WHITFIELD'S LATER YEARS

Prayer
Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:12
Hymn: 162 "O Happy Day"

When George Whitefield landed in London, July 5, 1748, he received a warm welcome from friends. He wrote, "Our Lord makes it exceedingly pleasant to me to preach His unsearchable riches. Multitudes flock to hear and many seem to be quickened."

The Association of Calvinist Methodists met on July 20, 1748, in London, and Whitefield, as Moderator, had to admonish some disorderly young preachers that they were candidates on approbation. He warned them against rashly going beyond the lines that were assigned them and urged them to show a teachable mind and a willingness to submit. In a letter to John Wesley he declared that his work was not creating societies but the prosecuting his itinerant ministry in Britain and America.

He made a quick trip to Wales to visit the Calvinistic Methodist churches and to preach. By August 22, 1748 he was back in London preaching in the drawing-room of Lady Huntingdon to her aristocratic guests and in her kitchen to her servants. Very dear to the heart of Whitefield and to the heart of Lady Huntingdon was the improving of the Church of England itself. They wanted to bring an evangelical awakening to the Established Church.

Lady Huntingdon has been called "The Lady of the Revival" and "The Queen of the Methodists." She was born at Stanton in Leicestershire, in the reign of Queen Anne, in 1707, the year of the union of the English and Scotch Parliaments. Her father, Washington Shirley, was the second Earl Ferrers. Her mother, Mary Levinge, was the daughter of Sir Richard Levinge, Solicitor-General for Ireland and Speaker of the House of Commons. From childhood she was a person of unusual piety and passionate religious devotion. In June, 1728, she married Theophilus Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, descended from the Plantagenet Duke of Clarence, Brother of Edward IV. The Earl was a man of high moral principles and liberal breadth of mind. The Countess was led to an interest in Methodism through two of the sisters of her husband. The two sisters, Lady Margaret and Lady Catherine, married Methodist clergymen—one of them, Benjamin Ingham had been a member of the Holy Club and became the founder of Yorkshire Methodism. Lady Margaret aroused in Lady Selina Huntingdon a deep concern in her own spiritual condition. After a serious illness she experienced a dramatic conversion in which her surrender to Christ brought her rest and peace. About that time John and Charles Wesley came to her neighborhood preaching in private homes and in barns. She sent them a message of good will that identified her with the Methodists. She had to face a storm of indignation and insults from the aristocracy. She was very much impressed by the preaching of Whitefield and made him one of her chaplains. For the rest of his life she was one of his closest and most ardent supporters. She was tireless in bringing some of the highest of British nobility to her drawing-room to hear her favorite preacher, Whitefield. For those who felt they could not afford to have it known that they had listened to him, she had a little room off her drawing-room where they could listen in secret. The wife of Lord Chesterfield and his two sisters became life-long followers of the teachings of Whitefield. Lord Chesterfield was impressed and spoke approvingly of the
preacher. Bolingbroke, after accepting an invitation and hearing Whitefield, sent a note to the Countess, "Mr. Whitefield is the most extraordinary man in our times. He has the most commanding eloquence I ever heard in any person." David Hume, the philosopher, described Whitefield as "the most ingenious preacher he had ever heard." He described the portrayal in a sermon of Gabriel carrying to heaven the news of a sinner converted to God. He wrote, "It surpassed anything I ever saw or heard in any other preacher."

Lady Huntingdon was deeply disturbed by stormy attacks on Methodist preachers and made strong protests to the government. As Methodist preachers were excluded from the Established Churches she used her fortune to help provide Chapels and preaching centers. Her husband who died in 1746 left her a large fortune. She established an orphanage at Kingswood and contributed to various schools. She founded a College at Trevecca, South Wales, to train Calvinistic Methodist preachers. She helped build and repair many churches in different parts of Britain: York and Huddersfield in the north, Gloucester and Worcester in the Midlands, Lewes and Brighton in the South, Swansea in the West, Margate and Norwich in the East. To build the church in Brighton she had to sell part of her jewels. She provided preaching centers at Bath, Bristol, Tunbridge Wells, and Cheltenham. She helped select and supported some sixty Calvinistic Methodist preachers who rotated in circuits in these churches under the oversight of Whitefield. She helped generously in the building and maintaining of Whitefield's "cathedral" at Moorfields and the Tottenham Court Chapel, and the chapels at Long Acre and Spa Fields. She took a great interest in the lay preachers and helped Whitefield persuade Wesley that the pay preachers were needed. Once when Charles Wesley was preaching in John Wesley's place in London, Charles' wife in Bristol was stricken with a bad case of smallpox. Lady Huntingdon went to Bristol to take care of Charles' wife. She sent for Whitefield to go to London to relieve Charles Wesley so that he could hasten to his wife's bedside. She continued her good works to the end of her life on June 17, 1791, outliving Whitefield by twenty-six years and John Wesley by four.

