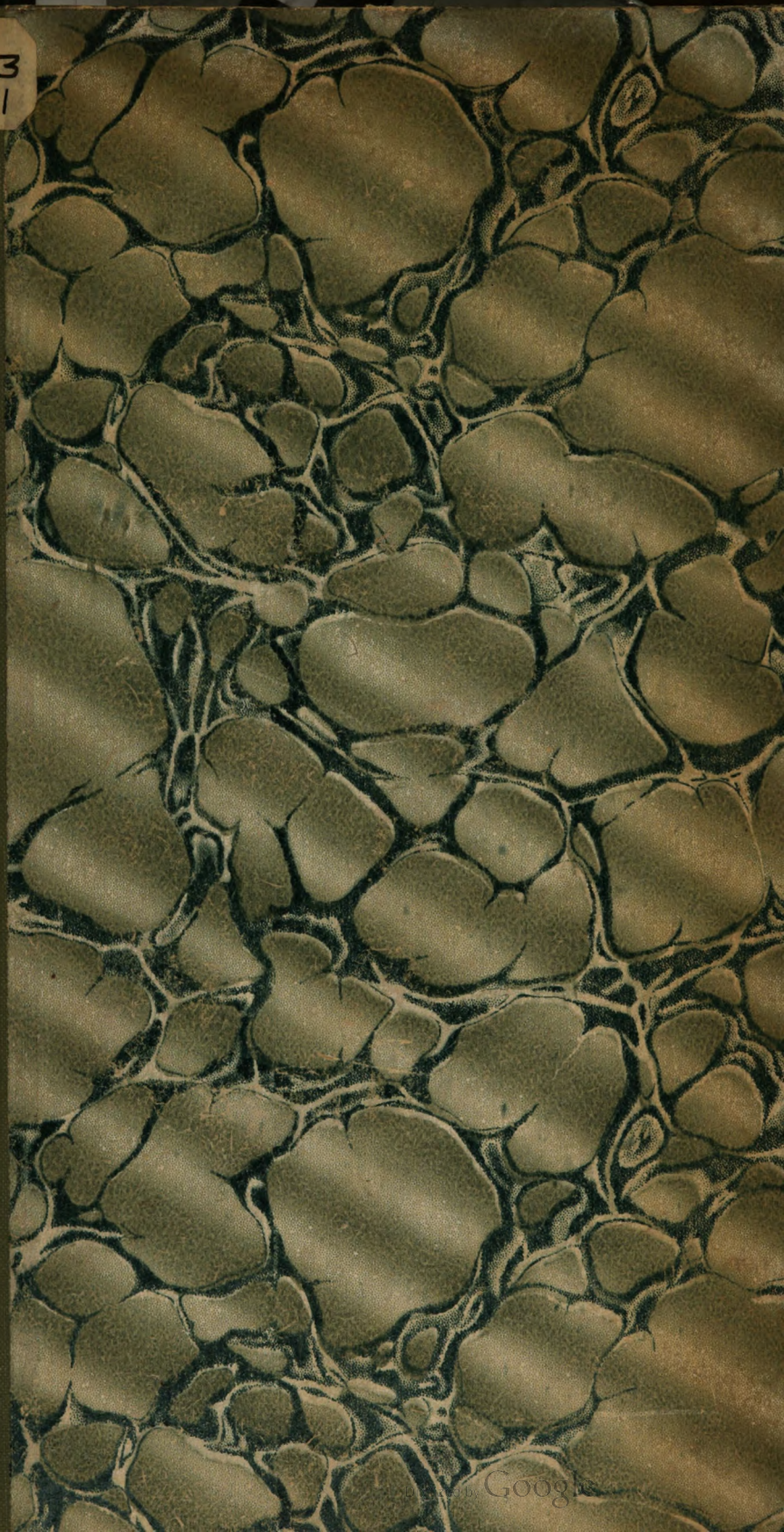


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Centennial Commemoration

OF THE DEATH OF

George Whitefield,

IN THE

OLD SOUTH CHURCH,

NEWBURYPORT, MASS.,

SEPT. 30, 1870.

Commemorative Discourse
COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT NEWBURYPORT, MASS.

IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

ON THE

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE DEATH OF THE

REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

SEPTEMBER 3D, 1870,

BY REV. J. F. STEARNS, D. D.,

FORMERLY PASTOR OF THAT CHURCH, NOW OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY.

NEWBURYPORT:

WILLIAM H. HUSE & CO., PRINTERS, No. 42 STATE STREET
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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

NEWBURYPORT, October 17, 1870.

REV. J. F. STEARNS, D. D.,

Dear Sir:—The undersigned, Committee of Arrangements for the Centennial Commemoration of Whitefield's death, respectfully request of you a copy of your Commemorative Discourse for publication, feeling sure that the life of such a man, portrayed in so vivid a light, cannot fail to do great good.

We are, yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

ISAAC H. BOARDMAN,
HENRY COOK,
J. B. CREASEY,
C. S. DURFEE,
EDWARD GRAVES,
WILLIAM GRAVES,
J. A. HORTON,
W. H. JOHNSON,
E. W. LUNT,
P. G. LUNT,
J. N. PIKE,
G. L. ROGERS,
T. C. SIMPSON.

NEWARK, N. J., November 11, 1870.

HON. I. H. BOARDMAN and others,

Committee of Arrangements:

GENTLEMEN,—I cheerfully comply with the request with which you have honored me, to furnish for the press a copy of my discourse at the Centennial Anniversary of the death of the great English and American preacher, George Whitefield. It has cost me more labor than I anticipated, chiefly from the wealth of materials and the difficulty of selecting and condensing so as to present any thing like a just view of so remarkable a character within the limits of a single discourse. But it has been a labor of love, and with all its imperfections I place the result at your disposal.

Your honored names appended to the request revive in me the memory of scenes long past, of tender and most affecting interest. With my fervent prayers that Heaven's best blessings may ever rest on you and the beloved church and congregation which you represent, I beg leave to subscribe myself, with respect and esteem, your friend and former pastor,

J. F. STEARNS.

COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSE.

There are some movements which may make a wild foam on the surface of the stream, and leave it the same. There are others which turn a current, and it flows on in a new channel over half a continent. There are sounds which stun the ear for a moment and then are silent. There are others which when once uttered echo on forever. The eloquent voice which more than a century ago spoke words of love and power to quivering thousands, is heard still in its effects, and by them, he that uttered it, "being dead yet speaketh."

On Sabbath morning, June 20, 1736, there knelt before the bishop of Gloucester, in the old cathedral town of Gloucester, Gloucestershire, England, to be ordained with others to the Christian ministry, according to the forms of the Church of England, a young Oxford student of thoughtful mien and remarkably prepossessing appearance. He was somewhat above the middle stature, well-proportioned, of a slender form, fair complexion, regular features, small, lively dark blue eyes, in one of which—the effect of measles—was observable a slight squint, not disfiguring, but rather adding to the general expressiveness of his face—and distinguished for the peculiar sweetness of his countenance and the native grace of his manners. His youth, for he was only twenty-one years of age

and had not yet taken his first degree, served to increase the interest, always felt in serious and religious minds, for so sacred a transaction.

He was one of a small, despised but eminently devout and resolute band, who, marking the degeneracy of the times and determined to resist it, had begun, within a few years, to be known at Oxford as *Methodists*, because, as it was said, "they lived by rule and *method*" and were distinguished for their strict habits of life and religious observances—called also by some, by way of derision, "Sacramentarians," "Bible moths," "Bible bigots," the "Holy" or "Godly Club."

This young man, I need not say here to-day, was GEORGE WHITEFIELD. Although so young, he had gone through varied experiences. Left fatherless at a very tender age in the care of his mother, who since her husband's death had been struggling for a maintenance by carrying on the Bell Inn at Gloucester, which had been the support of the family during the father's life, he was exposed in childhood to many evil influences; and though sent to the grammar school in his native town, where for a time he made good proficiency, becoming restless and despairing of ever reaching the university, which had been his early ambition, he left the school, became an assistant in the public house and at length, to use his own expression, "put on his blue apron and sluffers, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and, in a word, became a common and professed drawer." Even then, however, as during his whole early life, he was not without better aspirations. Sinking at times deeply into sin, he was often roused to a keen sense of his guilt and folly, and often resolved, and for a while kept his resolutions, to endeavor after a better life. He was descended from a religious ancestry, his great grandfather and one of his great uncles having been ministers of the Church of England; and from his earliest years, the pulpit and the tavern seem to have mingled strangely and grotesquely in their influence on his forming character. At length a turn was reached unexpectedly, and he went back to school, completed his preparatory studies and entered Pembroke College, Oxford, where he supported himself, as did other poor students of his day, by act-

ing in the capacity of a *servitor*, for which his experience at the inn afforded him some special qualifications.

Before taking this step, while he was yet in the grammar school of St. Mary de Crypt, his religious feelings had undergone a considerable change, and he reformed his own life, and made some reformatations among his dissolute school-fellows. On coming to Oxford, and finding the general character of his fellow-students adverse to all his best aspirations, he withdrew himself, with alarm, from their society. "It was quickly solicited," he says, "to join in excess of riot with several who lay in the same room. But God gave me grace to withstand; and once in particular, it being cold, my limbs were so benumbed by sitting alone in my study, because I would not go out among them, that I could scarce sleep all night. But I soon found the benefit of not yielding; for when they perceived they could not prevail, they let me alone as a singular odd fellow."

It was in the midst of these conflicts, that his attention was turned to the despised Methodists. "They were then, he says, "much talked of at Oxford. I had heard of them and loved them before I came to the university. For above a twelve-month, my soul longed to be acquainted with them, and I was strongly inclined to follow their good example, when I saw them go through a ridiculing crowd to receive the holy Sacrament at St. Marys. At length an opportunity occurred. He made the acquaintance of Charles Wesley, who by degrees introduced him to his brother John and the rest. He became one of them—imbibed their spirit, caught their evangelical fervor, adopted their rules of life, and being much younger than either of the Wesleys came largely under their influence.

At first his inexperience and defective knowledge led him into some serious mistakes. He became first a mystic, then an ascetic. He prayed much and long, lying prostrate on the ground, or kneeling in the cold night air under the trees. He practiced monkish austerities, used unsuitable food, fasted immoderately, neglected his person, dressed meanly, and altogether so lost the balance both of mind and body that he fell

into a severe sickness which well nigh cost him his life. This last by the grace of God proved a salutary discipline. He had before caught what he regarded as a ray of divine light, showing him that true religion does not consist in a round of outward observances, but is "a union of the soul with God or Christ formed within us," from reading that excellent little treatise, Scougal's "Life of God in the soul of man." But now, as he describes his case, "God was pleased to enable me to lay hold on his dear Son by a living *faith*; and by giving me the spirit of adoption to seal me, as I humbly hope, to the day of everlasting redemption. At first, my joys were like a spring-tide and overflowed the banks; go where I would, I could not avoid singing of psalms almost aloud. Afterwards, they became more settled, and blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."

In coming, at so early an age, to receive holy orders, this young candidate had not rashly or thoughtlessly thrust himself forward. Friends, well acquainted with his character, had marked his ripe qualifications and commended him to the bishop. The bishop himself had observed his deportment both in the church and in the works of beneficence to the poor, the sick and the prisoners, and his care for the souls of those around him in which he spent his leisure hours; and sending for him, much to his surprise, and expressing pleasure at seeing him, said, on learning his age, "Notwithstanding I have declared I would not ordain any one under three and twenty, yet I shall think it my duty to ordain you whenever you come for holy orders." He had hitherto felt the deepest aversion to what seemed to him so premature a step. "That saying of the apostle" he said, "not a novice lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil," and that first question of our excellent ordination office—"Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and administration; used even to make me tremble when I thought of entering the ministry." It was with him, as with the youthful Jeremiah, when he replied: Ah Lord God! behold I cannot speak for I

am a child !” Often, in an agony under a sense of his insufficiency, his prayer was “ Lord, I am a youth of uncircumcised lips. Lord send me not into thy vineyard yet.” He corresponded with his Oxford friends, hoping they would justify him in his views. But their answer was “ pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send thee and many more laborers into his harvest.” Some suggested that, by thus holding out against what seemed to them so obvious a purpose of divine providence, he might even be found fighting against God. And he himself, especially after the interview with the bishop, began to feel that he could no longer resist.

