheus' Conversion recorded at large in the Verses foregoing, and then to infer [infer?] the latter Part of the Text, as an Encouragement to poor, undone Sinners to come to Jesus Christ—For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Another illustration is found in "The Holy Ghost Convincing the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment": "My Design from these Words [of the text] is to shew the Manner in which the Holy Ghost generally works upon the Hearts of those, who, thro' Grace, are

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made Vessels of Mercy, and translated from the Kingdom of Darkness, into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.9

The Body of Whitefield's printed sermons always showed careful, clear-cut organization. The main function of the Body was to stimulate the audience to the point that they would be receptive to his emotional exhortation in the Conclusion. In each one of his sermons the main purpose was to encourage believers to retain their faith in God, and to actuate sinners to "come to Christ." This dominant theme underlay the Introduction and the Body, but was brought into sharpest focus in the Conclusion. In seven of the eleven sermons analyzed, Whitefield worked up the feelings of the audience in the Body by a vivid dramatization of a Biblical narrative, such as Abraham's offering up his son Isaac for the sacrifice, the conversion of Saul, and the return of the prodigal son. His method in presenting the narration was to weave a story for his listeners from the appropriate verses in the Bible. He did not limit himself to one or two verses, but instead, utilized as many as twenty-one verses. For instance, in "The Seed of Woman and the Seed of the Serpent" he used the first fifteen verses in Genesis 3; in "The Conversion of Saul" he used the first twenty-one verses in Acts 9. The organization of the Body of his sermon on Abraham's offering up his son Isaac is typical of his other sermons of this type. The text of the sermon was Genesis 22: 12. "And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou say anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Whitefield began the Body

9Whitefield, Ibid., 9.
with the first verse in Acts 22, when God directed Abraham to sacrifice his son. Then in the order listed in the Bible, Whitefield took up each of the next 11 verses in turn, interpreted them, invented dialogues between the main characters, pictured the despair of the father, and followed the father, son, and their two servants on the three-day journey to the mountain where Abraham was to kill Isaac. This dramatic treatment, as well as the others Whitefield used, was extremely clear narration. The listener had no difficulty in following the evangelist in his story. The discussion of each verse was well arranged to highlight its importance, and to stimulate emotional feelings. The transitions between the verses tied them smoothly together. There were no awkward breaks in the trend of thought.

The second method Whitefield used for the development of the body of his sermons was to analyze the text under three or four well-organized main heads. These main divisions showed careful attention to thought relationship; they bore a coordinate relationship to each other with no overlapping of ideas. His hearers probably had no difficulty in following his discourse, for Whitefield introduced each new main head by means of phrases such as: "I come now to discuss,...," or "First, I shall...," or "Let us now consider..." He frequently utilized internal summaries, by recapitulating the main considerations of a thought before proceeding to another division. Each heading was thoroughly developed to present sufficient information and to arouse the emotions of the audience.

The transition between main sections was smoothly and easily

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10 See outline on pages 288-289.
made. He customarily tied up the essence of the central thought just finished with the new head to be introduced by means of a connecting sentence. For instance in his sermon, "Christ, the Believer’s Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption," his transition between a consideration of Christ as the believer’s righteousness consisted of the following sentence: "This is a glorious Privilege—But this is only the Beginning of the Happiness of the Believers—Christ is not only made to them Righteousness, but Sanctification."

Whitefield gained emotional emphasis through the placement of the more powerful heads near the close of the Body. In this way he was enabled to work steadily toward the emotional climax in his Conclusion. He also obtained emphasis by the type of material used and by the amplification of the more important points. In the sermon just referred to he devoted more than twice as much time to a consideration of Christ as the believer’s wisdom and righteousness. When he wished to emphasize a particular point Whitefield customarily used an increased amount of emotional material in conjunction with amplification. This technique will be discussed in later pages under the emotional content of Whitefield’s sermons.

A clearer conception of the typical unity and coherence found in the Body of Whitefield’s sermons may be gained through an examination of the following outline of "Persecution every Christian’s Lot."

**Text:** (2 Timothy 3: 12)

"Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ, shall suffer Persecution."
Outline of Body of Sermon

I. "First, let us consider what it is to live godly in CHRIST JESUS."
   A. General explanation.
   B. Summary and restatement of Text.

II. "What is the Meaning of the Word PERSECUTION, and how many Kinds there are of it, I come now to consider."
   A. Definition of "Persecution."
   B. "The first Kind of it is that of the Heart."
   C. "A second Degree of Persecution, is that of the Tongue."
   D. "The third and last Kind of Persecution, is that which expresses itself in Action."
   E. Summary and restatement of Text:
      "It would be impossible to enumerate in what various shapes Persecution had appeared.— It's a many-headed Monster, insatiable as Hell, cruel as the Grave, and what is worse, it generally appears under the Cloak of Religion.— But, cruel, insatiable, and horrid as it is, they that live godly in CHRIST JESUS, must expect to suffer and encounter with [it] in all its Forms."

III. "Why godly Men must expect to suffer Persecution... is what we are to make good under our next general Head."
   A. "First, this appears from the whole Tenor of our Lord's Doctrine."
   B. "As this is proved from our Lord's Doctrine, so it is no less evident from his Life."
   C. "But, farther: Not only our Lord's Example, but the Example of all the Saints that ever lived... demonstrates the Truth of the Apostles' Assertion in the Text."
   D. "For how can it be otherwise in the very Nature of Things?"
   E. "Persecution is necessary in respect to the Godly themselves."
   F. Restatement of Text.

It may appear from reading the outline above that the Body of his sermons consisted almost exclusively of informative material. In fact, this may have been the impression which Whitefield wished to give his hearers. However, despite the ostensible purpose of giving information, the real function of the Body was to arouse the emotions of the audience and to prepare them for the passionate exhortation.
which invariably constituted the Conclusion. Whitefield skillfully arranged the organisation of the Body in order to increase steadily in emotional utterance as the sermon progressed. Judging from the style of the discourses, the orator must have been intensely aroused by the time he came to the close of the Body and the beginning of the final exhortation.

(3) Certain material in the Body of Whitefield's sermons may appear to the casual reader to be extraneous, and to be digressions from the stream of thought. However, such matter actually constituted one of the orator's powerful rhetorical weapons, for it enabled him to bring home powerfully to his hearers the application of the Biblical teachings he was discussing. For instance, in discussing the conversion of Saul, Whitefield suggested that one of the reasons why God chose to convert Saul was because he "prayeth indeed." The evangelist then introduced a dissertation about the need for every member of the audience to pray:

None of God's Children, as one observes, come into the World still-born—Prayer is the very Breath of the new Creature, and therefore if we are Prayerless we are Christless—if we never had the Spirit of Supplication, it is a sad Sign that we never had the Spirit of Grace in our Souls; and you may be assured you never did pray, unless you have felt yourselves damnable Sinners, and the Want of Jesus to be your Saviour.—May the Lord, whom I serve in the Gospel of his dear Son, prick you all to the Heart, and may it be said of you all as it was of Saul. Behold, they pray!11

Such material grew naturally and easily out of the context and did not disrupt the development of the theme. It is likely that in the actual presentation of the sermons Whitefield inserted many of these direct applications to the hearers.

The Conclusions of Whitefield's sermons, which occupied about one-fourth of the total length or about fifteen hundred words, invariably consisted of a passionate exhortation to his hearers "to come to Christ." This appeal was typically based upon the application in the Body of the text. Usually he directed his exhortations chiefly to the sinners, with frequent references to the "fortunate Believers." Another method was to speak in turn to different segments of the audience. In the sermon "Persecution every Christian's Lot" he spoke first to those who were about to accept Christ, second to those who already believed, third to the ministers, fourth to himself as a person who had experienced persecution, and fifth to the "Persecutors." In "The Lord Our Righteousness" he spoke to sinners in general, to young men, to young women, to middle-aged persons, and to Negroes. The organization of the Conclusion was well adapted to help bring about the climax of emotionalism the orator desired.