In September, 1748 Whitefield paid his third visit to Scotland. It was a short visit that included some twelve days in Glasgow, a return to Cambusland, and with most of the visit in Edinburgh where he compared the crowds to those of Moorfields. He wrote the Countess that he was thankful to the Lord for directing him to Scotland. His health had improved and he was enabled to preach with greater power to large crowds. Some of the clergy were shy about supporting him. Two synods were held against him and he was called before one Presbytery. The Erskines of the Associate Presbytery held an assembly on November 16th in Edinburgh and led their clergy in an oath "solemnly engaged to strengthen one another's hands, in the use of lawful means to extirpate Popery, Prelacy, Arminianism, Arianism, Tritheism, Sabellianism, and George Whitefieldism." About November 10 Whitefield was back in London preaching to "the great and noble."

A bigoted magistrate heavily fined some of the Welsh Methodists. Lady Huntingdon used her influence to get the Government to refund the fines.

On November 25, 1748 Whitefield paid a visit to the dying Isaac Watts. Watts described himself as "one of Christ's waiting servants." Whitefield replied, "I am not too good to wait on a waiting servant of Christ!" He raised Watts up in his bed and sought to make him more comfortable. In half an hour
Watts was dead. Watts had written some 761 Psalms and hymns that were an important part of the Evangelical Revival. Some fifty-six are still in use.

In November, 1748 Whitefield began making plans to develop the Orphan House, Bethesda, into a college to train Calvinistic Methodist preachers. In December 1748, he wrote the Trustees of Georgia, urging them to legalize slavery in the colony. He argued that the colony could never prosper without slave labor because of its hot climate. He was looking to his plantation in South Carolina to contribute substantially to the Orphan-Home and college.

In 1749 Whitefield was much concerned for the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales. On January 24 with Howell Harris he held a meeting of the Association of Calvinistic Methodists at Waterford in Wales. In April another meeting of the Association was held in London. Whitefield surrendered his Moderatorship to Howell Harris. He would continue his interest in the Calvinistic Methodists and especially those of Wales. On May 15 he set out for another preaching tour in Wales.

On June 26, 1749, Whitefield's wife arrived from America and Whitefield returned to London. For a time he preached in the drawing-room and kitchen of Lady Huntingdon. Then he toured western England and preached in Gloucester, Bristol and for two weeks in Portsmouth. At Kingsbridge, with thousands listening in the street, a young man perched in a tree to see Whitefield, came down and surrendered to Christ. He became a faithful minister. Whitefield spent a couple of happy days in his wife's home in Abergavenny before beginning an eight days revival in which he preached fourteen times. He spent a month touring Wales and awakening a great revival.

In July, 1749 he received a letter from Benjamin Franklin urging him to return to America. Franklin commended him for preaching among the great and pointed out that Confucius had greatly improved his country by preaching to the great and that when the great changed great multitudes followed in the course of virtue. Franklin wrote, "there are numbers who perhaps fear less the being in hell than out of fashion." Franklin pointed out that more western reformations began with the ignorant mob. Whitefield in his reply commended Franklin for the progress he had made in studying the mysteries of electricity. He then recommended that Franklin with diligent unprejudiced pursuit and study should seek to understand the mysteries of the new birth. He urged that such a study would richly repay him because "One, at whose bar we are shortly to appear, hath solemnly declared that without it 'we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven'."

In the summer of 1749 Whitefield found himself in a bitter controversy with Dr. Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, who accused the Methodists of using guards armed with clubs to frighten people into joining them. Whitefield ably defended the Methodists and most sincerely pictured how the Methodists had suffered greatly from mobs. He confessed that he had been too harsh in his words against Archbishop Tillotson.

In the fall of 1749 Whitefield had to reconcile John and Charles Wesley. John had courted and planned to marry a beautiful, gifted, and good widow, Grace Murray. Charles strongly objected and behind John's back arranged for Grace to marry John Bennett. John was furious when he learned what his brother had done. He declared that his brother would be to him as a publican and heathen. Whitefield with tears and prayer brought the brothers to a
tearful reconciliation.