It only remained now, that he prepare himself for the result. Having carefully examined the thirty-nine articles and satisfied himself of their scriptural soundness, he tested his qualifications by those required in St. Paul’s epistle to Timothy, and by every question that he knew would be proposed to him in the ordination service, and “ sealed his approval of them,” as he says, “ every Sunday, at the sacrament.” He came to Gloucester a fortnight before hand, hoping for leisure to give himself to prayer and the composition of sermons. But his mind was disturbed and he could not write. He read carefully the several missions of the prophets and apostles, wrestling with God to give him grace to follow their examples. He had an interview with the bishop and put into his hands an abstract of his private self-examinations. Saturday, the day before the ordination, was spent in fasting and prayer. That evening he went out alone to a hill near the town and prayed fervently for about two hours, for himself and his fellow candidates. On Sabbath morning, he rose early and prayed over St. Paul’s epistle to Timothy ; dwelling especially on the precept “ Let no man despise thy youth.” Is it strange if there was a peculiar glow of heavenly beauty in his face, as he knelt there to be set apart to his great office ? He had been up into the mount communing with God many days. And like Moses, when he came down from Sinai, “ the skin of his face shone ” with the radiance which he had caught in that presence. Look thoughtfully upon him—that

young apostle, receiving from the great Head of the church his high commission to become the herald of a new and most surprising dispensation of his Spirit—"a chosen vessel" to "bear his name" and tell the story of his love to scoffing or adoring thousands. Do you ask what thoughts were working in that bosom? God only knows. But we have a glimpse of them in his own simple and unaffected testimony. "When I went up to the altar, I could think of nothing but Samuel's standing a little child before the Lord with a linen ephod. When the bishop laid his hand upon my head, my heart melted down and I offered up my whole spirit, soul and body to the service of God's sanctuary." "I call heaven and earth to witness, that I gave myself up to be a martyr for him who hung upon the cross for me. Known unto him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfold, and I trust without reserve into his almighty hands. Only I would have you observe that till you hear of my dying *for* or *in* my work you will not be apprised of all the preferment that is expected by—*George Whitefield.*"

Look now to the condition of the field to the ploughing, sowing and reaping of which this young devotee of Christ was to be assigned. All the accounts agree in the assertion that the spirit of true piety, both in England and America, had fallen into a very low state. It was an age of heartlessness—of infidelity and skepticism in religion and most appalling corruption in morals—the age of Hume and Bolingbroke and Collins and Wollaston and Tindall—when such men as Dean Swift could occupy one of the high places of honor and influence in the church, and such a thoroughly rotten moralist as Lawrence Sterne* sit undisturbed in his parsonage and be the "delight of the fashionable world—the delicious divine for whose sermons the whole polite world was subscribing"—when Frederic of Prussia† was the greatest monarch in Europe and

*The life of Lawrence Sterne and that of Whitefield covered nearly the same period. Whitefield was born December, 1714 and died September 30, 1770. Sterne was born November 24, 1713, and died March 18, 1768. Both were graduated the same year. Whitefield at Oxford and Sterne at Cambridge.

†Frederic the Great was born January 24, 1712, and died August 17, 1786. Voltaire was born February 20, 1694, and died May 30, 1778.

Voltaire the greatest philosopher, when England had a Robert Walpole for her prime minister; and the archbishop of Canterbury gave balls and routs in Lambeth palace, till even the king—such a king as the reigning monarch of England then was†—scandalized by the monstrous incongruity, commanded him on pain of his displeasure to cease from “such levities and vanities,” “in a place,” said he, “where so many of your predecessors have led their lives in such sanctity as has thrown lustre on the pure religion they professed and adorned”—that age of George the Second, whose picture is drawn with a pen so hideously graphic by the lecturer Thackeray! Whitefield’s description of what he saw and encountered at the school of St. Marys and the university at Oxford, seems but a trifle compared with the deliberate utterances of this popular writer. “I say, I am scared” he says, “as I look around at this society, at this king, at these courtiers, at these politicians, at these bishops, at this flaunting vice and levity. Whereabouts in this court is the honest man! The air stifles one with its sickly perfumes! Bishop Butler, Archbishop Secker, Dr. Watts and many others testify to the melancholy decay both of faith and piety. What made the case worse was, that there seemed to be no power left in the church to roll back or stay the tide of ungodliness. The brave old martyrs of the Reformation—the Latimers and Riddleys and Bradfords and Rogerses had passed into history; the sturdy and devout Puritans and Non-conformists, the Howes and the Bateses, the Henrys, the Baxters and the Flavels were remembered, if at all, only by few; the sincerely pious and ex-

†In the above remark, the writer was misled by the authority from which he obtained the anecdote, (viz: “Christian hearers of the last century by Rev. J. C. Ryle.”) Mr. Ryle says of the King’s letter, “A critical reader will remember that the King was probably more familiar with the German language than the English.” This remark could hardly apply to George III and does to George II. But it was George III who interposed in this matter, at the solicitation of Lady Huntingdon as the full account in the “Life and times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon” clearly shows. As an illustration of the state of religion at the period referred to, the corrected statement is not less pertinent than the other. The Whitefieldian influence which had at length reached the throne and affected the mind of the monarch, still met nothing better than contempt and ridicule in the palace of the highest dignitary of the National Church.

emplary Dissenters, the Wattses and the Doddridges, pressed by the weight of an arrogant establishment, were confined to narrow room and had grown *judicious* even in their fervor. The great distinguishing doctrines of the gospel had come to be handled daintily, and too much zeal and ardor for the conversion of souls was dreaded as enthusiasm or fanaticism. No doubt there were true and earnest men, both in the establishment and out of it, serving God and endeavoring honestly to defend and preach the holy principles of the gospel; but, chilled by the unholy influences around them, they had settled into their nests and contented themselves with a very feeble proclamation of the truth. Many of them had grown timid or disheartened, and could exert little influence to reform a dissolute, or arouse a slumbering community. And what was true of England was true likewise, though not without important differences and abatements, of America. New England Puritanism was fast dying out and a new form of polite religion which disturbed no man's conscience and excited no man's sensibilities was taking its place. The biography and writings of President Edwards and other productions of the time make the fact painfully apparent, both in the coldness and emptiness of the piety, and the prevailing moral corruptions of the age. It was a feeling widely prevalent among the best men, that, unless God should grant to his church some special interposition of his grace, true religion must soon die out and the whole community sink down into infidelity and ungodliness.

But God did grant such an interposition. The Great Awakening, which in America commenced at Northampton under the ministry of Jonathan Edwards, and in England, almost simultaneously, showed its first faint pulsations at Oxford in the "Holy Club" of the two Wesleys, Kirkman and Morgan" a short time before Whitefield came to the University, was one of the most remarkable manifestations of Divine love interposing for the rescue of its own imperilled cause, the discomfiture of its foes, and advancement of its interests, which are to be found in the whole history of the church. The men immediately en-

gaged in it knew but very little of its scope and purpose, and took only a step at a time following the track marked out for them, as best they could, by the light of their feeble lanterns. Their measures were the simplest possible, and were shaped by the circumstances,—preaching, praying, singing, exhorting, conversing, expounding the scriptures. In England, they and those who were in sympathy with them were organized into *societies*, bound together by a few simple rules to an earnest and constant pursuit of their great object. Such societies had been formed more than half a century before by the earnest-minded old Puritans, and some of them still remained, though fallen into neglect. These were revived and more organized, some larger and some smaller, all over the kingdom; which became the scene of some of Whitefield's most efficient labors and the source of some of his holiest impulses and consolations. Of machinery—*tactics* such as we have sometimes seen in modern revivals—these men had very little. But there was a power behind them impelling them forward, which, though unseen, neither they nor their bitterest foes were able to resist. It revolutionized the church, it saved the age, it opened a path which, if followed steadily and with resolute purpose, would lead us on to the millennial glory.

Having in view such an interposition, Divine Wisdom knew well how to provide for itself suitable instruments. Whitefield was not a man of great intellectual powers, nor a man of eminent learning; but he was a quick man, an ardent man, a man who conceived vividly and executed promptly, a man in whom prudence, though not wanting, was always subordinate to beneficent action, a man of vast endurance, and indomitable perseverance, an eloquent man carrying his heart always at his tongue's end, a man who sympathized warmly and deeply with all humanity, a man of God who verily believed Christ's Gospel which he had undertaken to preach, to be the best thing ever known in the world; on the whole a great man, for he is a great man who does great things, however you may analyze him, a man mighty to do just what the age for which he was raised up of God demanded of a man.

It is not likely that Whitefield had any adequate concep-

tion when he set out, either of what was in him or what he was appointed to do. His simple aim was to preach Christ crucified and save souls by bringing them to him. If he expected a great religious movement about to take place, it is probable he looked to John Wesley as the leading spirit and to himself only as one of many subordinate helpers. He had no scheme. He was not a schemer any way. He was no organizer such as Wesley was. He had "thrown himself," as he said, blindfold into God's hands," and trusting in him he meant to proclaim, energetically and faithfully, wherever God should open to him an opportunity, the everlasting gospel of his Lord.

Whitefield entered upon his work with great self-distrust. Popularity took him by surprise. And it is much to his credit, young as he was, that it never seems to have disturbed seriously his humility.* In looking forward to the ministry, he had intended, as became a prudent young student of divinity, to provide himself, in advance, with a good stock of sermons—at least a hundred. But his design was frustrated, and only one, prepared, not for the pulpit, but for "a small Christian society," one of those praying circles, probably to which reference has already been made, was now in his possession. He had sent it, when he was deprecating premature ordination, to a friend, a clergyman, in order to convince him how unprepared he was for the pulpit. But the needy parson, tempted by opportunity, kept it a whole fortnight, cut it in two and preached it morning and evening to his own congregation, and sent it back to its owner with a guinea for the loan.

His first pulpit effort was in Gloucester, in the Church of St. Mary de Crypt, where he was baptized and where he first received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Curiosity brought together a large number of his townsmen, and at

*When his youthful popularity at one time was rising very high, one of the London papers began to advertise him. Much annoyed he wrote to the printer "begging him not to put him into his paper any more." The printer flatly refused, saying "he was paid for doing it and would not lose two shillings for anybody."

first, he says, he was "a little awed," but taking courage from the conviction of God's presence, and greatly helped by the practice he had had in public speaking, both at school and in his ministries among the poor and to the prisoners in Oxford jail, he soon rose above his youthful timidity, and the fire kindling as he went on, "was enabled to preach with some degree of Gospel authority." He used, no doubt, that *society sermon*, for his subject was: "The necessity and benefits of religious society"—that is of social piety, or the intercourse of devout minds in prayer and for mutual edification. The effect was immediate. "Some mocked, but the most were deeply affected." The complaint was made to the bishop that he "drove fifteen mad by the first sermon." The good prelate replied, "I hope the madness will not be forgotten before the next Sunday." Whitefield's own remark was, as he recorded the incident: "Before then, I hope that my sermon on 'He that is in Christ is a new creature' will be completed. Blessed be God, I now find freedom in writing. Glorious Jesus!"

"Unloose my stammering tongue to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable."

In this last sermon and the doctrine it contained, he found the instrument of some of his first and chief triumphs. Marked tokens of the power that was with him soon began to be discernable—at Bishopgate church, at the Tower and other places in London, at Bath, and particularly at Bristol. "The word," he says, "through the mighty power of God, was sharper than a two edged sword; and the doctrine of the new birth and justification by faith in Jesus Christ made its way like lightning into the hearer's consciences." The tide rose when it was once started, with wonderful rapidity. In London, constables were placed at the church doors to control the crowd; "one might, as it were, walk upon the tops of people's heads," so densely were the churches packed. For three months there was no end to the people's flocking to hear the word of God." He preached generally nine times in a week. "The people were all attention and heard like people hearing for eternity." "On Sunday mornings long before

day, you might see streets filled with people going to church with lanthorns in their hands, and hear them conversing about the things of God." At Bristol, at his second visit, multitudes came on foot and in carriages a mile out of the town to meet him. He preached five times a week and the congregations grew larger and larger. "Some hung on the rails of the organ loft, others climbed on the leads of the church, and altogether made the church so hot with their breath that the steam would fall from the pillars like drops of rain." In the crowd were persons of all ranks and denominations; and during the last day of his stay there, he was occupied from seven in the morning till midnight, talking with and giving spiritual advice to awakened souls.