The actual material used will be discussed later under the emotional content of Whitefield's sermons.

Summary. Like most sermons of the period, Whitefield's printed sermons display clear-cut organization, and are easily divisible.

\(^{12}\) Analysis of eleven sermons showed the length of the conclusions to consist of the following approximate percent of the total length: "The Lord Our Righteousness"—32%; "The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent"—7%; "Persecution every Christian's Lot"—35%; "Abraham's Offering up His Son Isaac"—31%; "The Conversion of Saul"—14%; "The Pharisee and the Publican"—26%; "Christ, the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption"—19%; "The Holy Spirit Convincing the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment"—26%; "The Conversion of Zaccheus"—29%; "The Marriage of Cana"—24%; "The Prodigal Son"—15%. 
into Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. The Introduction consists almost invariably of an opening statement, explanation of the text, and a statement of the main heads of the Body. Possessing unity, coherence, and emphasis, the Body is admirably adapted to accomplish its main purpose of stimulating the emotions of the audience to the point that it would be receptive to the emotional exhortation in the conclusion. The evangelist used two chief methods to develop the Body: (1) by a vivid dramatization of a Biblical narrative; (2) by an analysis of the text in three or four well-organized main heads.

The Conclusion, which constituted about one-fourth of the total length of the sermon consisted invariably of a passionate supplication to his hearers "to come to Christ."
Despite the limitations imposed by a scarcity of materials, it is possible to determine certain definite characteristics of Whitefield's appeal to his audiences. The methodology used in discussing the content of his sermons is based upon Aristotle's classical concepts in *The Rhetoric*: "Of the means of persuasion supplied by the speech itself there are three kinds.... The character (ethos) of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief.... Secondly, persuasion is effected through the audience, when they are brought by the speech into a state of emotion.... Thirdly, persuasion is effected by the arguments when we demonstrate the truth, real or apparent, by such means as inhere in particular cases."¹

**Whitefield's Personal Appeal.** One of Whitefield's most effective methods of identifying himself with his audience was by use of personal pronouns. An analysis of ten printed sermons showed that the pronouns *I, we, you, our, your* constituted approximately four percent of the words uttered during the Introduction and Body, and

about ten percent in the Conclusion. It was largely by means of personal pronouns that he was able to apply the Biblical principles directly to his hearers. Frequently in emotional passages, personal pronouns comprised twenty to thirty percent of the words spoken.

Following is an example of Whitefield's use of personal pronouns, taken from "Christ, the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption":

What will your Wisdom avail you, if it does not make you wise unto Salvation? Can you, with all your Wisdom, propose a more consistent Scheme to build your Hopes of Salvation on, than what has been now laid down before you?—Can you, with all the Strength of natural Reason, find out a better way of Acceptance with God, than by

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2 In each sermon the personal pronouns I, we, you, your, our, were counted in the entire Introduction if it were not over five hundred words long; if it were longer, the count was made over only the first five hundred words. A section of 250 words was selected at random from the first half of the Body; a second section of 250 words was taken from the second half, and the results averaged. If the Conclusion consisted of less than five hundred words the entire Conclusion was used; otherwise a passage of five hundred words was selected at random. The results are shown in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Sermon</th>
<th>Percentage of Personal Pronouns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage of Cana</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Lord Our Righteousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persecution every Christian's Lot</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abraham's Offering Up His Son Isaac</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Conversion of Saul</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Pharisees and the Publican</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ, the Believer's Wisdom Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Holy Spirit Convincing the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Conversion of Zaccheus</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it right to think your own Works can in any Measure deserve or procure it? If not, Why will you not believe in him? Why will you not submit to his Righteousness? Can you deny that you are fallen Creatures? Do not you find that you are full of Disorders, and that these Disorders make you unhappy? Do you not find that you cannot change your own Hearts? Have you not resolved many and many a Time, and have not your Corruptions yet Dominion ever you? Are you not Bond-Slaves to your Lusts, and led Captive by the Devil at his Will? Why then will you not come to Christ for Sanctification? Do you not desire to die the Death of the Righteous, and that your future State may be like theirs? I am persuaded you cannot bear the Thoughts of being annihilated, much less of being miserable for ever. Whatever you may pretend, if you speak Truth, you must confess, that Conscience breaks in upon you in your more sober Intervals whether you will or not...3

Judging from the printed copies of his sermons, it appears that Whitefield rarely attempted to vindicate his motives. He professed to care little what mortal man thought of him, because, as he expressed it: "He that judgeth me is the Lord. He knows that I have spoken of his Miracle only for the same End for which he at first perform'd it...that is, to show forth his glory." His infrequent attempts to explain his actions usually took the form of professing a genuine love for all sincere converts to Christ. He also claimed that he had no intention of creating a new denomination, that his sole desire was to win souls for Christ, and that he wished only to raise his hearers from "dead Formalities" and to revive primitive Christianity among them.4 Upon occasions he attempted to prove a contention by means of an assertion of his belief in its validity. For instance, in his sermon on the conversion of Zaccheus he "proved"

3Whitefield, Nine Sermons, 150-151.

4For example, see: Prince, The Christian History, 1745, 363.
the doctrine of "Justification by Faith only" by stating: "To the best of my Knowledge I have spoken the Truth in Sincerity, and the Truth as it is in Jesus—I do affirm that we are saved by Grace, and that we are justified by Faith alone." An interesting method which Whitefield used to attain ethical proof was his declaration in "The Marriage of Cana" that he would not have chosen to preach in the wilderness of America if he had wished to gain fame or "to please natural Men."  

Whitefield's frequent direct reference to himself constituted an important part of the personal content of his sermons. Sometimes, following an extended series of rhetorical questions which he addressed to his listeners, he would plead with them not to become angered by the queries, because, as he assured them, he had only a "godly Jealousy" for their souls. Frequently he spoke of his longing for the day when he and his audience should die and go to Heaven, where they should meet at the "Judgment Seat of Christ" and speak of what "God had done for their Souls." A technique of the evangelist was to beg his listeners to pray for him as a minister and a sinner, as he did in the following passage from "Persecution every Christian's Lot":

Brethren therefore, whether in the Ministry or not, I beseech you, pray for me, that I may never suffer justly, as an Evil-Doer, but only for Righteousness Sake—Oh! Pray that I may not deny my Lord in any wise, but that I may joyfully follow him, both to Prison and to Death if he is pleased to call me to seal his Truths with my Blood—Be not ashamed of Christ, or of his Gospel, tho' I should become a Prisoner of the Lord—Tho' I am bound,
the Word of God will not be bound—No, an open, an effec-
tual Door is opened for preaching the everlasting Gospel,
and Men or Devils shall never be able to prevail against
it—Only pray, that whether it be in Life or Death,
Christ may be glorified in me.—Then I shall rejoice, yea,
and will rejoice.7

At times he expressed frustration at being unable to stir a greater
response in his audience and cried out that he could not bear to let
them go to Hell. In his sermon on the Holy Spirit he addressed the
"Sinners":

I beseech you, as in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to
God—Do not go away contradicting and blaspheming—I
know Satan would have you be gone—Many of you may be
uneasy, and are ready to cry out. What a Weariness is
this! But I will not let you go—I have wrestled with
God for my Hearers in private, and I must wrestle with
you here in publick.8

One of Whitefield's most effective uses of personal references
was his posing as a special mediator between God and the members of
the audience. Upon at least one occasion he proclaimed that God had
sent him as a special emissary to that particular locality to call
all "poor, abandoned Prodigals" home to Christ.9 Often he invited
his hearers to meet him on Judgment day, and promised them that
upon that occasion he would intercede with God on their behalf. A
characteristic of his methodology was to state at the close of his
sermon that he would ask God to send the "holy Comforter" in their
hearts. Then he would launch into a passionate, extempore prayer.