The winter of 1749-50 proved a wonderful season in Whitefield's London tabernacle. Large crowds assembled as early as 6 a.m. to hear him before going to the day's work. Whitefield and Wesley exchanged pulpits and shared in each other's Communion Services. The exchange heightened the enthusiasm in both camps. Both men made the most of the earthquake that shook London. They declared that the people were like ripe grain waiting for the sickle.

In July Whitefield made his fourth visit to Scotland, preaching mainly in Edinburgh. Again great crowds came to hear him. By August he was back in London. Soon he was off on another preaching tour through England. The high point was in the village of Haworth where William Grimshaw was the preacher. Whitefield sensed that Grimshaw who preached thirty times a week in his scattered parish was most stern and hard in his preaching. Some six thousand turned out to hear Whitefield. Over a thousand remained for Communion. When Whitefield tried to compliment them as "a sincerely Godly people," Grimshaw protested that he must not flatter them because he feared that "the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open!" Grimshaw later confessed that he had 1,200 in Communion and that he believed most of them were "one with Christ."

Whitefield was back in London in December but was quite ill. When he received an urgent appeal to come to Ireland because the Methodist Societies in Dublin and Cork were undergoing a cruel persecution, he was able only to express his sympathies.

In the spring of 1751 Whitefield was again "cross-ploughing the land" of England. By June he was in Ireland. In Dublin in five days he preached fourteen times. Above 10,000 attended on the Lord's Day. It reminded him of Moorfields.

Whitefield moved on to Scotland for his fifth visit. For twenty-eight days in Glasgow and Edinburgh he preached to near 10,000 each day.

He returned to London about the middle of August and by the end of the month he was on his way to America. He left his wife with friends in Scotland.

**WHITEFIELD'S FOURTH VISIT TO AMERICA**

On his fourth visit to America Whitefield carried with him a number of destitute children for the Orphan House. He reached Bethesda on November 20, 1751. On January 1, 1752, he began planning his spring preaching tour. In April he made a sudden decision to return to England. He had found Bethesda in good condition. Its prosperity and success had fired him with the ambition to add to the Orphan House a college to train preachers. The Trustees' Charter was nearing its end and before it expired he wanted to present his petition for a college.

By May, 1752, Whitefield was back in England. The Trustees were willing to grant permission for the college provided that the minister of the church be an Anglican and that the Liturgy of the Church of England be followed in the chapel of the college. Whitefield was unwilling to accept these conditions. The archbishop asked him, "Upon what bottom the intended College was to be
founded?" Whitefield replied, "Undoubtedly upon a broad bottom." Whitefield gave up the idea for a college. He would devote himself to his itinerant preaching. John Berridge quipped that the failure to establish the college meant that Whitefield was "spared from becoming the father of a race of unconverted ministers."

Back in England Whitefield began preaching again at Moorsfields. Thousands came to hear him daily but he was soon off on a tour of England. Then on to Wales. He came back to preach in the Midlands. Then he went to Scotland for his sixth visit. He preached twice daily for two weeks. Then there was more preaching. One place he included was Wyclif's Lutterworth.

By fall he was back in London where he initiated the building of a larger Moorsfields' Tabernacle. The New Tabernacle was opened on June 10, 1753. Soon he was again "cross-ploughing the land," visiting most of the places where he had preached earlier. Crowds were even larger, often estimated at 20,000.

On July 20 he began his seventh visit to Scotland, again preaching to great crowds in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

By September 25 he was back in London taking up his work there.

In November, 1753, he opened his first Tabernacle in Bristol. From the first it was not large enough. He was called back to London where John Wesley was dangerously ill. Wesley recovered to work for another forty years.

In December, 1753, Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies arrived in London to solicit support for the new College of New Jersey at Princeton. Whitefield invited them to make his home their home during their stay. They were advised by friends that it would not be prudent for them to associate publicly with Whitefield. They did visit him privately in the evening. He greatly encouraged them and they prayed together till about 3 a.m. Whitefield greatly fired their spirits. Governor Belcher of New Jersey had hoped for help from Whitefield. In spite of the fears of some of their friends Whitefield proved a great help.