That we may know something of the hidden sources of his power during this period, let us take a glimpse of his *inner life*. He had some very sweet Christian experiences, communing with God, studying the holy scriptures on his knees, and praying for divine assistance. "Early in the morning, at noonday, evening and midnight, nay, all day long," he says, "did the blessed Jesus visit and refresh my heart." "Sometimes, as I have been walking, my soul would make such sallies, that I thought it would go out of the body. At other times I was so overpowered with a sense of God's infinite majesty that I would be constrained to throw myself prostrate on the ground and offer up my soul as a blank in his hand to write on it what he pleased." One incident strongly reminds one of a passage in the life of President Edwards. He had been expounding the Scriptures to a company of people when there came up a terrific thunder storm. Many were afraid to go home, so he went with them. The theme which the scene suggested was, "the Coming of the Son of Man." As he returned, the people along the way were rising from their beds in the greatest consternation "seeing the lightning run along upon the ground and flash from one part of the heavens to another." But instead of terror, his own thoughts were filled with joyful adoration. In company with "a poor but pious countryman," he was in the field praying, praising, and exulting in the glory of God—and "longing for that time

when Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in a flame of fire." "Honest James and I," he says, "were out in the midst of the lightning, and were never more delighted in our lives. May we be as well pleased when the Son of God cometh to judgment." Thus was God fitting him for and inducting him into, the great and far-reaching work to which he had called him.

But it was not the design of infinite wisdom to confine the labors of this its chosen apostle to a single country or a single continent. On the opposite side of the great Atlantic, England had a narrow line of weak but growing colonies, where the seeds of a new Empire were beginning slowly to germinate. The two Wesleys, with one or two of their associates, had gone out under the patronage of Gen. Oglethorpe, the founder of the Colony of Georgia, to preach the Gospel to the natives and provide means of grace for the colonists. Their mission was a failure, except as John Wesley received there a new spiritual quickening, which he ever afterwards regarded as the beginning of his spiritual life. But their first reports fired Whitefield's emulation. They both invited him to join them; and after some delays the way was opened.* Meanwhile his popularity at home was rising higher, and tempting preferment was offered him. But this did not swerve him from his purpose. A voice from within, which as yet he could but partially interpret, called him to America. And to America he went, heeding not the remonstrances of friends, and turning his back on a career of widening influence and popular admiration, which might easily have taken captive a less self-consecrated spirit. It proved a voice from the new world, like that heard by Paul when he was to pass from Asia into Europe: "Come over and help us." And

*The words of one of the invitations deserve notice. John Wesley wrote thus: "Only Mr. Delamotte is with me till God shall stir up the hearts of some of his servants who, putting their lives in their hands, shall come and help us. What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?" "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." "Upon reading this," Whitefield writes, "my heart leaped within me and as it were echoed to the call."

without stopping to forecast the future, he followed it implicitly, as the voice of God. Delays were interposed, and the intervals were filled to the last moment with his zealous ministries. So was the passage. But, all the while, his face was set as though he would go to America

On his arrival in Georgia, finding himself alone, (for his friends the Wesleys had abandoned the enterprise, and leaving only a single assistant had gone back to England), he at once addressed himself to his work. One of his first projects was the founding of an orphan house to which he had been incited by the example of the celebrated Franke. It was a good object, though but partially successful; and he pursued it through life; but it was chiefly significant as furnishing the providential clue, by which his steps were to be guided through the yet unexplored labyrinth of his eventful itineracy. Most of his first preaching circuits were undertaken in its interest. It opened to him some of his best opportunities. It sent him hither, and it sent him thither—back to England that he might raise funds for it, and again to America that he might superintend its concerns. It drew forth some of his tenderest, humane affections. It served to develop parts of his nature which might otherwise have wanted an object. But, wherever he came and whatever his immediate errand, everything became subservient to the one great ultimate aim of his life, the salvation of souls and the quickening of the divine life in the hearts of Christians by the preaching of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Whitefield had now, mapped out as it were before him, the whole broad field of his life's labors. His parish or diocese if I may so denominate it, consisted of two grand districts—one a vast continent just beginning to be peopled, but destined to play a mighty part in the history of the world; the other a populous and powerful nation—the seat of empire and the head of Protestant Christendom. Both needed to be evangelized, awakened from spiritual slumber, quickened by the power of a divine life, made to throb in every fibre of their mighty frames with the pulsations of a living, active, energetic piety. The accomplishment of this great result, under

God, constituted the life mission of GEORGE WHITEFIELD. He traversed these vast regions, up and down, backward and forward, for more than thirty years, with unflagging ardor. The fire of his burning soul kindled and flamed in every corner. Between the two, the ocean was his highway. He crossed the Atlantic thirteen times and that at a period when the passage was long and the discomforts many. From a comparison of dates, I judge that he was actually at sea two years and a quarter, and on board ship a considerably longer time, encountering storms, collisions, hunger, sea sickness, alarms of hostile attacks and the rough ways of the roughest of men. "This comes of your praying," said one with an oath when they had narrowly escaped the peril of immediate destruction. Of the remaining thirty-one or two years, somewhere about nine were spent in this country, in preaching and kindred labors in the populous towns, the sparsely settled country and among the aboriginal tribes—in what Whitefield himself used to call, "hunting for sinners in the wilds of America." The rest of the time, about two-thirds of the whole, was devoted to similar efforts in his native land.

It would be pleasant and profitable, could we follow him in his vast circuits, and trace step by step the exertions which he made, the difficulties and perils which he overcame, the traits of character he displayed, and the wonderful effects which accompanied or followed his ministry. A recent writer has said of him, during the period of thirty years constituting the great body of his public life, that "the facts of his ministry are of one complexion. One year is just like another, and to follow him would be going over the same ground."* This is true, in the general, but not in the particular. For while the same great end is kept always in view, and the same measures employed with substantially the same results—there is scarcely a scene or record, where the details are preserved, which would not furnish, in the hands of a master, the subject for a distinct picture worthy a place in the great picture gallery of the Church's history.

*Rev. J. C. Ryle.

Whitefield's first return from America was the introduction to a remarkable change in the methods of his preaching. He had been in this country only about four months when the wants of the orphan house and the necessity of securing priests' orders in order to the full discharge of his new duties seemed to require his return. It was altogether contrary to his original intention, and he had to tear himself away from his new parishioners, they exacting from him a solemn promise "before God" to return to them as soon as possible. Up to this time he had been a great stickler for order. All his sermons he had carefully written out, and the first extemporaneous prayer as well as the first extemporaneous sermon on which he ever ventured was deemed worthy of a special record. He preached only when and where he was invited by the regular clergymen, and though he exhorted and expounded with great freedom in private houses and elsewhere, would have been shocked at the thought of *preaching* anywhere but in a church. But the time had come for him to cast aside such close trammels. It was not a measure of his own seeking but a providential necessity. The incapacity of the churches to contain the multitudes had already suggested the experiment. But now on reaching London, to his great surprise, he found most of the pulpits closed against him. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London received him kindly and approved his plans. But among the clergymen generally, dislikes, which had begun to show themselves before his departure, had, during his absence, ripened into concerted opposition. He took priests' orders but received no invitations. It was much the same in the country. The people were as eager as ever to hear. But how to get access to them? This led to the adoption of *field preaching*, a measure first resorted to by Whitefield himself,* and which, more perhaps than any other, characterized the great religious movement, in which he was the chief actor.

The first experiment was made at Kingswood, near Bristol. It was in a region of coal mines. The colliers were a rude

*Wesley came into it soon after but with much hesitation.

and almost savage people. Few ventured to walk in their neighborhood and when roused they were the terror of Bristol. Before he went to America people had said to Whitefield, "Have we not Indians enough at home.?" "If you have a mind to instruct Indians, there are colliers enough in Kingswood." Unwilling to be idle, he now resolved to see what could be done for them. He gathered around him a few hundreds and began to discourse to them. Presently he had, at the same and neighboring places, congregations of two, five, ten and even twenty thousand. He took his stand upon an elevated spot and made his clear, strong voice audible to the remotest listener. The trees and the hedges were full of people. All was hushed the moment he began. The preacher's own soul, as he looked round amidst the deep silence of the multitude, was filled, he tells us, "with a holy admiration." As for the poor colliers, to whom such precious truths were new, "having no righteousness of their own to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who was a friend to publicans and sinners and came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." The first token of the deep feeling wrought in them, was discernable in the "white gutters cut by their tears," as they coursed plentifully down their black, coal-begrimed cheeks. "Hundreds and hundreds," we are told, "were brought under deep conviction, which, as the event proved, ended in a sound and thorough conversion." On one of these occasions, as we are informed by a contemporary periodical, the multitude of all classes that were drawn together, with the coaches and horsemen, covered three acres of ground.

A few weeks later the same experiment was repeated at London. The church at Islington had been offered him by the vicar, but the church warden objected, so he betook himself to the churchyard. Shortly after, on a Sunday morning, he appeared at Moorfields, since so noted for its close connection with his London movements. It was a large open space much frequented by the populace on Sundays and holidays. The crowd was great. Some warned him that he would never come out of that place alive. He went in between two

friends, who were soon separated from him by the pressure of the rabble and compelled to leave him to their mercy. But instead of offering him the slightest indignity they "made a lane for him," passed him along through it to his place. On the evening of the same day, he preached again on Kennington Common, two miles from London, to an assemblage estimated at upwards of twenty thousand. Similar scenes were repeated again and again at these two places during several successive weeks. Of one of them Whitefield himself says: "Such a sight I never saw before. Some supposed there were above thirty or forty thousand people and near fourscore coaches, besides great numbers of horses; and there was such an awful silence and the word of God came with such power!"

Meanwhile and afterward he made extensive tours through the country including an excursion into Wales, preaching in every considerable town in just such places as offered themselves, and everywhere with similar results. The deep interest awakened by his preaching, caused a rush to him in private, so that all his intervening hours were occupied in counselling and instructing awakened souls, or praying, exhorting and expounding the scriptures, in the religious societies. Of these he sometimes visited two or three in a day, and continued his efforts in them sometimes far into and even through the night. Even at private houses, whither he went for such purposes, people crowded round the door in such multitudes that he was obliged to ascend by a ladder to an upper window, or clamber over the tiles of the neighboring houses, in order to get access.

Is it strange that, seeing among the people such a thirst for hearing the word, he should have grown less fastidious than formerly as to the ways by which the waters of life should be distributed? As a good Episcopalian, he still wore his gown and, where he could advantageously, used his prayer-book. But where a pulpit was not ready to his hand, a table, a tub, a horseblock, the steps of an inn, the stairs of a windmill, even the cudgel players' stage served an excellent purpose; and as for a church, his field and street preaching seemed no more than what his great Master had sanctioned, "who

himself had a mountain for a pulpit and the heavens for a sounding board, and when the gospel was rejected by the Jews, sent his servants into the highways and hedges." "I hope," he says, "I shall learn more and more that no place is amiss for preaching the gospel."

Nor is it strange, that, amidst such scenes, he caught a new and grander conception of the great work of God of which he was chosen as the instrument. Now he begins to see evidences of some vast divine plan about to be executed. "I believe," he says, "God will work a great work in the earth. Whatever instruments he may make use of I care not. What am I, O Lord, that thou should'st honor me?" Now he begins, as never before, to be conscious of a special and peculiar mission. "The whole world," he says, "is my parish. Wherever my Master calls me, I am ready to go to preach His everlasting gospel."

It was in the full spirit of these new views that, having accomplished the specific objects of his voyage to England, he returned to America. And here the same wonderful career opened itself before him. I might well have occupied the whole time allotted me to-day in describing this portion of his work. The movement in England, surprising as it is, by no means surpasses in grandeur that which took place in this new country. Here as there, there had been a great decline of Evangelical piety. Here as there God had *already* begun to revive His work. The partial awakenings which attended and followed the great earthquakes of 1727, and especially the great revival which began at Northampton in 1734, were no doubt part and parcel of the same divine impulse which was now working such results on the other side of the water. Whitefield was not the first instrument of the work there or here. He was indeed himself one of its products and here lay one of the secrets of his power—he was a living organ which the divine life, already quickened, had itself developed for its own purposes.

