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GEORGE WHITEFIELD AND THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

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The intimacy of George Whitefield with the founders of the College of New Jersey, his material aid during the anxious years of its infancy and the active interest he continued to take in its welfare have been scarcely mentioned by Princeton historians. This is an effort to supply the omission temporarily. A complete account of Whitefield's relation with the College is not possible until certain Scotch and English records are obtained. I have used chiefly Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, London, 1876; Gillies' *Memoirs of Whitefield*, Hartford, 1845; Belcher's *Biography of Whitefield*, New York, n. d., and *Whitefield's Works*, London, 1771.

On May 7, 1738, Whitefield landed at Savannah on the first of his seven visits to America. He was then in his twenty-fourth year. Admitted to holy orders in June, 1736, he received his B.A. at Oxford in July, and it was his intention to remain there for some years to finish his studies and do what good he might in that university town. But letters from his friends the Wesleys, who were in America, fired his soul with missionary zeal, and when Charles Wesley returned to England in December 1736 to procure helpers, and was followed in a few days by a letter from John Wesley to Whitefield directly suggesting mission work in

Georgia, the young clergyman decided, in spite of bright prospects at home, to accept what he believed to be a divine call. He desired to set out for his new field at once, but various matters delayed his departure until January, 1738, and even then the ship so loitered on the way that it was March 7 before Gibraltar was left behind and the voyage across the Atlantic to Savannah fairly begun. Whitefield's stay in Georgia lasted but a little more than three months. He was pleasantly surprised in the country, for he wrote home in the only letter preserved of that first visit, "America is not so horrid a place as it is represented to be." He left for England in August "to receive priest's orders and to make a beginning towards laying a foundation to the Orphan-house."*

On October 30, 1739, he landed again in America, at "Lewistown, 150 miles from Philadelphia." It was his intention to buy provisions at Philadelphia for the colony in Georgia, and to preach his way down to Savannah. He reached Philadelphia November 2, and immediately began evangelistic work. His journal for Saturday November 10 contains the first reference that connects his name with Princeton. On his return home from service he "was much comforted by the coming of Mr. Tennent, an old gray-headed disciple." This was the father of the famous brothers William and Gilbert,

*Gillies, 32.

the latter of whom became Whitefield's warmest American friend. Two days later he started for New York, stopping at Burlington, Trenton and New Brunswick. "Here we were much refreshed with the company of Mr. Gilbert Tennent, an eminent dissenting minister about 40 years of age, son of that good man who came to see me on Saturday at Philadelphia." At New Brunswick Whitefield preached in Gilbert Tennent's meeting-house, "for there is no place set apart for the worship of the Church of England." The next day at New York he listened to Tennent, and writes in his journal that he "never before heard such a searching sermon." On the 15th Whitefield faced his first New York audience. The Episcopal authorities had refused him the use of their pulpit; he therefore spoke "in the reverend and worthy Mr. Pemberton's meeting-house."* Seven years later this "Mr. Pemberton" became one of the first trustees of the College of New Jersey. The friendship that sprang up between Pemberton and Whitefield grew to be very strong, and on the latter's death in 1770, Dr. Pemberton preached a memorial sermon in his honor.

On the following Monday, November 19, at five in the morning, Whitefield started on his journey back to Philadelphia. At Elizabeth he met Princeton's future first president, dining "with Mr. Dickinson, a worthy dissenting minister, who had sent a letter of invitation to New York and offered me the use of his meeting-house." On subsequent visits to Elizabeth, Whitefield seems to have lodged with Samuel Woodruff, whose "house was the minister's house,"† and who in 1749 became a trustee of the College of New Jersey. Whitefield preached in Dickinson's meeting-house at noon,

*In Wall street, and at that time the only Presbyterian church in New York. Belcher, 118.

†Hatfield. History of Elizabeth. N. Y. 1868, 582.

and the next day again occupied Gilbert Tennent's pulpit at New Brunswick. On Wednesday November 21 he preached at Maidenhead and at Trenton, starting the next morning for Neshaminy, "where old Mr. Tennent lives and keeps an academy," and where he was to preach. "After our exercises were over we went to old Mr. Tennent, who entertained us like one of the ancient patriarchs." Then follows the well-known description of the Log College. Referring to his experience at Neshaminy, Whitefield subsequently makes this interesting remark: "At Neshaminy I believe there were nearly a thousand horses. The people, however, did not sit upon them to hear the sermon as in England, but tied them to the hedges; and thereby much disorder was prevented."