WHITEFIELD'S FIFTH VISIT TO THE AMERICAN COLONIES

Whitefield spend January and February of 1754 preparing for another trip to America. On March 7 he departed from Gravesend aboard the ship, "Success", with twenty-two destitute children. The ship spent a month in Lisbon where Whitefield got another view of Popery. He declared he witnessed "even more ridiculous fooperies than ever disgraced the pagan theology."

Whitefield and his orphans reached Charleston, South Carolina, in May, 1754. Eight days after depositing the orphans at Bethesda, he sailed for New York. He had a great reception and preached for a week. He travelled through New Jersey, preaching at Neward, New Brunswick, and Trent Town on his way to Philadelphia. There he preached in the New Building that he called "The Academy." In September he received the M.A. degree from the College of New Jersey. By October 13 he was back in Boston. At Old North Church at 7 a.m. he preached to 3,000. The number soon rose to 4,000. He preached in four other Meeting Houses—they were so full he had to be helped into the pulpit through the windows. He travelled on to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He set out on a
sixteen hundred mile journey by horseback, determined to preach all along the way back to Georgia. He preached at Newbury, York, Kittery, Rowley, Byfield, Ipswich, and Cape Ann on his way back to Boston. He made his way through Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. By Christmas, 1754 he had reached Maryland. In Virginia in January, 1755, he received a great reception. Samuel Davies' first church had been the result of the reading of Whitefield's sermons. Now he found seven churches. There were 300 communicants and forty slaves had been baptized. Whitefield wrote Charles Wesley that "Scenes of wonder have opened all the way."

On February 26, 1755 he reached Bethesda. After a short visit he went to Charleston to preach before embarking for England. He sailed for England on March 27, 1755. He could not know that it would be some eight years before he would return to America. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War would keep him in England.

Whitefield reached England on May 5, 1755. After a month of successful preaching in London he left for a tour of western England, visiting Gloucester and Bristol. On August 9 at Norwich the tabernacle built for James Wheatley was reopened for him to preach to great crowds.

He returned to London on August 20 to resume his usual winter preaching. In March, 1756, he began his spring campaign in Bristol where he had to face organized rioting during his services. He returned to London in June but soon set out on another tour that took him back to Bristol, to Bath, Westbury, Gloucester, Frodsham, Frome, Warminster, and Portsmouth. On August 20 he began his eighth visit to Edinburgh. For three weeks he preached twice daily.

On October 27 he returned to London. The high point of the fall was the opening of Tottenham Court Road Chapel on November 7, 1756. It was erected in an open field on the edge of London. From the beginning it was filled with both rich and poor. By 1758 twelve almshouses and a chapel-house had been added. The Chapel was enlarged to seat 5,000. It was the largest Non-Conformist church in the world.

On May 11, 1757, Whitefield began his ninth visit to Scotland in Edinburgh. At the end of June he set out for Ireland. On July 3-4 he faced terrible persecution from the Papists. In the midst of a sermon in the open all at once stones began coming from every quarter. Soon he was covered with blood. His beaver hat was knocked off. One large stone that hit near one temple left a scar for the rest of his life. He escaped to a nearby house that reluctantly received him. A carpenter tried to get him to disguise himself in a wig and coat but he soon put them off, feeling ashamed. A group of Methodists rescued him in a coach.

The persecution was not wasted. That day in the audience was a man named John Edwards who was smitten in heart and converted. He became a powerful itinerant preacher travelling over England, Scotland and Ireland. Once he escaped a mob by being let down from a window in a basket. He preached his way back to London which he reached by November 26. In spite of poor health he preached regularly to thousands throughout the winter.

In May, 1758, he set out again on a tour of England and Wales. On August 4 he arrived at Edinburgh for his tenth visit. In 1758 he had to cut his preaching
to once a day and three times on Sunday because of declining health. He returned to London on October 28.

On June 30, 1759 he arrived in Edinburgh for his eleventh visit. In 1759 he had to give up horseback riding for a one-horse chaise because of his health. Before the year was out he exchanged this for a four-wheeled carriage so that he could read as he travelled the bad roads. In Scotland, a Miss Hunter tried to give him her entire estate of money and lands worth seven thousand pounds, but Whitefield would not let her give it to him or to the Orphan House. He felt it not wise for a single lady to give away all she had.

In March of 1760 Whitefield was busy collecting aid for sufferers in Brandenburg. On the fast day of March 14 he collected 400 pounds. He spent June in Wales preaching.