He landed at Lewiston on Delaware Bay, and made his way through the forests on horseback, sixty miles, to Philadelphia. The churches could not contain the multitudes. From the

steps of the Court House, he preached to congregations of from six to eight thousand. On board a shallop at the wharf four hundred feet distant, every word was heard distinctly and the whole intervening space was filled with people. Thence he went to Newport, preaching on his way in the towns and villages of New Jersey, and making the acquaintance of those ardent and congenial spirits, the Dutch pastor Frelinghuysen and the Tenants, Rowland and Blair. Back through Philadelphia, he journeyed south on horseback, occupying more than a month and preaching almost every day with surprising effect. Arriving in Georgia, his first warm welcome from his friends was accompanied by an outbreak of religious feeling from the children of the orphan house. His sense of the divine goodness almost overwhelmed him, and with his characteristic humility and holy joy he could only exclaim, "Why me? Lord, why me?*"

It was during the autumn of the same year, the year 1740, that he made his first visit to New England. His friends were expecting him eagerly, and those of the opposite spirit had been warned publicly against him. The leading ministers of Boston, Colman, Sewall, Prince, Foxcraft, Cooper, Webb and others gave him a warm welcome. He preached first in the churches, then from a scaffold outside of Mr. Byles's meeting-house, and finally on the common. The people thronged to hear, in the same countless multitudes. "O how did the word run," is his own exclamation. "I could scarcely refrain from crying out, 'this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.'" Dr. Colman said of one of his services, it was the most pleasant he ever enjoyed. Governor Belcher attended on the preaching and paid the preacher the most affectionate attentions. Mr. Secretary Willard did likewise. Good old Mr. Walton of Roxbury, the

*It is worthy of note that he almost never records a success, whether in his journals or in his most familiar letters, without an expression of or a prayer for humility. "O, that I was humble, that I was thankful; help me, my dear friend, to entreat the Redeemer to make me a little, a very little child." It was one of his favorite expressions: "Nothing sets one so much out of the Devil's reach as humility."

successor of Mr. Eliot, said of his doctrine, "it is puritanism revived." He went out to Cambridge, and preached first in the Church and then in the College yard. The Faculty and a great number of ministers being present, he preached from St. Paul's words, "We are not as many who corrupt the word of God," and made a close application of his subject to tutors and students. Among the latter many genuine conversions and a general religious improvement was the result. Having visited and preached in most of the neighboring towns, he made an excursion to the eastward as far as Portsmouth, and preached twice every day in going and coming. Then taking his leave of Boston, he journeyed westward in the same manner, went to Northampton and had a fraternal interview with President Edwards, who gave him kind advice and wept during the whole time of his preaching, paused a day at New Haven, dined with the President of the College, preached with great plainness on the necessity of true conversion to the character of a Gospel minister, met the Governor who with tears expressed his strong approval of his preaching, and passing on through Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, embarked for Charleston and so returned to Savannah. At the place of his embarkation he records: "It is now the seventy-fifth day since I arrived at Rhode Island. I was then weak in body, but God has renewed its strength. I have been enabled to preach, I think, one hundred and seventy times in public, besides exhorting frequently in private. I have travelled eight hundred miles and gotten above seven hundred pounds for the orphan house. Never did I perform the journey with so little fatigue or see such a continuance of the divine presence in the congregations to whom I have preached."

It was on this grand triumphal march of the gospel herald, that he came for the first time to old Newbury and blew here the first strong blast of that gospel trumpet whose echoes I seem to catch even now, as they linger round the walls of this consecrated edifice, and repeat themselves, from generation to generation, in the hearts of this community. Of this visit we find in his journal this quiet but significant record:

"Sept. 3. Reached Newbury about *three*. Here again the power of God accompanied the word. The meeting-house was very large. Many ministers were present and the people were greatly affected." A memorable date, brethren, in your history—that of Sept. 30, 1740, hardly less than that of Sept. 30. 1770.

I have thus far only entered upon the *borders* of this wonderful history and given you only a few specimens of its surprising occurrences. Similar scenes filled the whole thirty years which ensued. Some of the most remarkable are among those to which I cannot even allude. Such were some of those which attended him in Scotland, where the circumstances were in many respects quite different from those in England and America. The amount of labor he performed was such as to exceed belief, were not the facts so well authenticated. The 18,000 sermons which he preached, some of them an hour and a half long, and averaging five hundred in a year, make but a fragment. In one single week he received more than a thousand letters from persons asking counsel about their souls.* On the Sabbath he preached usually four times in a day, besides administering the Lord's Supper, and conducting all the devotional exercises, and was quite restive when, on account of sickness, his physicians limited him to the "short allowance of preaching but once a day and thrice on a Sunday." Labor indeed seemed to be his life. "A pulpit sweat," as he quaintly termed it, was his most efficacious restorative. "One physician," he says once, "has prescribed a perpetual blister; but I have found perpetual *preaching* a better remedy. When that grand catholicon fails it is all over with me." It was much the same with his travels. He visited Scotland fourteen times, went over to Ireland twice; "and as to England and Wales," as a biographer observes, "he traversed every county in them from the Isle of Wight to Berwick on Tweed, and from Land's End to

*Once in Scotland he speaks of preaching seven times in one day, viz: once in the church, twice in the girl's hospital, once in the old people's hospital and twice in a private house. "Notwithstanding which," he adds, "I am as fresh as when I rose in the morning," and all this with wonderful spiritual effects.

North Foreland." "To ride hundreds of miles on horseback," says another, "from one end of the kingdom to the other, resting a day or two and then starting off on a new tour in another direction was an ordinary occurrence. Five times in the same way, he visited New England, preaching all the way at every considerable place. And everywhere, during the whole thirty years with substantially the same results. Wherever he came the people surged together like the waves of the ocean. They hung upon his lips, they watched every movement of his person, they gave himself up into his hands. He seemed to play upon their moral and emotional nature as the musician on the pipes of an organ. They were melted into tears, they cried out in alarm for their souls. Cool and unimpassioned men like Dr. Franklin emptied their pockets against their own purpose, at his appeals for the orphan. He moulded their thoughts; he revolutionized their permanent character; by the grace of God, he turned the worst of sinners into the most blessed and holy saints.*

Whitefield's chief success was among the common people. He had a deep sympathy for them, and his style of thought and speaking was eminently suited to their wants. It has been noticed that he approved of slavery. He did so, in common with most persons of his times. But no man labored harder for the enslaved race, or was more endeared to them. "Master," said a poor negro woman, as she sat on the ground and looked earnestly in his face, when he was rising from a supposed mortal illness: "Master, you first go to heaven's gate. But Jesus Christ say, get you down, you mustn't come here yet. Go first and call some more poor negroes." "I prayed the Lord," he says, "that if I were to live, this might be the event.†

*Dr. Franklin's testimony on this point is remarkable as coming from such a source. "It is wonderful," he says, "to see the change made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless and indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious; so that one could not walk through the town on an evening without hearing psalms in different families in every street."

†Phillis Wheatley, a young negro slave of the age of seventeen, wrote a poem

But Whitefield's ministry was by no means confined to the poor or ignorant. Men of the highest distinction for talents, learning and literary and social culture, here and in England, attended admiringly on his preaching. Multitudes of them yielded to its power. The accomplished Lady Huntington became, as it is well known, one of his most zealous and efficient supporters, and by her influence and wealth, numerous chapels all over England became the copious fountains of the same type of doctrine and piety. She drew around him also a large circle of the nobility and gentry of the land. Lord Bolingbroke, Horace Walpole, the historian Hume, Lord and Lady Chesterfield, several of the ladies of the Chesterfield family, Sir Charles Hotham, nephew of Lord Chesterfield, the Earl of Bath, Lord Dartmouth, and quite a number of the nobility of Scotland frequented his ministry, commended it for qualities which they could appreciate, and many of them became true and warm-hearted converts to the truth and piety he inculcated. The poor negress who looked up to him so piteously stands counterbalanced in the escutcheon of his ministry by a "king's daughter among" his "honorable women."

It is true he had his reverses. Such was that which in England followed his memorable breach with the Wesleys. That breach was to Whitefield one of the worst trials of his life. He wept over it and prayed against it; he begged his friends not to open a controversy but to agree to differ. Whitefield was a strong Calvinist, perhaps at that time an extreme one. Wesley became an Arminian and thought it his duty to come out in opposition. Among the adherents of both the dispute waxed warm. Whitefield returned from America after an absence of two years to find his ministry at first almost deserted. Many of his own spiritual children turned

commemorative of him, in which occurred the following touching lines referring to the earnestness with which he preached Christ crucified:—

"Take Him, my dear Americans, he said;
Be your complaints on His kind bosom laid;
Take Him, ye Africans, he longs for you,
Impartial Saviour is His title due.
If you will choose to walk in grace's road
Ye shall be sons and kings and priests of God."

coldly upon him. "So prejudiced," he says, "by the dear Wesleys' dressing up the doctrine of election in such horrible colors, that they would neither see, hear nor give any assistance." But this did not last long. Whitefield's popularity returned, the moment he was again fairly before the people, and was even increased. Both parties settled into their own proper positions. The breach of affection was healed. Both pursued separately the same general object. The great Methodist church, so fruitful in zealous and efficient labors here and in Europe, was the result on the one hand; and, on the other, good old Puritan Calvinism, which might otherwise have suffered deterioration by a diluting compromise, received a new and we trust a lasting lease of life, vigor and beneficence. Whitefield, being once asked by a zealous partizan "if he thought we should see John Wesley in heaven, replied promptly, "No sir, I fear not. He will be so near the throne and we at such a distance that we shall hardly get a sight of him."

Such likewise was the opposition which he encountered here in New England, on his second visit, after a four years' absence. During that time there had been a great change in the state of public opinion. The great religious impulse which first attended his preaching had encountered the forces of false zeal, disorder and fanaticism. Unsound or injudicious leaders had arisen. Parties had been formed and were lashed up into a high state of excitement. Old father Moody gave him a cordial welcome when he landed at York. But immediately there arose elsewhere a most violent opposition. Three of his old friends were drawn into it. Disorders with which he had nothing to do were charged to him as the culpable cause. All the forces of worldliness and declining piety, in the pulpit and out of it, were marshalled in fierce opposition. One association of ministers after another protested against his admission to the pulpits. Harvard College, piqued by some severe, perhaps too severe, strictures he had made on the state of religion in that institution, came out with one of the bitterest invectives. Some of the charges made against him were quite curious. He was an enthusiast. He was a priest of the Church of England, and yet Dr. Colman had allowed

him to administer the Lord's Supper in a Congregational Church! He had expressed the opinion that a considerable number of the ministers of the day were unconverted men. He had "treated the great and good Archbishop Tillotson shamefully" by expressing such an opinion of him. His preaching to such crowds was a great waste of *money*, taking the people off from their work. The worthy tutor Flynt of Harvard gives an estimate, in his journal, of the time and other charges in people's attending upon his ministry at "one thousand pounds per diem." His allowing people to go singing psalms and hymns along the streets as they travelled from one place of meeting to another was a great impropriety. His extemporising was a very *lazy* manner of preaching." His itinerating was bad. He had said in one of his journals: "God seems to show me that it is my duty to evangelize and not to fix in any particular place." They did not believe he had any such call: he had taken it up "of his own head." It had a tendency to make people discontented with their own ministers. Some of the clergy had got the notion that he had a plot to turn them all out of their comfortable berths and supply their places with a new set of men to be brought over from England or trained up by the Tenants at their "log College" at Neshaminy. Besides all the rest, the suspicion was quite rife that he was either an Arminian or an Antinomian, and some of them could not make up their minds which. So the storm raged; and for a time it seemed as if his day was over. But he acted prudently, explained some things and apologized for some things spoken too hastily, confessed that "Peter-like he had cut off too many ears," and going quietly on, was sustained by the great body of those who still adhered to the doctrines of the New England fathers, and still preached the same benign gospel with the same success to the same eager irrepressible multitudes as before. Much the same was his experience among the Presbyterians of the Middle and Southern States. New and old *sides* there were divided much as the new and old *lights* in New England. But parties soon began to know their positions and the lookers on learned to form their own judgments. Whitefield, in his later

days, had few opposers except the opposers of warm-hearted, evangelical and aggressive piety.