On the other hand, however, he sometimes threatened to "appear
in Heaven" against those who refused to be converted by his preach-
ing. The weaving of such intimidation into a warm plea to sinners

7Ibid., 78.
8Ibid., 192, 193.
9Ibid., 20.
was typical of his style:

Come then, do not send me sorrowful away! Do not let me have Reason to cry out, "O my Leanness, my Leanness!"—Do not let me go weeping into my Closet, and say, "Lord, they will not believe my Report—Lord, I have called them, and they will not Answer, I am unto them as a very pleasant Song, and as one that plays upon a pleasant Instrument; but their Hearts are running after the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life"—Would you be willing that I should give such an account of you, or make such a Prayer before God? And yet I must not only do so here, but appear in Judgment against you hereafter, unless you will come to Christ....I entreat you to come....Behold I stand here in the Name of God, to answer all that you can offer.10

Infrequently he lashed out against those who practised "good works" but who did not possess an intense emotional "relationship with God."

For instance, in "The Pharisee and the Publican" he warned: "Hear this, all ye Self-Judicators, tremble and behold your Doom!—A dreadful Doom, more dreadful than Words can express, or Thought conceive—If you refuse to humble yourselves, after hearing this Parable, I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this Day, that God shall visit you with all his Storms, and pour all the Vials of his Wrath upon your rebellious Heads."11 Whitefield had little fear of his enemies, whom he characterized as "only raging Waves of the Sea," and who he warned should dwell in the "Blackness of Darkness for ever." He proclaimed that he held them in "utmost Derision," and that Christ would help him destroy them. He threatened dire consequences for those who persecuted him or his followers.

Howl and weep for the Miseries that shall come upon you—For a little while the Lord permits you to ride over the Heads of his People; but by and by, Death will arrest you.

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10Ibid., 196.

11Ibid., 170.
Judgment will find you...those you now persecute, shall be in part your Judges, and sit on the Right-Hand of the Majesty on High, whilst you are dragged by infernal Spirits into a Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone, and the Smoke of your Torment shall be ascending up for ever and ever...I speak not this, as tho' I were afraid of you—For I know in whom I have believed. Only out of pure Love I warn you.12

In Whitefield's exhortations during evening prayer services in private homes, he frequently referred to previous experiences in his evangelistic career. However, such material was almost totally lacking from his printed sermons. One of the unusual references is found in "The Prodigal Son": "To him that hath, and improves what he hath, for the Sake of Christ and his Disciples, shall be given, and he shall have abundance. Brethren, I would not boast; but to my Master's Honour and free Grace be it spoken, I can prove this true by happy Experience."13 In "Persecution every Christian's Lot" he attempted to prove by means of references to personal experience that many persons in the audience would soon turn against him:

You now come on Foot out of the Towns and Villages to hear the Word, and receive me as a Messenger of God—But will you not by and by cry out, Away with him, Away with him, it is not fit such a Fellow should live upon the Earth?—Perhaps some of you, like Hazael, may say, Are we Dogs, that ye shall do this? But alas! I have met with many unhappy Souls, who had drawn back into Perdition, and have afterwards accounted me their Enemy, for dealing faithfully with them, tho' once, if it were possible, they would have plucked out their own Eyes, and have given them unto me."14

12Ibid., 79, 80.
14Whitefield, Nine Sermons, 74.
Although his printed sermons contained only few allusions to his having experienced persecution, contemporaneous reports show that such references formed a fairly important part of his preaching. His own letters and journals are replete with references to his being persecuted. Much of his religious philosophy was centered about the conviction that all those who lived "godly" should suffer oppression. He frequently stated in his writings that he "gloried" in mistreatment, because this proved he was preaching God's word. As we have seen in Part II, he appeared deliberately to court opposition by attacking intemperately the genuineness of the religious conversion of the "generality" of the American ministry, the moral conditions of colonial universities, and the validity of the doctrine of "good works." It appears that references to his being persecuted constituted a much more important segment of his preaching than is indicated by his printed sermons. In his printed sermons Whitefield referred only rarely to persons who had been converted through his preaching. One of these unusual references is the following passage from "The Pharisee and the Publican": "Oh, that I could hear any of you say (as I once heard a poor Sinner under my Preaching cry out) He is come. He is come!"\(^{15}\)

The only narration of his own personal experiences that is present in Whitefield's eleven sermons is the following passage, which has been taken from "The Prodigal Son":

\[\text{But my dear Friends, [concerts and dances] are as much contrary to the Gospel of Christ, as light is to Darkness. And whatever you may think, if God ever touch your Heart, and make you new Creatures, you will be sick of these}\]

\(^{15}\text{Ibid.}\)
Things; you will no more be present at a Ball or Assembly, than you will thrust your Head into the Fire. I speak this by Experience. No one hath been a greater Sinner that Way, than that poor Creature that is now preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to you. Many a precious Hour and Night have I spent this Way, and thought it no Harm...to go dancing for all that. But my dear Friends, take Warning, it hath cost me many a Tear, many a gloomy Hour to reflect upon the many precious Hours I have spent this Way, and I am amazed that God did not send me to Hell. Take warning by me, it cost me many a bitter Hour, as it will cost you if ever you come to God.  

Logico-Content and Basic Arguments. Almost all contemporary references to Whitefield’s preaching have commented upon the emotional power of his sermons. His enemies readily admitted his "Facility for raising the Passions," but believed that he had "no superior Talent at instructing the Mind, or shewing the Force and Energy of those Arguments for a religious Life." His friends, ignoring the weak logical content of his sermons, testified eulogistically about his appeal to the emotions. For instance, Reverend Josiah Smith wrote the following:

In what a flaming Light did he set our Eternity before us? How did he move our Passions, with the constraining Love of such a Redeemer? The Awe; the Silence, the Attention, which sat upon the Face of so great an Audience, was an Argument, how he could reign over all their Passions. Many thought, He spake as never man spake before him....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 pour’d in the Balm upon the Wounds of the contrite.  

16 Whitefield, The Prodigal Son. A Lecture Preached on Friday Afternoon, September 11th, 1741. In the High-Church-Yard of Glasgow, Upon Luke xv. By the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield. Taken from his Own Mouth, and published at the earnest Desire of many of the Hearers. Note. The Substance of the following Lecture was delivered on the Commons in Boston, Sept. 27, 1740 (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1742), 19.  

17 Harvard’s Testimony, 3.  

18 Smith, Sermon, 11, 12.
A careful reading of Whitefield's sermons reveals little appeal to the reasoning of the audience. In fact, he frequently ridiculed the power of "natural logic" as being "carnal and at enmity with God and Religion." His logical proof depended upon the acceptance by the audience of the tenets of original sin, regeneration of the new birth, "Justification by Faith only," and the "inward experiencing of the Spirit."

The basic premise of Whitefield's preaching was that all men, having shared in Adam's original sin, were vile creatures, fit only for damnation. Because of their depraved natures all men were natural sinners and were totally incapable of doing "good works." All persons were doomed to eternal Hell unless by "Divine Revelation" they realized that they were born again in Christ and that their sins were forgiven.