On his way south Whitefield met at Wilmington another future Princeton trustee. He writes that he "spent the evening in sweet conversation with Mr. William Tennent, brother to Mr. Gilbert Tennent." His new friend accompanied him to Whiteclay Creek, where at noon on Sunday December 2 he preached on invitation of the pastor Charles Tennent, a younger brother of Gilbert and William, to "upwards of ten thousand people. . . there were several hundreds of horses." Throughout his career the size of Whitefield's audiences seems to have been equalled only by the remarkable results of his efforts. It is hard to believe that he was an accurate judge of numbers.

With Whitefield's doings in Georgia, his wordy war with the rector of St. Philips, Charleston, and his curious and unlucky epistolary courtship of a Miss Delamotte we have here nothing to do, except to notice that he found time to open a correspondence with the Tennents and Dr. Pemberton.

In April 1740 he sailed north and landed on the 13th at Newcastle, where he

no sooner left the vessel than he was in a pulpit. His friend William Seward went over to Whiteclay Creek after the service to tell Charles Tennent that Whitefield would preach again that afternoon. Whereupon pastor and people closed their meeting-house and rode at full gallop to Newcastle, arriving in time to hear the sermon. Thence Whitefield proceeded to Philadelphia, where he was assisted in his work by Gilbert Tennent. The latter entered into the spirit and style of Whitefield's work more fully than any other American. Later in 1740 he went to Boston as Whitefield's successor, and in 1743 he formed a new church at Philadelphia of Whitefield's converts. The building erected there for Tennent's use became afterwards the seat of the University of Pennsylvania's predecessor.

Whitefield on April 23 revisited Newshaminy, and two days after preached at Amwell where Gilbert Tennent and three other ministers were waiting for him. On the 26th he reached New Brunswick and spent a memorable Sunday there with the faithful Gilbert Tennent's congregation. The next day, April 28, he was at Woodbridge, "dining at the dissenting minister's house." This was the Rev. John Pierson,* subsequently one of Princeton's first trustees. The same day he preached again for Jonathan Dickinson at Elizabeth, and on May 1 he paid a flying visit of a few hours to Long Island, returning in the evening to preach in New York for Ebenezer Pemberton. On the 5th he went to Freehold, meeting Gilbert and William Tennent on the way, and after a week of itinerant preaching he reached Nottingham May 13 with William Tennent "and Mr. Blair." The day following, after preaching at Nottingham to "near twelve thousand," he says he "revived and was strengthened to go with Messrs. Blair, Tennent and some

*Hatfield, 341.

other friends to Mr. Blair's house, twenty miles from Nottingham." Samuel Blair, whose hospitality Whitefield enjoyed that night, became one of the first trustees in Governor Belcher's charter. He had just been installed as pastor at Fagg's Manor, and there Whitefield preached the next morning to an audience as large as that at Nottingham. The occasion must have been well remembered by young Blair; for, says Whitefield, "Some of the people were as pale as death, others were wringing their hands, others lying on the ground, others sinking into the arms of their friends." Whitefield left directly after this for the south.

In the following September he went by boat to New England, landing at Newport, R. I., on the 14th. The Rev. Aaron Burr was at this time in Rhode Island for his health. Whether he met Whitefield during the three days the latter was in Newport I have been unable to ascertain. However, when Whitefield went to Boston on the 18th Burr followed the next day. In Boston he visited Whitefield at least once, and heard him preach several times.*

Governor Belcher had heard that Whitefield was coming to Boston, and had sent his son with a party of friends to escort him into town. There he was welcomed by almost all, says Tyerman, except a famous doctor of divinity, who met him in the streets and said, "I am sorry to see *you* here." "So is the devil" was the reply. The morning after his arrival Whitefield made haste to return the Governor's courtesy by calling on him. "The Governor received me with the utmost respect, and desired to see me as often as I could." Governor Belcher was at this time sixty-eight years old, but his friendship for the young clergyman of twenty-six became as intimate as if they had been equals in rank and years. On