These he always had and could expect no less. Men in high places, bishops and ecclesiastics tried the force of their satire upon him and even loaded him with obloquy. Foote, the comedian, ridiculed him on the stage and set the benches in a roar with merciless caricatures. The baser sort threw stones at him, pelted him with foul missiles and assailed him with vulgar abuse. Once a ruffian ascended the pulpit stairs in order to attack him. Once, an assassin made his way by false pretenses into his bed chamber and assaulted him murderously in his bed. Once, on coming out of his pulpit in the crowd, he felt a movement of his hat and wig, and turning met the point of a drawn sword with which a man was attempting to stab him. He seems not to have had a large share of physical courage. He used to call himself a coward; and once, at sea during an expected attack, while Mrs. Whitefield was employed making cartridges, "her husband," he says, "wanted to get into the hold of the ship, hearing that that was the chaplain's usual place." But he had a large share of *moral* courage, which, in any emergency affecting his ministry, always stood him in stead. The way in which he braved the mob during the Whitsuntide revelries at Moorefields, planting his pulpit in the very face of the mountebanks and their men, and competing with them *successfully* for the attention of the multitude seems to us little short of presumption. You may guess, he says, "there was great noise among the craftsmen." "My soul was indeed among lions." Yet, in spite of all sorts of hostile demonstrations, seeing the audience gathered around him disposed to hear, he quietly gave notice of a third service to be held at the same place at six o'clock in the evening, which service he held and carried through, though the opposition was more concerted and more fiend-like than before. On another occasion the very leaders of a mob, bent on mischief, taunted him and called him a coward because he had finished his sermon and was getting down from his table-pulpit just as they got on the ground. He promised them "they should hear some more presently," and soon after, tak-

ing his stand upon a flight of stairs, began to preach. Pretty soon they began to grow riotous, whereupon, feeling a sudden impulse, he leaped down from the stairs into the midst of them, at which they all ran like a flock of frightened sheep. At Oxmantown Green in Ireland, where the "Ormond and Liberty boys," used to have their Sunday fights, he ran a terrible gauntlet nearly half a mile through a storm of stones from a popish mob, "taking," he says, "a fresh stone at every step" which "made him reel backwards and forwards till he was out of breath and all over a gore of blood." He thought he got more blows than Stephen and was in hopes, he says, "that like him he should go off in this bloody triumph to the immediate presence of his Master." His friends got him into a house, and a carpenter offered him his wig and coat that he might get off in disguise, and he put them on; but ashamed of himself for not trusting in his Master, he forthwith threw them off again with contempt.

Few men ever had more of this sort of abuse. The poet Cowper's well known lines, though perhaps too general, present this side of the world treatment of him with graphic truthfulness. But he lived it down. Of the most virulent of his opposers multitudes became his converts, and some his pupils and assistants in the gospel ministry. Such was the man who said, "I came with stones in my pocket to break your head, but you have broken my heart."

Whitefield had a warm social nature and many attractive social qualities. He had really no *home* and very little that would be called domestic life. But he was a welcome guest among people of all ranks in society. Dr. Franklin who had a strong regard for him, once wrote him a polite note inviting him to share his house during his stay in Philadelphia. Whitefield's reply and Franklin's rejoinder are both characteristic. "If you make me this offer for Christ's sake," says Whitefield, "you will not miss your reward." Franklin rejoins, "do not let me be mistaken. It was not for Christ's sake but for your sake." Whitefield was married and had one son whose death in infancy was a deep sorrow to him. It has been intimated that his married life was not happy. It may be so; though

his wife seems to have been a worthy woman, and he always speaks of her with respect and tenderness. His views of marriage seem however to have been quite too utilitarian. Two curious letters are extant, written at an earlier day, when he was soliciting the hand of another lady. One, written to the lady herself, sets forth in formidable array the privations and self denials to be encountered in being the wife of a man occupied as he is. The other addressed to her parents, though intended for her eyes, explains his reasons for wishing to marry, and respectfully and properly asks permission to address her. But it adds, quite emphatically, "You need not be afraid of sending me a refusal, for if I know my own heart, I am free from that foolish passion which the world calls love." This proposal, the young lady, it seems, did not accept; and Whitefield, when he had reflected on the matter, thought it best that she did not. Probably it was. Indeed a man, who like him was always on the wing, restive when obliged to be "in winter quarters" and longing like a caged bird to get into the fields, who was so devoted to one particular department of his Master's service as to find little or no place for anything else, ought not to have married. And, yet, as all the accounts testify, Whitefield had a nature "susceptible of the most generous and tender friendship." These are the words of John Wesley who adds, "I have frequently thought that this of all others, was the distinguishing point of his character. How few have we known of so kind a temper, of such large and flowing affection." It was this, he thinks, that attracted and knit to him so strangely the hearts of others. "Love shone in his very countenance and breathed in all his words, public and private. Was it not this that, quick as lightning, flew from heart to heart, which gave life to his sermons, his conversations, his letters?" Particularly felicitous was his intercourse with women. His office brought him into intimate relations with not a few, and those of all ages and ranks. "But his whole behavior" says the same indubitable authority, "was a practical comment on that advice of St. Paul to Timothy: "Entreat the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity."

Indeed, I know not where is to be found such an assemblage of the most attractive human virtues as appeared combined in this man of God separated from the world, this devotee of Christ.* Economical in his expenses, frugal in his diet, regular in all his habits, scrupulously neat in his person, a pattern of order and propriety, he united in an admirable degree the perfect gentleman with the devoted Christian. He handled a great deal of money, yet nobody was able to fix upon him the slightest taint of avarice or unfaithfulness. With a simplicity as guileless as a child's, a frankness as open as the day, a delicacy that would not wound the most sensitive nature, a liberality that never stood upon trifles where the main thing was secured, a charity that was slow to suspect evil, a generosity that never disparaged others, nor arrogated to himself the praise which belonged equally to them, a candor which took reproofs kindly and was ever ready to confess discovered errors and faults, a singular meekness in the endurance of injuries and insults, of which few men have ever met more, he united a boldness in the reproof of error and sin which never blenched before noble-man or rustic benefactor or opponent, and a firmness in maintaining essential truth which, when the case came to the worst, would sooner sacrifice the dearest friendship than betray the trust which he believed to be committed to him of God. A reformer by profession, he was scrupulously conservative of all that was good. Called to act at a time when, to use his own words, "we must be either disorderly or useless," he took no liberties that were not manifestly necessary, and, amidst many provocations to the contrary, adhered to the last, to the church of his fathers. No man was ever freer from sectarianism. The cry, "I am a churchman," "I am a dissenter," wearied and pained him. There was no moroseness in his nature; his cheerfulness is proverbial. No man wept more tenderly over the ruin of the

*Dr. Franklin's testimony on this point is very explicit. "I knew him intimately he says, "for upwards of thirty years; his integrity, disinterestedness and indefatigable zeal in *every good* work I have never seen equalled—I shall never see excelled." Dr. Franklin, it must be remembered, was not a convert of Whitefield, nor was he a man to waste words on anybody.

sinner, and no man rejoiced more exultingly over his conversion. No man rolled the thunders of Sinai with greater awfulness. No man sang in sweeter, gentler strains the songs of Bethlehem. Few could have borne the flattery which he received without being spoiled, and few the ill treatment without being soured. But he wearied of his popularity; and as to the abuse, he said once to a friend: "Blessed be God, contempt and I are pretty intimate and have been for above twice seven years." His character, during life, was subjected to the severest tests. Certainly he had faults—the faults all of them of an ardent and impulsive nature—which disappeared as his character matured. Those who knew him best loved and honored him most; and most of the opposition which he encountered was got up in his absence, and most of the contempt and ridicule came from persons who knew very little personally of him. His sense of sin was keen, his humility unfeigned, his gratitude to God overflowing, his faith strong, his love ardent, his hope unwavering, his walk with God all his life long "quite in the verge of heaven."* He loved his work and yet he longed to go home. Worn, wasted and sick with excess of labor, and the powers of life in him evidently getting low, he still worked on to the utmost of his bent, and one of his last characteristic sayings was "Lord, I am weary *in* thy work, but not weary *of* it."

But we must hasten on to the close of his career. He had taken a tearful leave of his friends in England, preaching his last field sermon where he did his first, to his old friends the colliers at Kingswood. He crossed the Atlantic in May and was warmly welcomed. The Governor, Council and Assembly of the State of Georgia paid him a visit and attended di-

*Whitefield was eminently a devout man as all his writings show. Yet he was not tied to set forms or rules. When he was too weary to pray he did not hesitate, as he himself intimates, to go silently to his bed. The Rev. Cornelius Winter, who was in the closest intimacy with him, speaking of his frame of mind on Sabbath mornings as more than ordinarily devotional, adds, "I say *more than ordinarily* because, though there was a vast vein of pleasantry usually in him, the intervals of conversation evidently appeared to be filled up with private ejaculations. His rest was much interrupted and his thoughts were much engaged with God through the night." He sometimes spent whole nights in prayer.

vine service at the Orphan House. He made several extensive tours and showed much of his former vigor. Still he was really a sick man and could not do as he once did. A ride of sixty miles on horseback or a pulpit sweat was no longer a sure restorative. But he turned his thoughts northward—to use his own words, employed on a former occasion, “Affection, intense affection cried out: Away to New England, to dear New England.” He reached Boston about the first of August and spent several weeks preaching there and in the neighborhood. Thence he came to Newburyport and preached once, intending to go eastward. But his friend, Parsons, detained him. He preached three times in Rowley and was to have returned hither. But falling sick, he went back to Boston, and resting there a few days again turned his face eastward. The catalogue of his labors from the time of his arrival at Newport to that of his death, as given by Dr. Pemberton in his commemorative sermon, is, considering his feeble state, as wonderful as that of any part of his life. From August 4th to September 1st he preached every day except one. His sickness, which commenced at Rowley, took up three days. His journey from Boston to Portsmouth “pretty much indisposed,” says my authority, caused an interval of two days more. On the 23d, 24th and 25th he preached each day at Portsmouth, on the 26th at Kittery, the 27th at Old York, the 28th at Portsmouth again, the 29th at EXETER. Mr. Parsons had met him at Portsmouth and engaged him to spend the Sabbath at Newburyport. He rode from Portsmouth to Exeter on horseback, fifteen miles, on Saturday morning. The concourse of people more than filled the church, and a sermon in the open air was suggested. Mr. Parsons remonstrated: “as I really thought,” he says, “it was throwing away his life.”* But the people were thronging to hear him and he was never the man to be sparing of himself. So they made a

*The Rev. Jonathan Parsons was the venerated and beloved first pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, a man of great energy and force of character, a thorough theologian, a warm-hearted preacher of the gospel and one of the most distinguished of the revivalists of his day. A very cordial attachment subsisted between him and Whitefield, of many years standing.

platform for him by throwing a board or two across two casks ; and there he stood, bolt upright, with nothing to lean against, in a damp hot atmosphere and preached, it is said, for two hours on the duty of self examination, from St. Paul's words : "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." It was his *last sermon*. In the course of it, he expressed either the wish or the belief, that so it would prove ; for he longed for his dismission. He had longed for it often during thirty years and more, and was often "in a strait betwixt two." He rode that evening fifteen miles more to Newburyport, and, after tea, retired to his room. In the night he was seized with a severe fit of asthma, and on Sabbath morning, about six o'clock, Sept. 30th, just one hundred years ago to-day, breathed his faithful soul out into the hands of his Redeemer and now shines, as the promise is to "them that turn many to righteousness," "as the stars forever and ever."

It was according to his own express desire that he was buried in front of this pulpit. This church was peculiarly endeared to him. It grew directly out of the great religious movement of which he was so conspicuous an instrument, and as I have always heard, it was by his advice that it adopted the Presbyterian form of government, a favorite one with him, though he was not of its jurisdiction.* Great efforts were made to remove the remains elsewhere. Gentlemen from Boston urged their removal thither, as Mr. Parsons thought, quite too pertinaciously, and seemed hardly courteous in their presentation of arguments. "Newburyport," they said, "is but a small place, hardly known on the other side of the water." "It *shall* be known," answered Mr. Parsons decisively. They pushed their suit until his resolute nature was quite

A leading motive with this church in departing from the Congregational order, was the desire to secure toleration for their separate existence as a church, which they could not do under the Congregational church as then by law established. Neither they nor Whitefield had any repugnance to Congregationalism *as such*. But he had a special predilection for Presbyterianism, Episcopalian as he was, and pronounced the Presbyterian Church of Scotland "the best national church in the world." Hence his advice. The church organized itself at first provisionally, but became Presbyterian as soon as it took any denominational character. It was never Congregational.

roused, and bringing down his strong fist upon the table he reiterated, "Shan't go! Shan't go!" and that settled the question.*

On Sabbath morning a vast concourse of people from all the surrounding region gathered in and around this house of worship. But the eloquent voice to which they expected to listen was silent. Mr. Parsons came to the pulpit, and announcing the sorrowful event, preached to the disappointed and sorrowful multitude from the words: "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." The elders and deacons of the church assumed, in the name of the congregation, the whole charge of the burial which took place during the week following, including the preparation of the vault; and the funeral procession, which was nearly a mile long, was joined by many thousands of people. The pulpit was hung with mourning emblems, the vessels in the harbor displayed their flags at half mast. The funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Jewet, of Rowley. Mr. Rogers, of Hampton, rising to lead in prayer was so overcome with his emotions that he broke out, "O, my

The most authentic account of the death and funeral is probably that contained in a letter of Mr. Parsons to Dr. Gillies, Whitefield's biographer, a copy of which is now in the possession of Jacob Stone, Esq., of Newburyport, and was published with his consent, by Rev. Mr. Vinton, to whose kindness I am indebted for calling my attention to it in 1869, in the *Congregational Review*. Most of the facts stated above were derived from that source. The conversation with the Boston gentleman was related to me by the late venerated Dr. Andrews of Newburyport. Mr. Parsons is not quite so circumstantial, but says, contrasting their interview with him with the very courteous one of the delegation from Portsmouth: "Several private gentlemen from B——n came to my house and in a manner that appeared pretty sovereign they made a sort of *demand* of Mr. Whitefield's body to carry to B——n and bury there. I told them that I could not consent to their taking the body from us—that I meant to submit to the righteous providence of God and would not contend, but was not willing to have his body carried from the place *where he had desired it should be laid*." Mr. P. says, in this letter, "I could give a long account of Mr. W.'s tours through New England for thirty years past, as I kept a journal of all the opportunities I had with him." He also intimates that, in respect to his last visit, death and funeral, "the public have been much imposed upon," and throws some discredit on the competency of Mr. Smith as a witness, from whom most of the current accounts are largely taken. He says of him: "His (W.'s) servant seemed like a man bereaved of his senses, and said many things that could not be to his honor to mention."

father, my father !” then stopped and wept, the people weeping with him all over the house. After prayer the congregation led, by one of the deacons who gave out the hymn line by line, according to the old custom, sang, “ Why do we mourn departing friends, or shake at death’s alarm ?” And, the body being laid in its place, and the congregation dismissed with the blessing, they “ went weeping through the streets to their respective places of abode.” So did “devout men carry him to his burial” and, all over England and America, hundreds of thousands “made great lamentation over him.”