According to Whitefield, a spiritual rebirth required much more than a mere passive belief that Christ had atoned for man's sins and that mankind had thereby attained a new birth. Intellectual conviction was insufficient. He preached that in order to experience regeneration one had to feel a catastrophic physical and spiritual alteration of the entire being. It was a complete metamorphosis from a worldly to a spiritual attitude. Once a person actually felt the divine presence in his soul he would thereafter devote himself completely to working for the Lord. Regeneration was such a thorough-going experience to Whitefield that he complained numerous times of the "unconverted" condition of the generality of Colonial

19The Testimony and Advice of a Number of Laymen. 4; Whitefield, Journal After Arrival at Georgia to a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 32.
Whitelield was inconsistent in his interpretation of the method of regeneration. In one of the eleven sermons the evangelist explained that man had no power to "come to Christ" on his own accord, he had to be called by Christ. In other words, he could be saved only if he had been selected by God for salvation. In two sermons Whitelield referred vaguely to "Election." However, in the other eight orations he told his hearers that all sinners were welcome to Christ and that Christ would receive all those who believed on him. As was shown in Part II, Whitlefield expressed strong convictions concerning "Election" in letters to Wesley during the Great Awakening. After returning to the British Isles early in 1741, he engaged in a bitter feud with the Wesleys over this doctrine, and preached "Election" in England, Wales, and Scotland. However, none of Whitlefield's contemporaries in America during 1739 or the first eleven months of 1740 recorded his having stressed predestination. If "Election" did constitute an important part of his preaching at this time, it is strange that persons would refer to his other doctrines and not this one. The first definite proof that Whitlefield stressed predestination is found in William Stephens' Journal, written in December, 1740, upon Whitefield's return to Savannah from New England and the Middle Colonies. In the hundreds of comments previously made by Stephens about the evangelist's preaching, not one had mentioned his speaking of "Election." In his American journals Whitefield did not state that he had ever discussed predestination in his sermons. It seems reasonable to say that while Whitefield believed in "Election," he failed to stress it in his preaching until
his final visit to Savannah in December, 1740. The effectiveness of his speaking would probably have been impaired if he had preached forthrightly the doctrine of "Election."

Of seeming contradiction with the doctrine of election was his emphasis upon "Justification by Faith only" as the method by which his hearers could secure regeneration. Whitefield thought that because of innate depravity mankind was capable of performing only sinful actions. Therefore, those activities usually characterized as "good works" could exert no influence in the sight of God. The person who possessed all the virtues of character and morality, who attended church regularly, and who gave generously to the poor was damned to Hell unless he experienced an emotional conversion. He stated frequently that God cared only that man believe upon his righteousness and that such a belief was the sole requisite for salvation. This emphasis upon faith at the expense of good deeds aroused intense opposition among the conservative ministry. However, it furnished him with a powerful appeal to the populace, attracted by a doctrine which promised them as favorable a chance as the rich for salvation.

For those of his hearers who accepted the doctrines of original sin, regeneration, "Justification by Faith only," and "inward experiencing of the Spirit," Whitefield's sermons probably appeared logically sound. His reasoning in applying these principles to the audience was valid, although his "proof" consisted invariably of Biblical narratives and emotional exhortations rather than patterns of logic. In short, the evangelist made almost no appeal to the intelligence of the audience. He never plied his listeners with
rational, logical evidence or complicated systems of thought. He reduced his theology to the simplest terms of sin, faith, hell, and heaven. His Biblical narratives and other illustrative material were so clearly and vividly arranged that the most rustic backwoodsman probably had little difficulty in following. Whitefield aimed solely at arousing the passions of his hearers, for he believed that religion was a matter of the heart and not the head.

Whitefield's sermons were directed chiefly at the uneducated common people, who constituted the great bulk of his listeners. Such persons had no desire to hear church doctrine stated logically and applied soberly to their problems. They craved drama and excitement; they yearned for entertainment and stimulation. He capitalized upon their desires by presenting sermons almost entirely lacking in a logical proof but rich in sensationalism, vivid imagery, and dramatic appeal.

Whitefield's Emotional Appeal. Although Whitefield played less upon his hearer's fear of hell than did the Log College evangelists, nevertheless he preached a theology of hell-fire, brimstone, and damnation. His divine being was one of vengeance as well as love; it was the Hebraic-God of the Old Testament. Whitefield dwelt at length upon the vileness and depravity of Human Nature. He was fond of comparing his hearers and himself to "vile Worms," "Dung and Dross of Creation," and other evidences of opprobrium caused by Adam's sin. He characterized his hearers as "half Beasts and half Devils." He spoke of the "rightness" for their eternal damnation, and how powerless they were to escape their fate unless they were reborn in Christ. Unlike Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of
an Angry God," and his "The Future Punishment of the Wicked Unavoidable and Intolerable." Whitefield's printed sermons contained no extended descriptions of the horrors of hell. He made it clear, however, in short powerful passages that the nether regions were most appalling. In "The Lord Our Righteousness" he said:

Oh, think of Death!—Oh, think of Judgment! Yet a little while, and Time shall be no more; and then what will become of you, if the Lord be not your Righteousness? Think you, that Christ will spare you?—No, he that formed you, will have no Mercy on you. If you are out of Christ, if Christ be not your Righteousness, Christ himself shall pronounce you damned.—And can you bear to think of being damned by Christ? Can you bear to hear the Lord Jesus say to you, Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels? Can you live, think you in everlasting Burnings? Is your Flesh Brass, and your Bones Iron? What if they are, Hell—Fire, that Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, will heat them through and through. 20

He attempted to frighten his opposers by warning them that persecutors had the "lowest Place in Bell." He asked them how they would be able to stand before Jesus Christ, when he came "in terrible Majesty to take Vengeance on all those who had persecuted his Gospel." He claimed that even those who opposed him secretly in their hearts would be condemned on Judgment Day! "The secret Enmity of your Hearts shall then be detected Before Men and Angels, and you shall be doomed to dwell in the Blackness of Darkness forever." He promised that he should help condemn the persecutors and that he should sit "on the Right-Hand of the Majesty on High," while the persecutors were "dragged by Infernal Spirits into a Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone, and the Smoke of" their torment should "be

20Whitefield, Nine Sermons, 24.
ascending up for ever and ever."21 One of Whitefield's most powerful methods of reaching pious individuals who practiced "good works," conformed to the formal rites of their churches, but who had not experienced an emotional conversion, was to appeal to their fear of being damned. Following is a passage from "The Pharisee and the Publican":

Every one, without Exception...that trusteth in himself that he is righteous, that rests in his Duties, or thinks to join them with the Righteousness of Jesus Christ for Justification in the Sight of God, tho' he be no Adulterer, no Extortioner, tho' he be not outwardly Unjust, may, tho' he fast twice in the Week, and gives Pythen of all that he possesses, yet shall he be abased in the Sight of all good Men that know him here, and before Men and Angels, and God himself, when Jesus Christ come to appear on Judgment hereafter! How low? None but the Almighty God can tell—He shall be abased to live with Devils, and make his Abode in the lowest Hell for evermore...And, notwithstanding you may come up to the Temple to pray, your Prayers are turned into Sin, and you go down to your Houses unjustified...the Wrath of God abideth upon you...All the Curses of the Law belong to you. Cursed are you when you go out—Cursed are you when you come in—Cursed are your Thoughts, cursed are your Words, cursed are your Deeds—Everything you do, say, think, from Morning to Night, is only one continued series of Sin.22

Even more important than his play upon the fears of his listeners was his appeal to their reverence for God. If fear was the negative emotion aroused by his preaching, then love was the positive feeling. Much of the winning, persuasive quality of his speaking came from his portrayal of the eternity of rest and peace which awaited the converted in heaven. In glowing terms Whitefield described how the children of God would gather about the Holy Throne on Judgment Day

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21Ibid., 79.

22Ibid., 170.
to be "blessed for evermore." He stated frequently in his journals and letters that he never grew tired of pointing out the glories of heaven and the wonders of "God's gracious Love." In "Christ the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption" he described the happiness after death which awaited believers.

You shall enter into the Full Enjoyment of all Good—It's true, all Saints will not have the same Degree of Happiness, but all will be as happy as their Hearts can hold—Believers, you shall judge Evil, and familiarly converse with good Angels—You shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the Spirits of just Men made perfect—and to sum up all your Happiness, in one Word, you shall see God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and by seeing God, be more and more like him, and pass from Glory to Glory, even to all Eternity.