In July, 1760, he was cruelly and cruelly burlesqued in the drama, "The Minor." The author, Samuel Foote, was a well-born Oxford graduate, who failed in marriage and law. He turned playwright and actor and achieved success with merciless caricature. The Methodists were made the butt of his wit. Whitefield was Dr. Squintum who converts Mrs. Cole, the outrageous bawd and procuress who continues her occupation after being justified by faith. The play first appeared on the stage of the playhouse owned by David Garrick, England's favorite and most popular actor. Lady Huntingdon protested strongly against the play to the Duke of Devonshire who was Lord Chamberlain and also to David Garrick, in an effort to have the license revoked and the play suppressed. Garrick refused—the play was making too much money.

In another play of the 1760's The Register-Office, Whitefield was "Mr. Watchlight" who converted the reprobate, Mrs. Snarewell and became the beneficiary in her will.

Tobias Smollett accused Whitefield and the Methodists of seducing weak minds with delusions of superstition in his History and in his novel, Humphry Clinker.

Samuel Johnson also gave unflattering estimates of Whitefield who "vociferated and made an impression.

Horace Walpole regarded Whitefield as a pied piper. He considered him a fanatic and urged the preachers to fight and ridicule the Methodists.

The Methodists, a burlesque poem, makes Whitefield an instrument of Satan.

Hogarth in one of his prints represented Whitefield as "Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism." In another print he is "Enthusiasm Delineated."

In Richard Graves' The Spiritual Quixote, Whitefield is Geoffrey Wildgoose.

The London Magazine and The Gentleman's Magazine both printed defenses and attacks on Whitefield.

In February, 1761, Whitefield collected some six hundred pounds to aid the victims of the fire in Boston. He also collected money to help replace the library of Harvard and contributed a set of his Journals.
By the end of April, 1761, Whitefield was a semi-invalid. By November he visited Edinburgh but was not able to preach.

In June, 1762 he went to Holland hoping to recover his health. In August he was able to attend a conference held by John Wesley at Leeds. In September he began his twelfth preaching visit in Glasgow and Edinburgh. He returned to London on October 15.

On March 19, 1763, he arrived in Edinburgh for his thirteenth preaching visit to Scotland, preaching frequently in spite of his bad health.

On June 4, 1763 Whitefield embarked from Greenock on the "Fanny" for his sixth visit to America, a visit that lasted two years.

WHITEFIELD'S SIXTH VISIT TO AMERICA

When Whitefield arrived in America his health had improved enough for him to resume his preaching tours. In September, 1763, he was preaching in Virginia. He spent two months in Philadelphia with friends. He spent four days at the College of New Jersey and two at Elizabeth Tower, preaching with his old vigor. He preached again in New York. By February 20, 1764 he was in Boston where he received public thanks from the city of Boston for the charitable collection to relieve sufferers from the fire. For seven weeks he preached twice a week in and around Boston. The reception was greater than ever. He collected money for Wheelock's Indian School at Lebanon. When fire destroyed the library at Harvard he wrote back to England urging friends to send books and money for a new library. He preached with great effectiveness in Concord, Portsmouth and Newbury. When he announced he was heading south the people of Boston raised such a cry for him to stay that he ministered in the city for eight more weeks, lecturing every morning at 6 o'clock.

By September, 1764 he was back in Philadelphia after heartbreaking farewells in both Boston and New York. In Philadelphia he delivered the Commencement sermon at the College of Philadelphia. He wrote to John Wesley that he had scarce begun to begin in America and that a hundred itinerants were needed. He begged Wesley to send any one that he could.

He finally reached Bethesda where he began making new plans for a college.

In December, 1764 he approached Governor James Wright in Savannah on the matter of making a college of Bethesda. He received favorable action from both houses of the Georgia Assembly.

Whitefield went on another preaching tour through Charleston, South Carolina, and on to Virginia, Maryland and on to Philadelphia. On June 9, 1765 he embarked from New York for England.

WHITEFIELD'S LAST WORK IN ENGLAND

Whitefield landed in England on June 9, 1765. One of his preaching tours took him to Bath where he opened Lady Huntingdon's Chapel. By October 26 he was back in London to spend the rest of the year.

In January 1767 he was called on to heal a breach in Wesley's Society in London. He preached as he was able and spent much time writing letters and
revising his journals. He took Cornelius Winter to be his assistant and gave him a place in his home, in hopes of training him to carry on the work. It proved a happy arrangement and Winter developed into a powerful preacher.