*Stearns. First Church in Newark. Newark, 1853. 159.

the 25th he gave a clerical dinner for Whitefield. "After public worship I went at his Excellency's invitation and dined with him. Most of the ministers of the town were invited with me." Referring to this dinner in 1745 Whitefield said: "He honoured me with great honour, and the clergy paid the nod and obeyed. In many, I perceived it was quite forced; and I think, when at his table, I whispered to some one and said: 'If ever I come again, many of those who now seem extremely civil will turn out my open enemies.'" This prediction was curiously verified. Before dinner the Governor had sent for Whitefield "into his chamber. He wept, wished me good luck in the name of the Lord, and recommended himself, ministers and people to my prayers. Immediately after dinner I prayed for them all, and went in his coach to the end of the town." On the 28th Whitefield "had the honour of a private visit from the Governor." On Sunday October 12 he "dined with the Governor, who came to me after dinner when I was retired and weeping most earnestly desired my prayers." Then he "went with the Governor in his coach to the common where I preached my farewell sermon to near twenty thousand people—a sight I have not seen since I left Blackheath. . . . After sermon the Governor went with me to my lodgings. . . . Took his leave of me in the most affectionate manner and said he would come to take me in his coach to Charlestown ferry the morrow morning." Accordingly the next day Whitefield "took an affectionate leave of many dear friends. Went with the Governor in his coach to Charlestown ferry, where he handed me into the boat, kissed me and with tears bid me farewell." The interest Governor Belcher took in Whitefield of course created some sensation. A letter from Boston dated October 22, 1740, and published in the Charleston *South Carolina Gazette*, says:

"Mr. Whitefield has not a warmer friend anywhere than in the first man among us. Our Governor can call him nothing less than the apostle Paul. He has shown him the highest respect; carried him in his coach from place to place and could not help following him fifty miles out of town."

From Boston Whitefield went to Concord and on the 14th to Sudbury and Marlborough. "When I came into the meeting-house at Marlborough I turned about and to my surprise saw Governor Belcher there; he was affected, and though it rained and he was much advanced in years, yet he went in company with us as far as Worcester, fifteen miles from Marlborough. . . . We spent the remainder of the day very agreeably with the Governor." On the next day Whitefield writes: "Perceived Governor Belcher to be more affectionate than ever. After morning prayer, he took me by myself and exhorted me to go on in stirring up the ministers; 'for' said he, 'reform must begin at the house of God.' As we were going to meeting he said, 'Mr. Whitefield, do not spare rulers any more than ministers; no, not the chief of them.' . . . After the sermon the Governor remarked, '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.' Dinner being ended, with tears in his eyes he kissed me and took leave of me." Whitefield then remarks: "I have observed that I have had greater power than ordinary whenever the Governor has been at public worship."

On the 17th Whitefield reached Northampton, where Jonathan Edwards was pastor. Of Edwards, with whose sermons he was already acquainted, he says: "Mr. Edwards is a solid, excellent Christian but at present weak in body." Whitefield preached several times for Edwards

during the next two days, and the Princeton president to be was completely overcome. On Sunday October 19 "good Mr. Edwards wept during the whole time of service." Whitefield declares that he "felt wonderful satisfaction in being" at Edwards' house. Leaving Northampton, Whitefield made his way back to New York, where he spent four days preaching for Dr. Pemberton, and then started for Philadelphia. On his way he stopped among other places at Newark to preach for Aaron Burr.* At Philadelphia he wrote to Governor Belcher recommending to him his friend Gilbert Tennent, who was going to Boston to carry on the work, and on November 17 he started for his parish at Savannah, where he arrived December 13 after an absence of over four months. It must be noted that all of Whitefield's tours were to the advantage of his charge in Georgia, for he never failed to bring back large contributions to the support of the Orphan House. For instance, the tour just completed netted the remarkable sum of over £700.