But I must stop—The Glories of the upper World crowd in so fast upon my Soul, that I am lost in the Contemplation of them—Brethren, the Redemption spoken of is unutterable; we cannot here find it out—Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entered into the Hearts of the most holy Men living, to conceive how great it is. Was I to entertain you whole Ages with an Account of it, when you came to Heaven, you must say with Shals, No Half, no, not one Thousandth Part was told us.23

Upon occasion he told his listeners to "look forward, and see an unbounded Prospect of eternal Happiness" which lay before them. He promised that Josiah, the great high priest, should "administer an abundant Entrance...into the Land of Promise, that Best which awaited the Children of God." According to Whitefield, Christ deeply loved all men, wanted to enter into their hearts, and to welcome them to salvation. Once, he urged: "Come away, poor lost, undone Publicans—Make haste, say, and come away to Jesus Christ—The Lord condescends to invite himself to come under the filthy Roofs of the Houses of

23Ibid., 149.
your Souls—Do not be afraid of entertaining him—He will fill you with all Peace and Joy in Believing. He soothed away worries and trepidations by explaining that God was more willing to receive them than they were to accept him, and that God would give them "Kisses of Love" and would embrace them in "the Arms of his Mercy." He said their souls should put on the robes of Christ's righteousness which had been "purchased by the Blood of Jesus Christ, by the Death and Obedience of a bleeding God." He offered "Peace with God, Joy in the Holy Ghost" and an eternal feast upon the fatted calf.

The most powerful element in his appeal to reverence for God was his dwelling upon the great love God had manifested by sending his only Son to suffer and die upon the Cross. As we shall see a little later, Whitefield dramatized in vivid word pictures his conception of how Christ looked and what he thought during the crucifixion. A typical illustration of his advancing the love of Christ as an argument for conversion is found in "The Marriage of Cana."

If you will not be drawn by the Cords of Infinite and everlasting Love, what will draw you? I could urge many Terrors of the Lord to persuade you; but if the Love of Jesus Christ will not constrain you, your Case is desperate. Remember then this Day I have invited all, even the worst of Sinners, the most abandon'd Adulterers and Adulteresses to the Lord Jesus....I here give you a Summons to meet me at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and to clear both my Master and me.—Would weeping, would Tears prevail on you, I could wish my Head Waters, and my Eyes Fountains of Tears, that I might weep out every Argument, and melt you into Love.—Would any Thing I could do or suffer influence your Hearts, I think I could bear to pluck out my Eys, or even to lay down my Life for your Sakes. Or was I sure to prevail on you

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24 Ibid., 216.

25 Whitefield, The Prodigal Son, 18, 19.
by Importunity, I could continue my Discourse till Midnight, I would wrestle with you even till the Morning Watch, as Jacob did with the Angel, and would not go away till I had overcome. But...I can only invite.

In addition to his appeal to the emotions of fear and reverence for God, Whitefield endeavored to utilize the desire of his hearers for increased self-status. As we have seen previously, most of his auditors were common people. In 1739, the time of his arrival in the Colonies, "organized religion...was a matter of the few." The churches were supported by the aristocratic elements, and many of the common people had little to do with organized religion. As Bridenbaugh expresses it: there were "many humble folk—artisans, laborers, servants and slaves—many of whom had not before known the ministrations of religion. To such as they, Whitefield spoke in the language of the masses, and for them his broad humanitarianism, popular sympathies, and contempt for aristocratic religions held out a great appeal." Whitefield appealed to the pride of the common folk by declaring that the rich were as deeply mired in original sin as the poor, that the wealthy and the prominent rarely went to heaven, and that the Lord especially loved the meek and the poor. He boasted publicly that most of his followers were unlettered and unpretentious, and proclaimed that the poor should inherit the earth. The following is a passage in this vein taken from "The Conversion

27 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, 271.
28 Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, 425.
of Zaccheus:

The common People heard our Lord gladly, and the Poor received the Gospel—The Multitude...the Mob, the People that knew not the Law, as the proud High-Priests called them, used to follow him on Foot out into the Country, and sometimes stayed with him three Days together to hear him preach—But did the Rich believe or attend on him? No—Our Lord preached up the Doctrine of the Gross—He preach'd too searching for them, and therefore they counted him their Enemy, persecuted and spoke all Manner of Evil against him falsely. Let not the Ministers of Christ marvel, if they meet with the like Treatment from the rich Men of this wicked and adulterous Generation—I should think it no Scandal (supposing it true) to hear it affirmed, that none but the Poor attended my Ministry—Their Souls are as precious to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Souls of the greatest Men—They were the Poor that attended him in the Days of his Flesh—These are they whom he hath chosen to be rich in Faith, and to be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.29

He proclaimed that if the wealthy should speak well of him he should have need to be gravely worried, because this would prove that he "was only a Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing," and that he "spoke Peace, Peace, when there was no Peace, and prophesied smoother Things than the Gospel would allow of." He cried that the rich might despise the poor if they chose, but he should not do so because he would thereby "reproach" his maker. The poor were dear to his heart, and he rejoiced to see them flock to the churches "like Doves to the Windows" to hear him. He told them they should not be ashamed if they were illiterate, because academic learning made of men "only so many accomplished Fools." The only true wisdom was a knowledge in one's soul of the blessings of Christ. In brief, he offered his listeners a feeling of increased self-status by explaining that an impoverished sinner shared a plane of equality in God's eyes with the wealthy sinner, and that a converted pauper would receive salvation...

29 Ibid., 201, 202.
while the rich unbeliever would be damned.

Much of the effectiveness of Whitefield's appeals to the emotions depended upon his simple and unpretentious language. The Christian History reported that: "He has a great Mastery of Words, but studies much Plainness of Speech."\(^{30}\) The favorably impressed Josiah Smith said: "He is certainly a finish'd Preacher, a great Master of Pulpit-oratory and Eloquence, while a noble Negligence ran through his Stile."\(^{31}\) Even in his printed sermons there was no soaring artificial rhetoric or elaborate strivings for effect. Except occasionally in his opening sentences, Whitefield refrained from using long involved sentences. For the most part he spoke in phrases easy to understand, with only infrequent usage of compound or complex sentences. In emotional exhortations the sentence length was usually between ten and fifteen words.

An important technique of the evangelist was the frequent insertion of numerous rhetorical questions, giving to his discourse the atmosphere of a two-way discussion. For example, in "The Lord our Righteousness" he said:

But I must speak a Word to you, Young Maidens, as well as Young Men.—I see many of you adorned, as to your Bodies:—But are not your Souls naked? Which of you can say, the Lord is my Righteousness? Which of you was ever solicitous to be dressed in this Robe of invaluable Price, and without which, you are no better than whitened Serpents in the Sight of God?—Let not then so many of you, young Maidens, any longer forget your only Ornament.—Oh, seek for the Lord to be your Righteousness, or otherwise Burning will soon be upon you, instead of Beauty!\(^{32}\)

\(^{30}\) Prince, The Christian History. 1745, 362.

\(^{31}\) Smith, Sermon, 11.

\(^{32}\) Whitefield, Nine Sermons, 26.
At times Whitefield's direct applications to his hearers produced a violent response. As he neared the end of his sermon, the evangelist would locate in the audience someone who was crying as a result of his preaching. He would then point dramatically in the person's direction, and cry: "Conversion-Work among you! See, see, how the Lord has touched [his or her] Heart, and wrought Contrition in this poor Sinner!" He would continue in this vein until others began to dab at their eyes with handkerchiefs: before long the entire congregation was weeping. If, however, the audience failed to "melt" under his eloquence, he would reverse his methodology and would complain: "Where's your Contrition! Where's your Tears! No Body weep! No Meltings amongst you! Come, my Friends, I will weep with you and for you." Following such expressions, he would cry publicly upon the rostrum. Before long the "piteous Sight" would so stimulate his hearers that they too would begin to cry.

As we have seen previously, Whitefield aroused emotions by making frequent direct applications of his sermon material to his hearers throughout the oration, and by the frequent use of personal pronouns. One of the most important rhetorical devices Whitefield used was the presentation of dramatic narratives based upon the Bible. Frequently such a narrative would occupy the entire Body of the sermon and would be based upon a series of verses. Whitefield would dramatize the material, and would spice the story with suspense, conflict, and climaxes. One of the most interesting narrations was his sermon on Abraham's offering up his son Isaac for the sacrifice.