On March 4 he enjoyed fellowship with Wesley at a dinner in the home of a friend. On March 20 he was in Brighton to reopen Lady Huntingdon's Chapel. By June he was back in London. August 20-21 he met in a conference with the ministers of John Wesley. In September he began another preaching tour. On October 28 he preached to more than six thousand at Moorfields Tabernacle with as much power as ever.

Early in 1768 he defended a Methodist student who had been expelled from Oxford for nothing but Methodism. He busied himself with collecting and editing his letters and with further revisions of his Journals.

In June, 1768 he paid his last visit to Scotland where he was tremendously popular.

Upon his return to London he found his wife very ill. She passed away on August 9, 1768. Whitefield, himself, preached her funeral, paying tribute to her courage and faithfulness. He referred to her as his "right hand."

On August 24 he was in Wales to open Lady Huntingdon's college for the training of Calvinistic Methodists at Trevecca.

On his return to London his health continued to fail. His last winter in England was spent in London. When he was able he preached at the Moorfields Tabernacle and at Trottenham Court Road Chapel. He met frequently with John and Charles Wesley. Charles Wesley in a letter to his wife described their last dinner together as "a feast of love." A Mr. Adams and Howell Harris were also there. Mrs. Hermitage was hostess for the dinner at the Chapel.

On his last Sunday morning in England, Whitefield preached in the Methodist Tabernacle at Gravesend. In the afternoon he preached in the Market Place. His text was John 12:32 "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

On Monday, September 4, 1769 he left England for the last time to make his thirteenth and last voyage across the Atlantic.

WHITEFIELD'S SEVENTH AND LAST VISIT TO AMERICA

On November 30, 1769, arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, on board the "Friendship." On January 28, 1770 he entertained Governor Wright and the Savannah officials at Bethesda. In May he left Bethesda for the last time, travelling to Philadelphia. In June he began a preaching tour that covered 150 miles. June 23 he was in New York. On August 3 he arrived at New Port, Rhode Island and began a successful preaching tour of New England that lasted two months. He was never more popular nor more powerful. It was a kind of "Indian Summer" of his itinerary ministry. At Sharon he preached on "Ye Must Be Born Again." The audience was filled with emotion. An old ship-builder declared that under the usual sermon he could build a whole ship but under Mr. Whitefield he could not add a single plank. He preached in Providence, Attleborough, Wrentham, Malden, and for ten days in Boston. He went to Medford, Charlestown and Cambridge and then back to Boston. He preached in Roxbury Plain, Milton, Roxbury, and back to Boston. He went to Salem, North Head, back to Salem, on to Cape Ann, Ipswich
and Newbury Port. He was ill when he reached Portsmouth but he preached for
two days. He went to York and back to Portsmouth.

Whitefield preached his last sermon in the open air at Exeter on
September 29, 1770. He was on his way to Boston but the people of Exeter
begged him to preach. A friend remarked "you are more fit to go to bed than
to preach." He replied, "Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of it.
If I have not yet finished my course, let me go and speak for Thee once more
in the fields, seal Thy Truth, and come home and die!" He took for his text,
"Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith." He spoke for two hours.
After the sermon he dined with Captain Gillman and started by boat for Newbury
Port. On arrival he was too weak to leave the boat and had to be helped to
the parsonage of Old South Church. Toward evening he revived and after supper
when a great crowd gathered around the parsonage he declared he was tired and
had to go to bed, but he took a candle and began speaking to the crowd. Soon
he was preaching, pleading, exhorting. He preached till the candle burned out.

At two o'clock in the morning he was overcome by a violent attack of
asthma. He passed away at six o'clock, Sunday morning, September 30, 1770.

Word spread rapidly throughout New England. A young sailmaker of
Portsmouth, named Benjamin Randall, who had hated and reviled Whitefield, was
so shaken by the news that he heard an inner voice, "Whitefield is dead!
Whitefield is in heaven and I am on the road to hell!" Randall surrendered to
the Lord and later became the founder of the Free-Will Baptist Church.

On Tuesday, October 2, 1770, Whitefield was buried beneath the pulpit of
the First Presbyterian Church of Newbury Port, best known as Old South Church,
which Whitefield had had a part in founding. His friend, Jonathan Parsons
was the pastor. Some six thousand people crowded about the church. The hymns
could not be sung because of the crying and sobbing. The ships in the harbor
hung their flags at half-mast and their guns fired a salute.