In England, in accordance with Whitefield’s expressed wish, the venerable and beloved John Wesley, as soon as the news came, was designated to preach the commemorative sermon, which he did on the Lord’s day, Nov. 15th, in the two chapels in London, of which Whitefield had had the charge—a sweet and sacred testimony from one who loved him well, though they had differed and separated, and alike honorable to the speaker and the lamented subject of his touching eulogy.

I may naturally be asked here, what was the secret of Whitefield’s wonderful power, and I must detain you for a few words in reply, though the subject has been elsewhere so fully and ably discussed. He was, no doubt a very remarkable orator. His voice, strong as the blast of the clarion and melting as the softest notes of the flute, was at his perfect command and responded perfectly to all his emotions. Garrick said he could have made men weep though he had uttered nothing but the word *Mesopotamia*. Dr. Franklin compared the pleasure derived from his oratory to “that received from an excellent piece of music.” His style was simple, direct, almost homely sometimes, going straight to the common heart. He had a wonderful faculty of making men feel as if he were speaking individually to them. He told a story admirably and applied it as well. He had too an astonishing dramatic power. The anecdote of Lord Chesterfield, I believe, is not disputed. It is said, Whitefield was describing the perils of a poor blind beggar, groping his way on the edge of a precipice. Chesterfield had followed the preacher till he had brought the man out upon the giddy edge, and there presented him just top-

pling over. "Good God" cried Chesterfield, starting from his seat as if to rescue him, "he is gone!" We have some specimens of his bursts of eloquence, which are quite unique and must have been thrilling. But all this and a great deal more in the same line, does not account for its effects. It would have exhausted itself by repetition in a few years at most, and grown stale.

If I am not mistaken, two elements are chiefly to be recognized. The first is in *himself*—in his own mental and religious character, especially the latter, in that absolute self-consecration which he made at his ordination and maintained through life, in that glowing piety and constant "walk with God" which was manifest in his daily deportment, and, closely connected with that though greatly favored by his mental and emotional organization, in the force and vividness with which he conceived, felt, believed and communicated to others, the great, simple, heart-searching doctrines of which he was the herald. These last were to him present realities. The New Birth by the spirit of God, the justification of the sinner by the blood and righteousness of Christ, the utter ruin of apostate man by the guilt and corruption of sin, the sovereignty of grace, the eternal rewards of the believer and the unbeliever, God's holiness, the inexpressible love of Jesus (for these were the staple of his preaching—these and what belongs to them) were not doctrines merely but living facts, which he just as much believed as he saw the sun shining in the heavens. As he stood amidst the thronging thousands gathered to listen, his inward eye looked straight into their eternal future. He saw sinners standing upon the very verge of the "bottomless pit," and he wept bitter tears and uttered heartfelt cries in his efforts to save them. He saw Jesus, just as clearly, as Stephen saw him at his resurrection, "standing at the right hand of God" and beckoning them to himself; and he cried aloud, and with the tenderest pathos, begged and pleaded with them at once to go to him. He spoke not in his own name but in God's, whose messenger of love he fully believed and felt himself to be; and, so believing, he spoke with what he was accustomed to call "Gospel authority." His fine voice and

perfect action answering to all his thoughts and emotions as the tones of a musical instrument, to the lip and finger of a skillful performer, no doubt, did wonders for him; but it was not these, but the thoughts and feelings they expressed, that produced the effect. It was the "powers of the world to come," with which he lived constantly in loving and adoring intercourse, pervading his soul, seizing and appropriating to their use his remarkable physical and conceptive faculties and speaking out in every utterance of his voice and gesture of his body. Whitefield, with all his oratory, would have been nothing, comparatively, without his religion—nothing indeed in any other department than that of a preacher of that religion. To that he gave himself with a singleness of aim and energy of purpose hardly paralleled in the history of human action. It was the powerful lens which concentrated into one burning focus all his thoughts, passions and abilities.

The other element is to be found in what I may call the *specialty of his position*, or more specifically in his special mission from God as the apostle of a remarkable era. A man of his character would have mighty power in almost any circumstances. But that does not tell the whole story. We indulge here no superstitious fancies. In Whitefield there was nothing more supernatural than in any of the rest of us. Both he and the times in which he lived were subject to the same laws, natural and spiritual, which control all other persons and times. But there is one fact not to be disputed. The times in which he acted, were in a religious point of view, remarkable times. He was himself the product of them. All over England and America there was, before he came upon the stage and during the whole course of his action, upon it, an unusual waking up to the reality and binding obligations of the religion of Christ. That is a simple historical fact. Truths which, at other times, skim the surface of men's minds, now, in the hands of those who felt their power, took hold of the deepest springs of the heart. Men and women, old and young, high and low, cultivated and uncultivated bowed to their force as does the forest to the blast of a tempest. It is equally clear, as a matter of history, that of all the instruments of that remarkable move-

ment, George Whitefield was endowed with qualities which most eminently fitted him for that service. It was as if he had been made and fashioned expressly for it. Now, believing as I do, in common with most of my religious countrymen, that there is really a God, a living, personal God, thinking, feeling, willing, acting in the affairs of the world, I cannot but ascribe this most beneficent religious movement and the fitness of the man for it, in virtue of which he worked for the accomplishment of its ends with the same precision and certainty of aim as the main spring works upon the cogs and wheels of a watch to effect the designs of its maker, to the providence and grace of this great Disposer of all things. And just in this divinely ordained fitness of the man to the work do I find one of the main secrets of the preacher's wonderful power. Talent is not merely subjective. As far as it is that alone, it falls dead. All the great men of the world owe their greatness to their adaptation to their time and place. And Whitefield's is to be found, not in his mental and emotional organization only, not by any means in his art, not indeed in his eminent Christian zeal, fervor and devotion independently considered, but in the fact that he was a chosen instrument fitted by the divine hand to perform just the work which the divine purpose of compassion for a degenerate and sinking age had undertaken to accomplish. Whitefield was not the only one of his class. Edwards, Tenant, Rowland, Parsons, in America; Wesley, Berdridge, Rowlands, Howell Harris, Griffith, Jones, in England and Wales, produced some of the same effects. But he was *facile princeps*—the chief of them all. And in proportion as he was so was his divine commission the more apparent. So his contemporaries seem to have judged. Parsons says: "I have often considered him as an angel flying through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth. Wherever he flew, like a flame of fire his ministry gave alarm to all sorts of people." "In some such manner," says another, "have I been tempted to conceive of a seraph, were he sent down to preach among us and to tell us what he *had heard and seen above*." "It is certain," says Henry Venn, "that his amazing popularity was only from his

usefulness ; for he no sooner opened his mouth as a speaker than God commanded an extraordinary blessing on his word." Whitefield, I repeat the opinion, would have been, with all his eloquence, comparatively a common man without his gospel, and the simple but stupendous truths to which he gave utterance in its name ; and, even with these, he could never have attained to the same eminence except as the divinely chosen and fitted instrument of the all-conquering grace of God in the GREAT REVIVAL.

And now what has been the result ? The lapse of a century has sufficed to remove from the world all the direct effects on the hearts of individuals. There were few here who had any distinct recollections of him when I came to Newburyport, thirty-five years ago. Mr. Bartlett remembered him, but had not much to tell. Mrs. Clarkson, whose husband was a step-son of Mr. Parsons, and who was often in the family, remembered him as "a cheery old gentleman, a very cheery old gentleman." She had heard him "joke mother Parsons about her old cap." Perhaps the cap did not quite come up to his very nice notions. A very old woman then living in the lower part of Lime street remembered seeing him spread out his hands and, beckoning to the children in the gallery, call to those "dear little birds" "to come and fly to the arms of their Saviour." Mrs. Sarah Eaton, a woman of rough speech and manners who had been bed-ridden for several years, had very clear recollections of the day of his death, and in the account she gave, represented, no doubt, the adverse side of popular opinion. "She was a gal then," she said, "and had no religion herself;" and when she met the people in the streets going away and they told her Whitefield was dead, she told them she was "glad on't;" for "it made me so *mad*," she said, "to see 'em all running a'ter him." The thousands and hundreds of thousands, that loved his ministry on the one hand or hated and reviled it on the other, have all gone to their account ; "also their love, their hatred and their envy is now perished."

Still there are and must be vast results left on the church and the world. And what are they ? The exact answer to

this question God only can give; for he only can unravel the net-work of influences and assign to each their part in any great event in the world's history. The most we can say of any one man, in any case, is that he had a *great hand in it*. Plain it is, from what we have seen, that the crisis was one of the most momentous. Equally plain that the deliverance wrought by the divine hand was among the most signal. It saved the age.

If we should undertake to number the actual conversions, no doubt we must fail. The judgement day alone can furnish the materials. Henry Venn says of Whitefield: "The seals of his ministry, I am persuaded are more than could be credited could the number be fixed." John Newton says: "It seemed as if he never preached in vain. Perhaps there is hardly a place in all the extensive compass of his labors where some may not yet be found who thankfully acknowledge him as their spiritual father." John Wesley challenges contradiction. "Have we ever heard of any person who has been the blessed instrument of bringing so many sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." An able recent writer says of him and his associates: "No such harvest of souls is recorded to have been gathered by any body of contemporary men since the first century." Such results do not end with the life of the converts! Among these arose, even in Whitefield's time, not a few of the ablest and best ministers of the Gospel, beginning a true apostolic succession of the best sort, whose type, so far from being effaced, is multiplying itself from age to age in all our evangelical denominations. Several important institutions for this purpose owe their origin to this movement. Dartmouth College is one of them. So is Princeton. So are the two principal classical and theological colleges in Wales, those of Bala and Trevecca.

Whitefield organized no new denomination such as Wesley organized, but he was instrumental in infusing a new spirit into the existing ones. By his clear, earnest and faithful inculcation he restored and gave new life to the old puritan doctrines, when they were fast passing into neglect or becoming diluted.

In the church of England the evangelical portion owes its existence, unquestionably, to his influence. The elements of evangelical piety introduced by his ministry into the ranks of the nobility, both in England and Scotland, have produced and are still producing some of the most beautiful fruits of Christian culture and large-hearted benevolence. The great Methodist denomination, now so powerful and so efficient for good here and in England, was in the beginning made up largely of his converts, and owes to his ministry some of the best elements of its character, though it does not bear his name. The Baptist church felt the power of the same movement, and in this country certainly, gathered into itself, eventually, many of the churches formed during its progress. The Presbyterian church of Scotland was re-invigorated and received an element of spiritual life and practical beneficence greatly needed to modify and counterbalance its doctrinal stiffness. The Presbyterian church of Wales, otherwise called the Calvinist-Methodist church, now the strongest church in the Principality, was directly and confessedly the child of his ministry.* Wales was in a most deplorable state. Whitefield's ministry shook it from end to end and pervaded it through and through with a new spirit. There the results took a distinct organization, which is at the present moment, strong, efficient, and growing. The Presbyterian church in this country owes a vast deal to the same movement. Not only Princeton College but Princeton Theological Seminary, and all the spreading fruits that have come forth from both may be fairly traced to it. And as for Congregationalism in New England—*orthodox* Congregationalism, now so strong, so energetic, so aggressive in all parts of the land, it may be justly said to have been saved almost from extinction, under God, by the great revival to which this "Burning and Shining Light" of his age contributed so much. Nor only saved. It too, as well as the other denominations, received from the movement a new energy.