In January 1741 Whitefield sailed for England, remaining on that side of the water until August 1744. On October 26 he landed once more on American soil, this time at York, in Maine. Belcher was no longer governor, and the secret coldness that Whitefield had suspected when he met the Boston clergy at the Governor's table in 1740 had turned into enmity, and the next year he spent replying to libellous pamphlets and nursing his health. Strangely enough the opposition was headed by the authorities at Harvard and Yale, where he had preached with good results during his first visit to New England. His letters show that he kept in touch with the Tennents and his other friends in New York and Philadelphia; but nothing of present interest occurred until November 1746, when, in Virginia,

*Stearns, 160.

he preached to the little Presbyterian congregation which Samuel Finley had visited in 1745, and whose pastor Samuel Davies became in 1747. It seems likely that he met Finley about this time. At any rate, in April, 1747, he met Davies, who had just been licensed to preach in four mission churches near Hanover.* He must have heard by this time of the foundation of the College of New Jersey, but I have been unable to find any contemporary reference he may have made to the institution. It is safe to say, however, that when he was in New York and vicinity in the fall of 1747, he took the opportunity to visit his friend Governor Belcher, then just entering on his new duties, for on October 2 Belcher wrote to a friend in England that when he was in New York he had heard Whitefield preach twice and had found him "the same seraphick creature he ever was."† To meet the Governor at this time was to talk of the new college, and when Whitefield sailed for the Bermudas in March 1748, and thence to England in June, he carried with him the resolution to do anything that lay in his power to hasten the realization of the old Governor's cherished plans. So we read in a letter written to his friend Ebenezer Pemberton on November 21, 1748, "I have been endeavoring in Scotland to do all the service I could to the Indian School and the New Jersey college whilst I was there; but I believe nothing will be done to purpose unless you or some other popular minister come over and make an application in person. In all probability a collection might then be recommended by the General Assembly, which sits next May, and large contributions be raised among private persons who wish well to Zion."‡ Governor Belcher had already that year been

*Whitefield 2.92 and Sprague, *Annals of the Amer. Pulpit*, N. Y. 1858, 3140.

†N. J. Hist. Soc. Coll., 5, 211.

‡Whitefield 2, 206.

writing to relatives in England about the college,* and seven months later, on July 10, 1749, Whitefield asks Pemberton, "Is there no prospect of your coming over? Your Mr. Tennent might do much for New Jersey college; but I have told you my mind in a former letter."† It remained for outsiders to do what the Trustees would not or could not do at that time.

In the minutes of the board of trustees, dated at New Brunswick September 27, 1749, occurs this memorandum: "Coll. Williams and Mr. Jeremiah Allen, designing to make a voyage to Great Britain and having offered their kind services in favour of the College, the trustees very thankfully accept them and desire these gentlemen to exert themselves in our favour assuring them that the Trustees will be very ready to make their acknowledgements proportionable to their success." Early in 1750 Col. Williams and Mr. Allen arrived in England with letters of introduction from Governor Belcher and Aaron Burr, now president of the college. Among these letters was one from Governor Belcher to the Countess of Huntingdon, who was the patroness of Whitefield. The latter immediately introduced the visitors to the Countess and to other influential friends. The Countess was interested at once. "A statement of the plan and enlargement of the College was drawn up and several of the dissenting ministers in London promised their assistance. By the advice of Lady Huntingdon their statement was printed together with a recommendation of the plan, subscribed by her ladyship, Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Whitefield and others. Being desirous of serving the interests of this rising institution . . . her ladyship was very active in collecting considerable sums amongst her friends and acquaint-

ances, and corresponded with many persons of eminence in England and Scotland to whom she communicated the mission of Mr. Allen and Col. Williams. Mr. Whitefield likewise lost no opportunity of recommending the institution to the attention of those who he thought could effectually further the objects it had in view. He preached several sermons in its behalf; and in the course of a few months considerable sums were collected, which were immediately transmitted to America."* On April 27, 1750, Whitefield wrote to the Governor: "I am glad your Excellency hath been honoured by Providence to put New Jersey College on a footing that it may be a nursery for future labourers. I have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Allen and Colonel Williams, and have introduced them to such of my friends as I believe under God may serve the interests in which they are engaged. . . . By the Divine blessing I hope that something considerable will be done in England and Scotland for New Jersey College."† To a friend he writes the next day: "There is a glorious plan set on foot by the great and good for a college in the New Jerseys; the particulars will ere long be published. I wish it much prosperity."‡ The Rev. Mr. McCulloch of Cambuslang, Scotland, received the following from Whitefield dated May 14, 1750: "I have desired to write you a long letter for a considerable time but was so hurried when at London that I could not be so explicit as the affair I wanted to write about necessarily required. It is concerning the Presbyterian College in the New Jerseys; the importance and

**Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*. London 1840, 1. 140. These memoirs were compiled by a member of her family chiefly from private records which of course I have had no opportunity to examine. I believe, however, that no records exist here at least of any funds received from England directly through her.

†Whitefield 2. 344.

‡Ibid. 345.

*N. J. Hist. Soc. Coll. 5. 235.

†Whitefield 2. 266.

extensive usefulness of which I suppose you have long since been apprized of. Mr. Allen, a friend of Governor Belcher, is come over with a commission to negotiate this matter; he hath brought with him a letter which Mr. Pemberton sent to you some months past. This letter hath been shown to Doctor Doddridge and several of the London ministers, who all approve of the thing and promise their assistance. Last week I preached at Northampton, and conversed with Doctor Doddridge concerning it. The scheme that was then judged most practicable was this: 'That Mr. Pemberton's letter should be printed and a recommendation of the affair subscribed by Doctor Doddridge and others be annexed; that a subscription and collections should be then set on foot in England and afterwards that Mr. Allen should go on to Scotland.' I think it is an affair that requires dispatch. Governor Belcher is old, but a most hearty man for promoting God's glory and the good of mankind. He looks upon the College as his own daughter and will do all he can to endow her with proper privileges. The present President, Mr. Burr, and most of the Trustees I am well acquainted with. They are friends to vital piety and I trust this work of the Lord will prosper in their hands. The spreading of the Gospel in Maryland and Virginia in a great measure depends upon it and therefore I wish them much success in the name of the Lord. But more of this when we meet.*

Meanwhile the trustees had received no reports of the work Messrs. Allen and Williams were doing in England, for in their minutes dated at Newark September 26, 1750, is the following: "There are as yet no accounts of the success of those gentlemen who offer'd us their good offices in Great Britain." A partial explanation is here given. "Unhappily for

the scheme of the New Jersey College Mr. Allen who came over on purpose to negotiate it was smitten by the fatal infection which during the summer of this year was so prevalent at the Old Bailey, and died about two months after his arrival in England."† Whitefield, however, wrote on October 13, 1750, to Mr. T(ennent?) "I am glad that New Jersey College succeeds. I had lately a letter from Governor Belcher which I suppose you have seen. Colonel Williams proposes that Mr. Pemberton shall come over with one of the Indians; I wish he may."‡ And the same date to Governor Belcher: "I had the favour of your Excellency's letter and took the liberty of communicating it to the good Lady Huntingdon. . . Her Ladyship will be very glad to open a correspondence with your Excellency; and seems to speak of New Jersey College with great satisfaction. I rejoice to hear that it is in a prosperous situation. If Mr. Pemberton or Mr. Burr can be prevailed to come over I am persuaded liberal contributions will be raised both in England and Scotland. All was ready, if dear Mr. Allen had not been taken off by death."‡

Elenezer Pemberton was chosen to go to Great Britain that autumn; but his congregation objected and he declined. Governor Belcher deplores this decision in a letter [January 18, 1751] to Colonel Brattle of Massachusetts, for he declares that friends in Scotland were expecting some representative of the College to visit them.§ To Whitefield, who evidently had not heard of Dr. Pemberton's proposed trip, and seems to have become impatient with what he doubtless considered lack of energy on the part of the trustees, Governor Belcher wrote on June 23, 1752: "And now, Sir, let me thank you once

*Life and Times 1. 141.

†Whitefield 2. 383.

‡Whitefield 2. 384.

§N. J. Hist. Soc. Collections, 5, 285.