In Georgia the Governor and the Council led the procession to a
Memorial Sermon.

In London in the Tabernacle and the Chapel John Wesley delivered eloquent
tributes to great multitudes.

The Quaker, John Greenleaf Whittier, penned a tribute:

"So the flood of emotion deep and strong
Troubled the land as it went along,
And left a result of holier lives,
Tenderer mothers, worthier wives.
The husband and father whose children fled
And sad wife wept when his drunken tread
Frightened peace from his roof tree's shade,
And a rock of offence his hearthstone made,
In a strength that was not his own, began
To rise from the brute's to the plane of man.
Old friends embraced, long held apart
By evil counsel and pride of heart;
And penitence saw through misty tears
In the bow of hope on its cloud of fears,
The promise of Heaven's eternal years,—
The peace of God for the world's annoy,—
Beauty for ashes, and oil of joy.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON WHITEFIELD

George Whitefield was one of the great preachers of all times—perhaps the greatest of revivalists. He must have had one of the greatest speaking voices that the world has ever known. On one occasion in Scotland he was said to have preached to almost 100,000 people at one time and that after an hour and a half 10,000 had been converted. Often his audiences were estimated at twenty-five thousand. Benjamin Franklin declared that his voice had perfect modulation and emphasis and that his actions were perfectly fitted to his voice—the effect was that of "an excellent piece of music." One contemporary said his voice resembled "an organ, a flute, a harp, all in one." David Garrick, the most noted actor of the day, said that Whitefield could melt an audience and move even the hardest of men to tears simply by the way he pronounced the word, "Mesopotamia." He went on to say that he would freely give a hundred guineas if he could just once on the stage pronounce "0." like Whitefield often did in his preaching.

Whitefield did not pretend to be a scholar but he knew his Bible. Sometimes his interpretations were peculiarly his own. He preached without notes but he spent a great deal of time carefully preparing his sermons. He frequently wept as he preached. He used the language of the people and filled his sermons with homely illustrations and with many personal references. He was very dramatic and held his audiences spell-bound.

During his ministry he preached over 18,000 times—an average of over 500 sermons a year—ten a week.

Whitefield was not a theologian and did not found a school of theology. He took great and continuing interest in the Calvinistic Methodists but his main interest was not in forming a Society. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church would continue and he left behind many ministers who under his influence had felt a call to preach.

Many feel that there was a great contradiction between the theology he held and his personal faith. He believed and preached that the Bible was the authority and gave specific directions for all circumstances. God was a stern judge and intervened personally and directly in the affairs of individuals. Jesus was tender, loving and merciful. He held to a Calvinistic theology that included predestination, election, total depravity and limited atonement. No man could come to God unless God called him. But he preached the new birth and entreated all men to come. If they came it was a sufficient sign that God had called. He preached and exhorted as if all men were free to come. He denied that good works had any worth and yet insisted that good works were a necessary sign of the new birth. God kept a careful and complete record and his books would be open at the judgment.

Much of the spirit of the times was against Calvinism. Many of Whitefield's followers would find their way into Wesleyan Arminian Methodism. Some were
drawn to the Dissenting bodies as revival spread among them too. Many stayed in or were drawn to the Evangelical Revival in the Established Church where they became a part of Low Church Anglicanism. Whitefield remained the hero of revivalists and offered the model of converted bearing the good fruit of charitable works. This was especially true in the Second Great Awakening that followed the Revolutionary War.

Perhaps Whitefield's heart was best revealed in a sermon preached from the balcony of the court house in Philadelphia when he said,

Father Abraham, whom have you in heaven? Any Episcopalians? No! Any Presbyterians? No! Have you any Independents or Seceders? No! Have you any Methodists? No! No! No! Whom have you there? We don't know those names here! All who are here are Christians.

In John Wesley's final tribute

Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we read or heard of anyone who has been the blessed instrument of bringing so many sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?

Whittier on visiting the "Whitefield Church" in Newburyport wrote:

He erred: shall we count His gifts as naught?
Was the work of God in him unwrought?
The servant may through his deafness err,
And blind may be God's messenger;
But the errand is sure they go upon,--
The word is spoken, the deed is done.
Was the Hebrew Temple less fair and good
That Solomon bowed to gods of wood?