We may trace, also, in a large degree, to this source the

*So is the Lady Huntingdon connection in England and another small body called, I think, the Whitefield Methodist.

whole system of aggressive movements on the ranks of sin and wretchedness throughout the world by which the modern evangelical church is distinguished. A recent writer has very justly remarked that "Whitefield was the very first Englishman who seems to have thoroughly understood what Dr Chalmers aptly called the aggressive system. He did not sit tamely at the fireside mourning over the wickedness of the land. He went forth to beard the devil in his high places. He dived into holes and corners after sinners." Mark his characteristic expression, borrowed, as I have somewhere heard, from Brainerd's Indians: "*hunting* for sinners." No doubt, the zeal which now characterizes the efforts of the church for home and foreign evangelization, as well as the introduction of the most approved measures now in use for the promotion of religion* owes very much to the quickening influence of the great work of grace of which he was so conspicuous an instrument. The Protestant Reformation was to a great degree outward, among institutions, doctrines, forms and methods of worship. The churches thus emancipated, re-organized and indoctrinated by the Protestant movement, now needed another, which should put life and practical energy into their body. And this was accomplished, more than by any other means, by what we may call, with due qualification yet with manifest justice, the WHITEFIELDIAN REVIVAL.

It is thus, and by similar results of his great ministry, that to-day, after he has already sung in glory and his precious and sacred remains have reposed under this favored pulpit an entire century, this great "PRINCE OF PREACHERS," as he was justly called by the sainted Toplady, "being dead yet speaketh,"—speaketh in every corner of the land that gave him birth,—in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and by an echo of the same, in India, Africa, China, Australia, and wherever the martial and commercial power of England has made its influence predominant; speaketh through all the borders of this then young and feeble but now vast, powerful and growing country; speaketh, not in one of the denominations

*The "*Societies*" of that day were the precursors of our evening prayer meetings.

only, of which none could claim to appropriate this large-souled catholic spirit, but in all who still love the truths he taught and the Saviour whom he served ; speaketh in every mission established by English speaking men in every corner of the globe, speaks now and will speak louder and louder as the voice echoes on down the coming century and to the remote generations. He needs no costly pile to preserve his memory. The beautiful monument that stands in the corner of this church, with its emblematic flame rising to heaven, is indeed a worthy tribute.* We guard and will guard with care, in this our loved house of worship, his honored dust. You, my dear brethren of this ancient church, have a tender and sacred trust committed to you to protect these mortal remains of one so justly revered. But the chief honor we can do to his memory is to feel in our own hearts his burning love for Jesus and the souls of his fellow-men, and make the motto of our lives the same with his, who said " O that I had a thousand tongues—the ever-loving, ever-lovely Jesus should have them all."

*Erected by the munificence of that large-hearted giver, William Bartlet, Esq.

The other exercises of the morning were a voluntary on the organ ; a sentence from Beethoven ; invocation and reading of the scriptures by the Rev. F. W. Bakeman, of Newburyport ; prayer by the Rev. Randolph Campbell, of the same city ; singing by the choir, of the hymn beginning, " How rich thy bounty, King of Kings." The Commemorative Discourse followed, occupying nearly two hours in delivery. After the singing of an anthem—" Blessed are the people"—the Rev. Dr. Stearns pronounced the benediction.

AFTERNOON.

Invitations to be present and take part in the services of the afternoon, had been extended to several of the eminent clergy of the land, sons of Newburyport and others. So far as possible it was desired to have all the denominations with which Whitefield especially labored, represented among the speakers.

The Rev. George W. Blagden, D. D., of the Old South Church, Boston, presided, and introduced the speakers to the audience. Prayer was offered by the Rev. J. B. Wakeley, D. D., of Newburgh, N. Y. Dr. Blagden then made a statement in regard to Whitefield's Orphan House in Georgia which is added as a note at the close of this pamphlet. He spoke also of the lessons of the day, gathering them all under the saying of the apostle, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The duty of giving the heart to the Saviour for whom Whitefield labored, in order worthily to commemorate his death, was enforced upon the audience.

The pastor of the church, the Rev. Charles S. Durfee, then read letters received from several who had been invited to be present on the occasion, regretting their inability to do so; among them, Rev. John Stoughton, D. D. and Rev. Henry Allon, of London, Eng; President McCosh, of Princeton, N. J.; Rev. John Hall, D. D., of New York, and John G. Whitier, of Amesbury, Mass.

The Rev. Ashbel G. Vermilye, D. D., of Utica, N. Y., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, from 1850 to 1863, was then introduced by the President.

Dr. Vermilye said: "A century and a quarter ago witnessed a strange sight in this venerable old town, then a place of about two thousand inhabitants. An immense crowd is hurrying, at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning, to the corner of High and Federal streets. And some of them, men and women too, young and old, have come, riding or afoot, even from Rowley. For what strange thing? Of all other strange

things, to hear a sermon ! But the preacher is George Whitefield. He gives out his text :—" Ye are the salt of the earth, but if," &c. And then his voice rolls over the assembly, as he begins : "and whom does the apostle *mean*, when he says, '*ye* are ?' Why you, ye saints of Newbury ; but I much fear me ye have lost your savor !" Then, after a warm and stirring address to Christians, he turns an appealing voice to sinners ; and the audience is moved by his words, as human oratory has seldom moved men.

On the same spot a stone was thrown at him, which struck the little bible he held ; when, in a powerful tone, he exclaimed : "I stand in the king's highway and hold in my hand the king's commission ; and I must and will preach :"
which he did without further interruption.

At a later period, he preached in this church, even before it was finished. "Didn't we have good times," said an old lady who died aged 105 years, "when we used to sit on the benches, and Mr. Whitefield preached." And it was with his usual power. You would have seen souls bowing, occasionally a smile, but more often a tear ; and one, I know, the ancestor of a great and Christian posterity, was converted while clinging to the pulpit-rail to prevent being crushed away by the crowd. Such was the impression he made, that after eighty-two years, a bed-ridden old lady whom I knew, could not speak of him without excitement in her voice and manner. When 16 years of age, she had herself walked with her mother to Exeter (fourteen miles) to hear him. One hundred years have passed since he was buried, as other men are ; not an echo of his voice lingers in any living ear ; and yet there is eloquence to gather men, even in the name of Whitefield—as it has gathered us this day. What gave him his influence and power ?

We have read of the prophets, what they said and did ; and was not he, in his kind, a prophet ? Look at him, and you see a plain man in gown and bands and wig, with a cast in his eye, a stern look, but alert and quick in his movements. In his preaching, he turns no gilded periods, as rhetoricians do ; digs no mines of thought, nor scatters their treasures abroad

in ingots of gold. His mental gifts and acquirements are not great. He wrote no book. He occupies to-day no niche in the minds of men anywhere near Edwards, as one of "the dead but sceptred souls that rule us from their urns." But in that man, physically weak, mentally not eminent, who lies there, perhaps, panting and exhausted by some field-preaching, you will find the very "spirit and power" of Elias; that which made *him* great, first of all his *spiritual* power.

First, Whitefield's mind was burning with great ideas. Not great as men are apt to estimate ideas. The fuel that made his furnace hot, came from none of the usual fields of thought. It was not by his grand handling of scientific or other truths of the kind, that he surprised cold critics like Chesterfield into a momentary sympathy and a reluctant homage. But, two thoughts from God's book had taken full possession of his soul—man a lost sinner, in danger of death; and redemption by Christ and the renewing of His Holy Spirit, the only remedy. Upon these two themes he rung the changes through eighteen thousand sermons, with a readiness of diction and a power of illustration that was amazing. He felt the truth he uttered, burned with it; and his audiences saw the flame, felt the heat, and themselves caught fire before the intense energy of the speaker.

Second, I think the state of the times and of his audiences must be considered. The gospel had long been withheld from them. They knew nothing of its great prime truths. No wonder, then, they staggered and reeled before the mighty vision of its verities thus newly presented to them: before *him*, as he grappled and shook and tugged at their consciences with tremendous zeal, till rooted prejudices gave way. "I came," said one, "with my pocket full of stones to break your head, but you have broken my heart." Peter the hermit was, no doubt, an orator; but he roused Europe to a congenial task. They followed him willingly in crowds, though only to perish by the way. Whitefield found his hearers dead, till he brought the unaccustomed gospel to bear upon them; then they arose and followed him by thousands to a new, a holier, an eternal life.

Third, His voice must be mentioned—without which he would not have been Whitefield, nor have produced such marvelous effects. You know the power of sound to thrill, charm or terrify ; but nothing can move us like the human voice uttering great thoughts with passion and flame. And his was a wonderful voice, loud beyond the ordinary compass of good voices—they say it could be heard a mile ; and yet it was not a storm of mere noises in the ear, but modulated to pass from the roll of the thunder to the zephyr's murmur as it gently shakes the leaves. With his voice, too, went the vivid illustration, the rapid transformation of style, the whole harmonious manner. It is not always *what* a man says, so much as *how* he says it. And Whitefield's loving, emotional nature, his imagination quick to breathe life into an incident, his dramatic power and fine voice, added to *what* he said the charm of a manner the most moving, winning, melting. Sometimes he touched the smiles, and then the tears ; and he touched the smiles that he might afterwards draw the tears—for you know how near smiles and tears lie together. Sometimes his speech was like a cloud, dark, portentous, thundering ; and as, with face and manner all ablaze, he exclaimed, " Oh ! the wrath to come, the wrath to come," who could resist the contagion of such earnestness ? They seemed to see the impending ruin, and felt the danger he described. Dr. Smalley, who heard him when a boy, says :—" I was altogether absorbed in the services of this bold preacher, his stern look, his great voice, his earnest words ; and as I thought of my soul, and of Christ, and salvation, I was so carried away in my feelings, as not to know where I was. I could not keep my eyes off from him. I saw him in his prayer, his eyes wide open, looking on high ; and I certainly thought that he saw that Great Being up there, with whom he was talking and pleading so earnestly." An old lady of 98 years told me the anecdote, usually attributed to Rowland Hill, but which I think must belong to Whitefield : that a lady, richly dressed, was sitting in the front pew, whose manner annoyed him greatly. Closing his Bible he exclaimed, " no more preaching here to-day—we are going to have an auction. An auction !

Yes, a lady dressed in silk—who bids?" Then he portrayed vanity, the world, Satan, as bidders; till she was pale and purple with rage. But then, changing his voice and whole manner, he said:—"but hark! I hear another—it is the Saviour's voice—I'll give my life for her;" and the lady burst into tears.

Fourth, I can only add, that the Holy Spirit was with him. That rare oratory would have lacked its soul, without that which made his whole life peculiar,—“a man *full* of the Holy Ghost”; full, so full, as to keep his heart and eyes and speech overflowing continually with love to God and man. And so he went moving round the world; a comet, if you will; but one whose train was a cloud of stars, gathered from collieries, the most unlikely places and material of earth, to shine forever among the jewelry of heaven. And then he died; silent at length, who for 30 years had never been silent, on the great themes of Christ and human salvation: silent even when dying,—as he had once predicted; for, said he, “God has permitted me to testify so often for him, that he will need no dying testimony from me”:—died, and was buried. There have, no doubt, been more stately funerals than his. England poured from her coffers a more elaborate and showy mourning when George 2d died; and Warburton the bishop, who thought Whitefield “mad,” went to his grave with more pomp of ceremony. But when Whitefield died, a genuine and unusual grief infected the whole community. As they had crowded to his preaching, as that of a flaming angel, so they now crowded weeping to his burial. But *is* Whitefield dead? True, there stands his cenotaph, and in the little vaulted chamber that holds his remains the bare skull, when you touch it, gives no echo of life. And yet—what means this gathering? No! to be dead is not to be remembered, to have done nothing that lasts. And, in this sense, Whitefield is not dead. During the rebellion they used to sing, “John Brown’s soul is marching on.” And *his* soul is marching on. He founded no sect; but he transfused his soul into every denomination and sect. And it is marching on, in England, Wales, America; as the storm of the tropics marches, in

waves successive, that reach and resound on distant shores. Such men do not come often ; they would not be such treasures if they did. But who, in our day, would not hail as an angel from God him who in the place of Whitefield's ashes, could re-kindle Whitefield's fires ; whose single voice could revive religion as his did. and multiply converts by such thousands ?