*Whitefield 2. 349.

more for your kind and generous concern for the welfare of the infant College in this province, which I assure you creeps along with great difficulty. The Trustees chose Mr. Pemberton the last fall to take a voyage to Great Britain in favour of the College, but when the thing came before his church and congregation they would by no means be prevailed upon to let him go.* In his speech to the trustees at commencement, September, 1752, the governor referred to the lost opportunity; and Whitefield, replying in December to his letter, says: "I am sorry, very sorry, that not one of his [Christ's] ministers could venture over the Atlantick for New Jersey College. Two general collections have lately been made upon other occasions in Scotland. What a pity, when all circumstances concurred, that such a favourable opportunity should have been lost! I can only lament that which I did all I could to prevent."† He was soon gladdened, however, by the news that his old friend Gilbert Tennent was coming over with Samuel Davies. To a friend in America he writes in June 1753: "If they come with their old fire I trust they will be enabled to do wonders."‡ He mentions their intended trip in another letter some days later.§ On Christmas day, 1753, Tennent and Davies arrived in London. Whitefield immediately took up their cause, writing on December 27 to the Marquis of Lothian as follows: "A matter of some importance is the occasion of my troubling your Lordship with another letter. The reverend Mr. Gilbert Tennent of Philadelphia, and the reverend Mr. Davies from Virginia (both eminent ministers of Jesus Christ) are just arrived. They are commissioned to apply for a general collection in Scotland, and to procure private contributions for

the building and maintaining a Presbyterian college in New Jersey province. What I therefore beg of your Lordship is that you would do them the honour of permitting them to wait upon you, and that they may be also introduced to Lord Leven. . . . I shall wait for your Lordship's answer and then apprize them of it."* On the same day he wrote to his friend Dr. Gillies of Glasgow: "Perhaps it may please you to hear that Messrs. Tennent and Davies supped with me last night. . . . I hope they will be introduced soon to the Marquis of Lothian and by him to Lord Leven. I shall help them all I can."† He invited them to make his house their headquarters, an invitation which in prudence they declined on account of Whitefield's uncertain position in the clerical world; but they visited him privately, says Mr. Davies in his journal, and "the kind reception he gave us revived dear Mr. Tennent." In a letter to Governor Belcher, January 11, 1754, Whitefield says: "Was Lady Huntingdon in town they [Tennent and Davies] should have been introduced before now, but at present she is at Bath drinking of the waters of life freely."‡ Two months later Whitefield was again on his way to America. The spring and early summer he spent in the south, but in July he travelled northward and on the 31st he preached at Newark. Without doubt he visited the college and his friend Aaron Burr, and he must have heard with no little joy that two days before his arrival ground had been broken at Princeton and the first corner-stone of a new and magnificent college building laid. His work for the college was not overlooked by the board of trustees. On the 30th of September he writes from Elizabeth to the Countess of Huntingdon: "I am now at Governor

*N. J. Archives, 1, 8, pt. 1, 85.

†Whitefield, 2, 462.

‡Whitefield 3, 16.

§Whitefield 3, 17.

*Whitefield 3, 54.

†Ibid. 55.

‡Ibid. 58.

Belcher's. . . Last week was the New Jersey Commencement, at which the President and Trustees were pleased to present me with the degree of A.M.* On this occasion he preached before the Synod. To Dr. Gillies he wrote a month later: "I was exceedingly delighted at New Jersey Commencement. Surely that college is of God. The worthy president, Mr. Burr, intends to correspond with you."† However pleased Whitefield was with the honor done him, he retained in all his publications until 1763 his Oxford bachelor's degree. In that year his friends in England, less modest than he, published without his knowledge a pamphlet on whose title page we read for the first time "George Whitefield, A.M."‡

In October 1754, President Burr accompanied Whitefield to Boston, spending a week with him there.§ That winter Whitefield went south, and in January 1755, while in Virginia, he preached for the Rev. John Todd, a graduate of the College [1749], who, beside his ministerial duties, managed a classical school. Among his pupils was a young Virginian, James Caldwell, who was studying to enter Princeton. Eight years later, when pastor of the Presbyterian church at Elizabeth, Caldwell had the pleasure of Mr. Whitefield's presence in his pulpit. Whitefield must have noticed with some degree of personal satisfaction the number of Princeton graduates he met among the younger generation of ministers outside of New England.