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Whitefield told of Abraham's receiving in a dream a divine directive to sacrifice his beloved son upon one of the mountains in the nearby land of Moriah. He portrayed vividly the consternation which he believed possessed Abraham when early the next morning he called Isaac, saddled his ass, and kissed his wife goodby without revealing to her his plan of murder. The evangelist then followed Abraham and Isaac on their journey to Moriah, and, upon their arrival at the mountain specified for the sacrifice, described the old man's feelings when he loaded upon Isaac's back the wood which was to be his pyre. He told of the rising mental anguish in Abraham's breast as they approached the top of the mountain, how he struggled with his paternal desire to defy God and to spare his son. He pictured Abraham turning to Isaac and sobbing the words "Thou art to be the Lamb, my Son"; Isaac murmured no protest but permitted his father to bind him with ropes and lay him upon the pyre. Whitefield skillfully increased suspense by depicting Abraham, knife in hand, standing over the body of Isaac. He spoke of Abraham's drawing back his arm to strike, pausing to wipe his hand over his face, to weep in misery, and to whisper a final farewell. Then, once more, Abraham pointed the blade at the youth's throat, raised his arm and began to drive the knife downward. Just at the last moment Abraham stayed his blow, for the old man heard God commanding him: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." The presentation of narratives like this one, coupled with a powerful delivery, must have stirred deeply the emotions of the hearers, and thereby conditioned them for an emotional
exhortation "to come to Christ."

Closely allied with his usage of dramatic narratives as a means of motivating the audience was his personifying of Biblical characters. He brought Biblical characters to life, endowed them with human personalities, gave them speech, and interpreted their emotions and thoughts. It was fascinating drama and must have been a startling innovation upon the dull, logical sermons at that time almost universally delivered in America. One of the more impressive illustrations of this technique is found in "The Conversion of Zaccheus":

There, there by Faith, 0 Mourners in Sion, may you see your Saviour hanging with Arms stretched out, and hear him, as it were, thus speaking to your Souls—"Behold how I have loved you!—Behold my Hands and my Feet!—Look, look into my wounded Side, and see a Heart flaming with Love—Love stronger than Death—Come into my Arms, 0 Sinners, come wash your spotted Souls in my Heart's Blood—See here is a Fountain opened for all Sin and uncleanness!—See 0 guilty Souls, how the Wrath of God is now abiding upon you—Come, haste away, and hide yourselves in the Clefts of my Wounds—For I am wounded for your Transgressions—I am dying, that you may live everywhere—Behold, as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so am I here lifted up on a Tree...Oh look unto me, all ye trembling Sinners, even to the Ends of Earth!—Look unto me by Faith, and you shall be saved—For I came thus to be obedient even unto Death, that I might save that which was lost."

Other Biblical characters which he personified were: Adam, Eve, the serpent, Saul, Zaccheus, the trembling jailor, the prodigal son, the blind beggar, the Pharisee, and the Publican, the disciples and the prophets. Whitefield was not content to mention these by name alone, he elaborated upon their physical appearance, the way they walked and talked, their thoughts and emotions. For instance, when he

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34 Whitefield, Nine Sermons, 219.
wished to refer to the manner in which the Publican prayed in the
temple, he launched into the following passage:

Methinks I see him standing afar off, pensive, oppressed, and even overwhelmed with Sorrow—Sometimes he attempts
to look up—but then, thinks he, the Heavens are unclean
in God's Sight, and the very Angels are charged with
Folly, how then shall such a Wretch as I dare to lift up
my guilty Head....He smites upon his Breast, his
treachurous, ungrateful, desperately wicked Breast—A
Breast now ready to burst, and at length, out of the
Abundance of his Heart, I doubt not, with many Tears, he
at last cries out, God be merciful to me a Sinner.35

Although Whitefield's printed sermons contained almost no long
tirades against "unconverted" ministers, the ungodliness of the
universities, the sinful philosophies of the anonymous author of The
Whole Duty of Man and Archbishop Tillotson, and the "damnable Poms
and Vanities of the Age," these strictures constituted an important
part of his sermons. The common people were probably attracted by
his execration of the conservative, aristocratic aspects of religion.
His violent condemnations caused hundreds of persons to withdraw from
the churches of "unconverted" preachers, led others to burn the
volumes Whitefield disliked, and caused the complete cessation of
dancing in Philadelphia for years after his departure from that city.

Summary. The personal content of Whitefield's sermons formed
an important part of his preaching. He made a deliberate attempt to
identify himself with his audience by means of personal pronouns,
which constituted approximately four percent of the words uttered
during the Introduction and Body, and about ten percent in the Con-
clusion. He rarely attempted to vindicate his motives, professing

35 Ibid., 166.
not to care what mortal man thought of his actions. One of the most effective uses of personal references was his posing as a special mediator between God and the members of the audience. In his printed sermons, he seldom mentioned his previous evangelistic experiences.

The evangelist made almost no attempt to stimulate an intellectual response in the listeners. He made little effort to prove logically the basic tenets of his theology: original sin, regeneration, "Justification by Faith only," and the "inward experiencing of the Spirit" of God. His "proofs" consisted almost exclusively of Biblical narratives and emotional exhortations.

The chief emotions which he endeavoured to stimulate in his hearers were: fear of hell, reverence for God, and the desire for increase in self-esteem. The effectiveness of his appeals to emotions depended upon: a vivid, simple, colloquial manner of utterance; direct application of sermon materials to the hearers; frequent use of personal pronouns; powerful dramatic narratives based upon familiar Biblical stories; personification of Biblical characters; and the use of the element of conflict by means of violent condemnations of the conservative, aristocratic aspects of religion.
CHAPTER XIV

WHITEFIELD'S MANNER OF DELIVERY

Almost every contemporary reference to Whitefield's oratory commented upon the effectiveness with which he delivered his sermons. Mrs. Jonathan Edwards described him as a "born orator." She said further: "It is wonderful to see what a spell he casts over an audience...I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob." The Christian History stated: "He spake as became the Oracles of GOD in Demonstration of the Spirit and of the Power.... He spake with a mighty Sense of God, Eternity, the Immortality and Preciousness of the Souls of his Hearers." Even Whitefield's enemies acknowledged his power of delivery. Nathanael Henchman, a severe critic of the evangelist, wrote: "It is evident to me, that it is not the Matter of his Prayers and Sermons that charms, but the Air and Tone, the tuned Voice, vehement Pæthos, and theatrical Gestures of the Gentleman, with a Faculty to apply to the Affections in a melting Manner." The hostile Alexander Garden stated, concerning the popular response to Whitefield's preaching: "Such Effects...are very plainly owing to...his Talent of Delivery, or

1Wakeley, op. cit., 278; Tyerman, op. cit., 428, 429.
3Henchman, Reasons Offered, 7.
Voice and Vehemence in Speaking, adapted to take the Ear and excite the Passions of his Hearers. I bid him only to put the same Words, which from his Mouth produced the boasted Effects, into the Mouth of an ordinary Speaker, and see whether the same Effects would be the Consequence. Inasmuch as both Henchman and Garden were violent opposers of the evangelist, it is possible that their testimony was colored by their desire to belittle the logical content of Whitefield's sermons. Nevertheless, his lively, emotional manner of delivery, which differed conspicuously from the pulpit style then prevalent, was a most important element in the total effectiveness of his preaching in America.