The next speaker was the Rev. George S. Hare, D. D., of Boston,* who said he was here, as he understood, because he was a Methodist, representing an organization which included nearly one-half of Protestant christendom, and in its congregations nearly one-fifth of the people of the nation. He spoke of Whitefield as a Methodist, sketching his early life, his connection with the Wesleys, who, he said, founded more churches than the apostles. He recited the vows of Whitefield when he entered the ministry, and dwelt at some length upon the marvels that attended the preaching of Whitefield and the Wesleys. The differences of opinion between them were dwelt upon, and yet their substantial unity was maintained and the opinion expressed that all differences were at an end with them in heaven. Whitefield stood forth as the founder of the Calvinistic Methodists, and Wesley of the Arminian Methodists. At Whitefield's death the Calvinistic Methodists became separated into three divisions: the Lady Huntington connection, who had about sixty chapels; the New Connection of Whitefield Brothers, who had been mainly absorbed in other sects; and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, who had a chapel in every village of Wales, which country was inscribed all over with the signatures of Whitefield's labors.

The President then announced Rev. Rufus W. Clark, D. D., of Albany, N. Y., who spoke as follows :—

Standing in this pulpit, brings vividly to my mind the services and scenes of the past. In this church I worshipped God in childhood, and learned to reverence the sanctuary and

*It is to be regretted that no fuller report of Dr. Hare's address could be obtained.

the institutions of religion. At this altar I received the holy rite of baptism, and within these walls my honored father served as an elder of the church for forty years. His familiar face, and the forms of most of those who occupied these pews, in my youth, have passed away from earth. They have ceased their worship here and joined the general assembly and church of the firstborn in heaven.

I am reminded of the able and faithful ministers who here unfolded divine truth; enforced with eloquent lives the duties of religion, and have passed to their reward in heaven. The venerable Dr. Dana appears before me, the embodiment of Christian sanctity, the able expounder of the doctrines of Christianity, and defender of a rigid orthodoxy at a period when errors were creeping into the churches.

Succeeding him came the Rev. Samuel P. Williams, whose son bearing his name is with us to-day, and whose fervid eloquence and intellectual power, impressed not only his own congregation, but this entire community. I easily recall the earnestness with which I listened to his discourses, especially those which he delivered shortly before the close of his earthly labors. The accomplished and scholarly Dr. John Proudfit followed him, whose social qualities and personal attractions, as well as finished pulpit efforts, won my affection and admiration. Recently, after valuable services rendered elsewhere, he has been called by the Master to his heavenly kingdom. The living successors of these eminent divines, whom the present pastor has welcomed here to-day, we rejoice to know, are occupying posts of wide usefulness, in other parts of the Lord's vineyard.

But the occasion upon which we have assembled, calls us to commemorate the memory and achievements of the prince of preachers, whose dust rests beneath this pulpit. As his life and the incidents connected with his history have been so fully and ably presented by the gentlemen who have preceded me, it only remains for me to gather up a few of the lessons of the hour, in accordance with the suggestion of our presiding officer, that the value of past history lies in the benefits it confers upon the present time.

From the career of George Whitefield we learn first the power of individual effort in the service of Christ. The age in which we live is distinguished for organized action in associations and societies. This form of Christian labor is necessary, and is attended with great good. But as we study the history of the church and of the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, we find that God's special blessings have rested upon individual consecration to him. The church has advanced under great leaders, inspired by a holy ardor; and giving their entire intellectual and moral forces to the service of God. Moses was more to the cause of truth and righteousness than thousands of the Israelites. When he was upon the mount receiving the law, and the people were rendering divine honors to a golden calf, the strength of the church seemed to abide in his soul. His individual faithfulness was the pillar that upheld the spiritual kingdom, amid the darkness of heathenism and the perils of apostacy.

When the gospel was to be established in the Gentile world, while several disciples were appointed to their work, one was divinely commissioned to prosecute it with signal vigor and success. St. Paul was the soul of the enterprise, and to him was given the power to overcome great difficulties and establish Christian churches amid Jewish bigotry and Pagan superstition.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was, under God, wrought out by individual rather than associated effort. In single minds the light of divine truth was first kindled; in single hearts the resolution was formed to smite the fabrics of error and oppression, that crushed the nations of Europe. Luther stands forth the spiritual power around which the friends of freedom and truth rallied, and from which they received their enthusiasm and hopes. Whitefield and Wesley, of whom we have heard so much of interest to-day, appear before us in the line of entire consecration to God, and hence of leadership. One was distinguished for his eloquence, and sway over the hearts of the multitudes who thronged to listen to him, and the other for his organizing power; while both were animated by the most intense religious fervor.

Whitefield was probably the instrument of bringing more souls to Christ than any preacher since the time of the apostles. He fired with new zeal the hearts of his ministerial brethren. He aroused churches to a fresh activity, and widely developed the latent powers and resources of the people of God. He had faith in that union with Christ which imparts to the mind a superhuman energy, and gives the greatest success to Christian labors. His achievements reveal what is possible to any one who will make the service of God the supreme end of his being, and resolve to know nothing among men "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Whitefield also expressed the unity and catholicity of the Christian church. While riding in the cars to this city to-day, I was accompanied by an old friend and townsman who is an Episcopal clergyman. He claimed Whitefield as an Episcopalian, because he was brought up in that church and retained through life, his connection with it. The Methodist brother who has just addressed us, has endeavored to prove that Whitefield was a Methodist, because of his connection with the Wesleys, and others, who established this great and influential denomination. As his remains lie under the pulpit of a Presbyterian church, the Presbyterians might, perhaps, present a claim to him based upon this fact. But the simple truth is: he was too large a man for any one denomination. He belonged to the universal church of our Lord Jesus Christ. He held the great doctrines common to all evangelical sects; was ready to labor in cordial fellowship with all, and possessed a zeal for the honor of the divine head of the church, that to-day, would be a blessing and a power to the ministry, of every name throughout Christendom. We contemplate his catholic spirit with peculiar admiration at the present time, when so many earnest members of the various denominations are not only expressing their fellowship, but seeking to make the unity that prevails, a power for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Let existing sects rise to the standard of consecration, and labor that he reached, and by a natural law they would move together, and feel the inspiration of one faith, and be guided by one Lord.

The career of Whitefield also reveals to us the secret of ministerial success. He was not a man of extraordinary intellectual abilities. His pulpit power did not consist in the depth or originality of his thoughts; nor in logical skill; nor in treasures drawn from the various departments of learning. His style was simple, and his printed discourses present few attractions to the reader. His voice was remarkably rich, sweet and powerful. His emotional nature was easily moved, and he possessed the gifts of a natural orator. But the power within him that gave life to every thought, force to every truth, impressiveness to his illustrations, and kindled in his soul the flames of intense feeling and made his eloquence irresistible, was the power of the Holy Spirit. What he had of talents, more or less; what he had of gifts, natural or acquired, he laid upon the altar of God, and God breathed into his body and soul His own Spirit. This enabled him to prosecute his work with strong faith and high expectations of success. This made his sermons penetrate the consciences, stir the feelings, sway the reason and mould the lives of his hearers. This made him a spiritual force in the church that has been felt to this hour, and will grow with the growing kingdom of God through all time.

Let us who are here, and the ministry of our day, obtain this Divine Spirit, and under the augmented power of the American pulpit, the church will awake and put on her strength; the truth will be mighty to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin, and we may discern in the horizon the dawn of the millennial glory.

Rev. Alexander King, of London, England, was presented to the audience as a representative of the land of Whitefield's birth.

He expressed his great gratification at being enabled to take part in this solemn and sacred celebration, and trusted that all present might carry away in their hearts the inspiration of the memories awakened here to-day.

He regretted the absence of Dr. Stoughton, Mr. Bickersteth and Mr. Allon, who would have so worthily represented the

evangelical communities of Great Britain ; and as the only representative of the British churches present, he might testify to the deep sympathy of British christians, thousands of whom were now in spirit present with that meeting, earnestly desiring to honor the memory of the great preacher, and to bless God for His labors in the gospel.

Mr. King mentioned that he had, himself, frequently come across the tracks of Whitefield's wonderful work, both in England and in Ireland.

A few years ago he had preached in the noble church erected to the memory of Whitefield at Kingsdown by Bristol, and stood upon the scene of his marvelous work amongst the colliers in that region.

In Bristol, in London, and in many other places throughout England, amongst Christians of various denominations, the sacred and loving memory of the name of the man of God is as fresh and fragrant to-day as though the present generation had heard his voice and felt the spell of his matchless eloquence.

In Ireland, many years ago, he had himself been led to open-air preaching, when even the old Methodist preachers—the heroic Evangelists of an earlier era—had abandoned it ; and he thanked God he had had a glorious success and was permitted to preach the gospel in that way in every part of that country, to hundreds and thousands who would not otherwise have heard it. He was also glad to testify that he had never been stoned or maltreated by the poor Roman Catholic people, many of whom received the word with gladness ; and he wished to record there that day that he had been sustained and animated in that effort by remembering the glorious work which God had enabled Whitefield to perform, in darker days and often at the peril of his life.

He invited the audience to appreciate the sacredness and moral grandeur of this occasion.

We are not hero-worshippers ! We do not canonize our departed saints. We do not put sentimentalism for piety. He doubted if we were sentimental enough. Yet we do homage to the memory of heroic Christian zeal. We remember it is

written the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance, and we bless God for the great grace bestowed upon His servant, and for the glorious results of his faithful and abundant labors.

Mr. King urged special attention to the lesson of true catholicity and brotherly love to be learned by all the churches from this commemoration of the life and work of Whitefield.

In conclusion he affectionately admonished all to catch fresh inspiration for the work of God from the touching solemnities of this day, and besought each Christian present to realize the power of a consecrated life !

The closing benediction was pronounced by the pastor.

The exercises continued from two o'clock till nearly five. They were pleasantly varied by the singing of two appropriate hymns by the choir, whose "modest and excellent manner of performing their part" was much commended.

The only decorations were a wreath of laurel surrounding the cenotaph ; a painting of the old church hung at the side of the pulpit ; and in front of it a portrait of Whitefield, kindly loaned for the occasion by Mr. W. P. Johnson, of Chelsea. The chair in which Whitefield died, the property of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions ; a ring worn by him, now in the possession of John Tappan, Esq., of Boston ; and a medal struck at the time of his death, were on exhibition in front of the pulpit, together with Rev. Mr. Parsons' writing desk, given to the church for the use of its pastors. On it was placed the old Bible of the church, from which Whitefield had often read.

NOTE.—The statement of Dr. Blagden, referred to in his opening address, is as follows: "Rev. George Whitefield came to the then infant colony of Georgia, about the year 1750, and at that time established a charity called "The Union Society," so named because it was of all religious denominations, for the support and education of orphan boys. He had really begun the establishment of this Orphan House in 1738, during his first visit to Georgia, and it was first proposed to him, he says, by his dear friend, Charles Wesley, who connected the scheme with Gen. Oglethorpe. He had heard and read of what Professor Franck had done in Germany. This institution is still in existence, and last year celebrated its one hundred and twentieth anniversary. Joseph Story Fay, Esq., who now resides in Boston, while resident in Savannah, was President, and did a great deal for it. Bethesda, Whitefield's ancient site for the House, had been abandoned. Through Mr. Fay's instrumentality it was repurchased and resuscitated. Edward Padelford, Esq., of Savannah, lately deceased, a native of Taunton, Mass., was a most generous benefactor while living, and in his will left it a legacy of \$100,000. The venerable Lowell Mason was Secretary from 1824 to 1827. The society has commenced this year a new building of a substantial character. Whitefield was on a visit North to obtain some pecuniary aid for this society, when he sickened and died at Newburyport. Last year the Union Society received a likeness of Whitefield and a volume of sermons preached in England on the occasion of his death, a present from the Rev. John Lockwood, Torley Bridge, Halifax, England. According to the original charter, it was to be granted as long as three members celebrated the anniversary, which is St. George's day, April 23. There were three gentlemen prisoners of war on board of a British man-of-war, who craved permission from the commanding officer to go ashore and celebrate this anniversary under an oak tree, at Sunbury, Ga., which was granted. The three original members were of three denominations—Protestant, Catholic, and Israelite. [See Gillies' Life of Whitefield, pp, 188, 189. 202.]

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Old South Church

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