As early as 1750 Governor Belcher had written to friends in Great Britain about the possibility of having the degree of D.D. given to President Burr by some university abroad,|| but without result. Whitefield on his return to England in

1755 gave the matter his attention. To the Marquis of Lothian, accordingly, he wrote on May 14, 1755: "Being but lately arrived in my native country I take the first opportunity of returning your Lordship thanks for your great zeal in promoting the welfare of New Jersey College. Surely it is the purest seminary that I have known. . . I think if the degree of Doctor of Divinity could be procured for Mr. Aaron Burr, their present worthy president, it would still make an addition to the honour of the College. He is a most excellent man; your Lordship will not be offended at my making the motion."* To Dr. Gillies, June 27, 1755, he wrote: "If you remember, I hinted to you something about getting a Doctor's degree for President Burr; since then I wrote to the Marquis of Lothian. His Lordship writes thus, 'The University of Edinburgh desire of me to obtain some account of Mr. Aaron Burr's literature or performances; this I hope you will do, and a diploma will be immediately transmitted.' By this post I shall write what I know of the President, but I would have you and Mr. E. — write also immediately to the Marquis. Surely he is the most worthy, ingenious, diligent and truly Christian President of his age, now in the world. He hath published something lately to animate our people against the common enemy. I have it at London, and hope you have it with you. If so, be pleased to transmit it to the Marquis. I shall mention it, and so do you to his Lordship."† The Marquis thus regarded Whitefield's suggestion favorably. Replying to him on June 27, 1755, Whitefield, after thanking him for his attention, proceeds: "Never was there a man in the world, that could be more safely recommended as a scholar and a truly Christian minister of the Gospel and a

*Whitefield 3. 103.

†Whitefield, 3. 110.

‡Tyerman 2. 335, 462.

§Phillip, *Life and Times of George Whitefield*, 419.
||N. J. Hist. Soc. Coll. 5. 265.

*Whitefield 3. 119.

†Whitefield 3. 125.

laborious, prudent President of a College than Mr. Aaron Burr. He was educated at Yale College in Connecticut, New England; and for his pregnant abilities and many years well approved piety was unanimously chosen to succeed the Reverend Mr. Dickinson in the care of New Jersey College. It would have delighted your Lordship to have seen how gloriously he filled the chair last year, at the New Jersey commencement. His Latin oration was beautifully eloquent, and was delivered with an unaffected, yet striking energy and pathos. As a preacher, disputant and head of a college he shines in North America; and the present prosperity of the New Jersey College is under God greatly owing to his learning, piety and conduct. The students revere and love him. Your Lordship might have testimonials enough from good Governor Belcher, Mr. Jonathan Edwards, *Cum multis aliis*. And I believe they would all concur in saying that of his age (now upwards of forty) there is not a more accomplished deserving President in the world. As for anything of his in print that can be referred to I cannot say, unless to a little pamphlet lately published in which he hath animated the people against the common enemy and discovered a close attachment to the interest of our rightful sovereign King George. . . . This piece of Mr. Burr's I have at London and I hope it is in Scotland. I just wrote to Mr. Gillies of Glasgow, who, together with Mr. T. E., I suppose will write to your Lordship concerning Mr. Burr. I wish the diploma may be transmitted against the next commencement. It will endear your Lordship more and more to the good people of America.* The pamphlet above referred to was "*A Fast sermon on account of the encroachment of the French, . . . delivered at Newark January 1, 1755.*" It did not in itself

*Whitefield 3. 126.

prove a sufficient warrant for the degree, and the Edinburgh authorities suspended action until further information should be received concerning the New Jersey college president. To the latter Whitefield writes December 9, 1756: "I am sorry you have not your degree. It is ready if testimonials were sent from those who know you. This not being done, it looks as though the character given you on this side the water was not justly founded."* The next year Burr died from the effects of exposure at the funeral of Governor Belcher. Whitefield in a letter dated November 17, 1757, to a friend in America, refers to the death of his two friends as "dark providences,"† and in another letter to a gentleman connected with the college he adds: "I fear the death of the Governor and President will hurt New Jersey College."‡ His fears must have increased at the quickly succeeding news of President Edwards' death, although the only reference I have found in his letters is one made to Dr. Gillies of Glasgow, in August 1758, "I suppose you have heard of the death of Mr. Jonathan Edwards. Happy he!"§