Some Psychological Aspects of Whitefield's Delivery. The main source of power in Whitefield's delivery lay in his ability to lose himself so completely in his emotions that he was able to stir up similar emotions in his audiences. He was absolutely convinced that he was presenting the words and the will of God, and that he was "one of the few" chosen by God to preach the gospel. Frequently in the midst of his sermons he would reach a state of near-hysteria, and would believe that the Holy Ghost had entered into his soul and was giving him utterance. Comments from his journals indicate that it was chiefly during these emotional climaxes that the audiences were "melted-down" into tears. A typical comment concerning the real with which he spoke was made by Josiah Smith, who wrote: "He appear'd to me, in all his Discourses, very deeply affected and impress'd in

\[\text{Garden, } \text{T}a\text{k}e \text{ H}e\text{ad} \text{Ho}w \text{ Y}e \text{ He}ar, 13.\]
his own Heart. How did [he] burn and boil...when he spoke.5

However the evangelist was not always able to attain an "intense outpouring of the Spirit." He seemed to possess some of the characteristics of the manic-depressive. His emotional nature was subject to frequent changes of mood from heightened periods of exultation to periods of "profound despair," in which he mourned over his own "wretchedness," his spiritual resemblance to a "worm," and the "vileness" of his heart. Very often he experienced a feeling of "great inward Trials" before preaching, but this mood customarily lifted either before or during the sermon. In those cases, however, where the mood of depression failed to lift, Whitefield's effectiveness in delivery was impaired. For instance at Brookfield, Massachusetts, on October 16, 1740, he "Rose in great Dejection of Soul at the Consideration of indwelling Sin. Retired, and wept before the Lord." In his two sermons that day his preaching was attended "with little Power" and received but little response from his audiences.6

Customarily Whitefield's feeling of depression began to disappear after the beginning of his sermon, when his emotions became aroused. An example of this characteristic of his preaching was his insertion in his Journal on Sunday, November 2, 1740, in New York City:

[I] was much dejected before the Evening Sermon. For near half an Hour before I left Mr. Noble's House, I could only lie before the Lord and say, 'I was a poor Sinner, and wonder that Christ would be gracious to such a Wretch.' As I went to Meeting, I grew weaker and weaker, and when I came into the Pulpit, I could have chose to be silent rather than speak. But, after I had begun, the Spirit of

5 Josiah Smith, Sermon, 11.

6 Journal From a few Days after his Return to Georgia To his Arrival at Falmouth, 45.
the Lord gave me Freedom, till at length it came down like a mighty Rushing Wind, and carried all before it. Immediately the whole Congregation was alarmed. shrieking, crying, weeping and wailing were to be heard in every corner."

sometimes for days or weeks his journals would contain no mention of a period of depression. at such times his writings would refer to his "being upon the Mount" and his sermons would be full of "Life and Power."8

Another psychological aspect of whitefield's delivery which grew partly out of his feelings of depression was the increase in the effectiveness of his delivery as the sermon progressed. his journals and letters contain few instances of occasions where he achieved a spectacular response from his listeners in the early portion of his sermons. ordinarily, the "sweet meltings" did not begin to appear until the oration was well advanced; sometimes he spoke for half an hour or more before members of his audience responded with tears or loud cries. the fact that it took some time for the preacher to work himself and his audience into a high pitch of emotionalism may account for this delayed response.

whitefield's lack of power in the introductions of his sermons might be attributed to his fatigue. during his tours he would sometimes ride twenty or thirty miles between sermons, preaching immediately upon arrival in a town, without any opportunity for resting beforehand. sometimes upon these occasions, he was so tired that

7 Ibid., 57.
8 Ibid., 35, 36.
his "knees smote together." He would not have preached long, however, before he believed that he received fresh energy from the Lord, and his delivery would increase in animation and power.

A third reason for the increase in effectiveness of delivery as the sermon progressed lay in the change in sermon material. Ordinarily, the early portions of his sermons were largely informative, while the later parts became highly emotional.

Whitefield's Use of the Body in Delivery. Although Whitefield later became portly, the youthful orator whom the colonists saw in 1739 and 1740 was a slender man of medium height, "of a fair Complexion, and of a comely Appearance." He always wore the cassock of the Episcopal church, even when he preached in the fields or in a dissenting church. Many contemporaries thought he looked "bold" and "courageous" when delivering his orations. The old farmer who heard Whitefield's sermon at Middletown, Connecticut, believed that "he looked as if he was Cloathed with authority from ye great god and a sweet solemn Solemnity sat upon his brow."

The friends of the evangelist found his bodily activity in the pulpit "beautiful" and "magnetic." The Christian History reported: "He uses much Gestures, but with great Propriety:...every Motion of his Body, speaks, and [is] natural and unaffected. If his Delivery

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10 Smith, Sermon, 12.
is the Product of Art, 'tis certainly the Perfection of it, for it is entirely concealed. Josiah Smith complained that his pen could not describe Whitefield's Action and Gestures, in all their Strength and Decencies. Gillies wrote eulogistically that every feature of his face, every motion of his hands, and every gesture spoke to the eye, so that the most dissipated and thoughtless found their attention involuntarily fixed, and the dullest and most ignorant could not but understand.

Some of the more conservative persons did not approve of Whitefield's "excessive" bodily activity while preaching. One gentleman wrote to the Weekly News Letter: "His Delivery is exceeding Warm and Affectionate. He abounds in Action beyond any Man I ever heard; and tho' some of his Actions are the most natural and beautiful imaginable, yet in others there appeared a roughness which was not agreeable to me." Other critics complained that he spoke with a "Vehemence unusual" in the colonies. At times Whitefield exerted himself so strenuously during his sermons that he became ill afterwards and vomited repeatedly.

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13 Smith, Sermon, 11.
16 The Testimony and Advice of a Number of Laymen respecting Religion, and the Teachers of it. Address'd to the Pastors of New England (Boston: 1743).
17 Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, after his Arrival at Georgia. To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 74.
Whitefield's countenance apparently reflected accurately his inward feelings and was an aid to communication. The conservative New England minister Charles Chauncy once criticized him vigorously for smiling while describing the "wonders of Salvation." Whitefield's reply is revealing: "And can it justly, Reverend Sir, be deemed a fault in any Preacher when talking out of the Abundance of his Heart, of the loveliness of the ever lovely Jesus, the Joys of Heavens, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, to express, and give an Indication of his inward Joy, by a Smile in his Countenance?" 18

In his journals Whitefield frequently referred to his having shed tears during his exhortations. Once, in recounting a prayer service, he wrote: "I prayed with and exhorted them. My Eyes gushed out with Water; my Soul was full of a Sense of the Divine Love, and my little Flock wept plentifully too. I was much carried out for them." 19 Another typical reference is the following: "God gave me to pray earnestly, and particularly with strong Cryings and Tears." 20

Unfortunately Whitefield's contemporaries did not write many comments upon his use of the body in delivery, beyond expressing approval or disapproval. Most of them who did not like his bodily action upon the platform were also opposed to his doctrines.

18 Whitefield, A Letter To the Reverend Dr. Chauncy, on Account of some Passages relating to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, in his Book intitled Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1745), 8.

19 Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal, after his Arrival at Georgia, To a few Days after his second Return thither from Philadelphia, 51.

20 Ibid., 53.
Available evidence indicates, however, that the great congregations of common folk to whom he preached were much impressed with his hearing in the pulpit.

**Whitefield's Use of the Voice in Delivery.** Whitefield's clear enunciation, and powerful vocal projection, gained through addressing much larger congregations in England, enabled him to reach the farthest outskirts of his colonial audiences. According to Benjamin Franklin: "He had a loud clear voice, and articulated his words and sentences so perfectly, that he might be heard and understood at a great distance." 21

Most of the contemporary comments referred to the "charming Musick of his Tongue." 22 Mrs. Jonathan Edwards described his voice as "deep-toned, yet clear and melodious...It is perfect music." 23

Another friend, Josiah Smith, wrote the following extravagant account: "How was his Tongue like the Pen of a ready Writer? touch'd as with a Coal from the Alter! With what a flow of Words, what a ready Profusion of Language, did he speak to us upon the great Concerns of our Souls?...How awfully, with what Thunder and Sound did he discharge the Artillery of Heaven upon us? And yet, how could he soften and melt, even a Soldier of Christ, with the Love and Mercy of God?" 24

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21 Franklin, Autobiography, 122.