July 1763 found Mr. Whitefield once more in his beloved America. In July he writes from Philadelphia: "I am here yet, left behind, and now about to make my first excursion to New Jersey College,"|| referring of course to Nassau Hall, where he afterwards "had four sweet seasons." One of these "seasons" must have occurred when he preached to the students at five in the morning. It was on this visit that at President Finley's dinner table he made the prediction, "I shall die silent. It has pleased God to enable me to bear so many testimonials for Him during my life that He will re-

*Whitefield 3. 195.

†Ibid. 3. 220.

‡Ibid. 3. 220.

§Ibid. 3. 230.

||Whitefield, 3. 300.

quire none from me when I die." Later he writes: "New Jersey College is a blessed nursery: one of the purest perhaps in the Universe. The worthy President and three tutors are all bent upon making the students both saints and scholars. I was there lately for a week."* To Charles Wesley he wrote: "At New Jersey College we had sweet seasons among the sons of the prophets." Princeton undergraduates were not the only ones favored, however. Forgiving past scores Whitefield assisted in the renewal of Harvard's library which had been destroyed by fire, and at Yale the students were so impressed by his words that when he "was going off in the chaise, the President came to me and said . . . that they were going into the chapel and earnestly entreated me to give them one more quarter of an hour's exhortation." Moreover, he preached that year at the commencement of the College of Philadelphia. On the way thither he attended the Princeton commencement, preaching before an audience which included the governor and trustees. The trustees passed a vote of thanks to him for his sermon and other great services to the college, and during his brief stay he was treated with well deserved honor. In July 1765 he returned to England, and four years elapsed before he set foot again in America. While in England he addressed a memorial to the King in which he prayed that his Orphan House in Georgia might receive a charter "upon the plan of the New Jersey College." In November 1769 he landed at Savannah on his last visit to America. Spending the rest of the winter and the ensuing spring in the south, he came to Philadelphia in May, going on to Albany the next month to attend an Indian congress with Mr. Samuel Kirkland, a young Princeton graduate (1765). Two months of ex-

hausting itinerant work followed. Whitefield seemed to feel that it was his last opportunity, and was rebuked by William Tennent for the joy he expressed at his approaching end. On September 30 at Newburyport he died. Among the many sermons preached on his death was one by his friend of thirty years' standing, the Princeton ex-trustee, Dr. Ebenezer Pemberton.*

* "Heaven the Residence of Saints." Boston, 1771.

THE SEMINARY COMMENCEMENT.

The annual sermon before the Board of Directors of Princeton Seminary was preached in the Miller Chapel on Sunday, May 2, by the Rev. Joseph T. Smith, D.D., LL.D., of Baltimore. The exercises of the eighty-fifth commencement were held in the same place on the following Tuesday, beginning at 10 A. M. The Rev. Dr. Cattell, Vice-President of the Board of Directors, presided in the absence, on account of feeble health, of the Rev. Dr. Gosman. The chapel, all too small for such occasions, was crowded with the large graduating class and their assembled friends. Prayer was offered by the Rev. R. R. Booth, D.D., LL.D., of New York City, and the address to the class was delivered by the Rev. Howard Duffield, D.D., of the same city. The Rev. W. E. Schenck, D.D., having resigned the office of Secretary of the Board of Directors, an office which he had held for the last twenty-seven years, the official announcements were made by his successor, the Rev. Maitland Alexander, of New York City. The following fellowships and prizes were announced: The George S. Green Hebrew fellowship, awarded to Kerr D. Macmillan, of Mount Forest, Ontario; the Alumni New Testament fellowship and Robertson scholarship, to Thomas C. Laughlin, of Barnesville, O., a graduate of Princeton University; the Carter prize in Old Testament

† *Ibid.* 3. 304.