22Boston Evening Post, April 15, 1745.


24Smith, Sermon, 11, 12.
Comments made by Whitefield's enemies concerning his voice varied from Commissary Archibald Cummings' mildly complimentary reference to his "agreeable Voice" to the following expression by Alexander Garden: "his Talent of Utterance hit [the] Fancy [of the people,] his Words were to them as a very lovely Song. They came only for Sound, and Sound they had, and Sound they carried with them, and no more....the Phantoms and Caprices of their heads, which turn them a hunting after the Fine Preacher, the Man whose Tone and Air they are best pleased with, whose Voice is unto them as a very lovely Song."  

Perhaps the most accurate judgment of Whitefield's voice in the delivery of sermons was made by the objective Franklin: "every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turn'd and well plac'd, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleas'd with the discourse; a pleasure of much the same kind with that receiv'd from an excellent piece of musick."  

Summary. The essence of Whitefield's power in delivery was his ability to lose himself so completely in his emotions that he was able to stir up similar emotions in his hearers. His effectiveness varied directly with his psychological moods which shifted from

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26 Garden, Take heed how ye hear, 21.

27 Franklin, Autobiography, 122.
heightened periods of exultation to periods of profound despair. He typically experienced a spell of despondency and "great inward Tryals" before preaching. Ordinarily such feelings lifted either before or shortly after he began to speak; however, upon those occasions when he remained depressed throughout the entire sermon, his effectiveness was severely hampered. Whitefield customarily possessed dynamic bodily animation upon the platform. His movements were graceful, powerful, and at times violent. Some conservative persons found his actions "repulsive," but the great share of his listeners were captured by the magnetism of his presence. His powerful voice easily reached the farthest outskirts of the crowds. The curves and sweeps of his voice were "a charming Song" that fascinated and led many to experience what they believed to be the "Presence of God."
PART IV

RECAPITULATION
The great wave of religious emotionalism which, between 1739 and 1745, swept over New England, the Middle Colonies, and to a certain extent South Carolina and Georgia, has been characterized by various historians as "the first great social movement in American history." The Great Awakening was not a totally impromptu phenomenon. The social heritage of centuries, molded by the peculiar environment of the American frontier, favorably predisposed the Colonies to a great resurgence of religious zeal. In November, 1739, when Whitefield arrived in Philadelphia, revivalism was in the air. For two decades Theodorous Frelinghuysen, the Log College evangelists, and the German Sectaries had been planting the seeds of revivalism in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. New England had been shaken by the Northampton awakening and its associate revivals of 1734 and 1735. Discontent of the crusted formalism of the churches was widespread throughout the Colonies.

In the words of Sweet: "the Times were ripe for some new emphasis in religion as well as a new type of religious leadership." The twenty-four year-old Whitefield, whose training and life experiences since early childhood had groomed him for his role as a great itinerant evangelist, furnished the new emphasis and leadership necessary for an outburst of religious feelings in the Colonies. The "new emphasis" brought to America by Whitefield was based upon traditional Calvinistic theology. Old line Calvinism had long since run out its dynamic course, but now, Calvinism tinctured with Whitefield's emotional, personalized plea for conversion, brought a
spiritual transformation in many communities from Boston to Savannah. He brought religion to the great masses of the religious indifferent, by minimizing the logic and "reasonableness of the Calvinistic doctrine, and by magnifying the emotional appeal for personal redemption. His ability to fuse his Calvinism with the liberal philosophies of pietism gave the element of newness to the old and familiar principles which Americans had accepted since the founding of the Colonies.

Austere ministers had been trying unsuccessfully for several generations to maintain the influence of religion by the delivery of formalized, logical sermons. Whitefield brought a new experience in religion to the masses by delivering emotional extempore sermons. America had never witnessed itinerant evangelism before; preaching on the Commons and in the streets was excitingly different. Here was a preacher who needed no notes or manuscript, and whose eloquent simplicity of delivery could stir the learned as well as the unlettered. He never plied his vast audiences with rational, logical evidence or complicated systems of thought. He reduced his theology to the simplest terms of sin, faith, hell, and heaven. His Biblical narratives and other illustrative material were so clearly and vividly arranged that the most rustic backwoodsman probably had little difficulty in following. He aimed solely at arousing the emotions of his hearers, for he believed that religion was a matter of the heart and not of the head.

Whitefield's sermons were directed chiefly at the uneducated people, who constituted the great bulk of his listeners. Such
persons had no desire to hear church doctrine stated logically and applied soberly to their problems. They craved drama and excitement; they yearned for entertainment and stimulation. He capitalized upon their desires by presenting sermons almost entirely lacking in logical proof but rich in sensationalism, vivid imagery, and dramatic qualities. He dramatized Biblical narratives, making of them fascinating stories which contained suspense, conflict, and climaxes. He personified characters from both Old and New Testaments, even going to the extreme of "interpreting" the emotions of Christ when he hung upon the cross.

Whitefield appealed to his listeners' desire for increased self-status by proclaiming that the rich were as deeply mired in "original sin" as the poorest and most illiterate frontiersmen in the audience. He proclaimed that the wealthy and the learned rarely gained admittance into heaven, and that God possessed a special love for the meek and the poor. He sneered at the feebleness of human reasoning and declared that the only valid knowledge was the divine will. He placed himself upon the same level as his hearers and talked to them as one friend to another. He spoke of "our sins," "our God," "your troubles," and "my faith in you." Numerous rhetorical questions gave his sermons the aspect of a two-way discussion.

At times Whitefield posed as a divine emissary sent by God to bring sinners "home to Christ." He frequently offered to meet his hearers at Judgment Day when he should intercede for them with God. He promised that believers should sit on the right hand of God and should talk with the prophets and apostles for all eternity. However, with grim visage and ringing voice he threatened sinners with
George Whitfield had embodied virtue and was more than just a "preacher" to the people. With earnestness of purpose and a supreme faith in the Lord, the actions of those who were conversions for George would have been profound. The conversion of one man often deeply affected the lives of so many. The presence of a man who has not only been converted but has also been transformed by the presence of God on the platform was a powerful and awe-inspiring sight.

During the services, the emotions of the audience were melted-down. The audience was moved into the soul and was affected by the words. It was entirely contrary to the method of man to reach a place, but the words of the sermon he would reach a god and that he was one of the key chosen by God to preach the word. The words were multiplied in the audience. He was able to stir up similar emotions in the audience. He was able to move himself to consolation in the emotions that he was to make them feel before God and help command them to tell forever.

He was driven, and such of the presence. He vowed he should appear.
of any but the hardiest men, to bring the word of God, as he saw it, to the people of America. Tens of thousands in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were yet to thrill to his oratory. He was to visit the Colonies five times more, before his death at Newburyport, November 30, 1770, but these American visits were anti-climactic ventures.

There can be little doubt that the preaching of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening made him one of the most important figures in the history of modern religion. He possessed no great mental capacities, but was blessed with the ability to arouse the non-critical to emotional heights. His importance lies first, in bringing a new zeal for religion to the great masses in America; second, in introducing a new era of fiery emotional preaching in place of the dull, logical pulpit style then prevalent; third, in stimulating waves of emotional fervor which swept colonial America, and which in turn motivated the rapid development of the Methodist, Baptist, and other evangelical denominations; and fourth, in helping to develop the democratic sentiment by creating the first important social movement common to all the American colonies.
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BIOGRAPHY

Eugene E. White was born in Denver, Colorado, October 31, 1919. He received his elementary and high school education in St. Joseph, Missouri. He was granted the degree of Bachelor of Science from Oregon State College in 1942 and the Master of Arts degree from Louisiana State University in 1944. From 1942 to 1946, he was a graduate assistant; and from 1946 to 1947, he held the rank of instructor in the Department of Speech, Louisiana State University.
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Title of Thesis: The Preaching of George Whitefield During the Great Awakening in America.

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