MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE
OF THE REVEREND
GEORGE WHITEFIELD, MA
Late Chaplain to the Right Honourable
THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON:
In which
Every Circumstance worthy of Notice, both in his
private and public Character, is recorded.
 Faithfully selected from his Original Papers,
Journals, and Letters.
 Illustrated by
A Variety of interesting and entertaining
Anecdotes, from the best Authorities.
To which are added
A particular Account of his Death and Funeral;
and Extracts from the Sermons, which were
preached on that Occasion.
Compiled
the Rev. JOHN GILLIES, DD

Yea doubtless I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the
knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: For whom I have suffered
the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I might
And I will very gladly spend, and be spent for you. 2 Corinthians 12:15.
For he that winneth souls is wise. Proverbs 11:30.
And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,
and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever
and ever. Daniel 12:3.

LONDON:
Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY, in the Poultry;
and Messieurs KINCAID and CREECH, at Edinburgh.
MDCCLXXII.
TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Countess of Huntingdon,

These Memoirs of the Life of

The Rev. Mr Whitefield,

Are Most Respectfully Inscribed,

by

Her Ladyship's

Most Obedient,

And Most Humble Servant,

John Gillies.
THE CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.
His birth and parentage.—Early appearances of his eloquence at school.—At the age of seventeen, brought under the prevailing influence of religious impressions.

CHAPTER II.
At eighteen, goes to the University of Oxford, and becomes acquainted with the Methodists.—Is treated with great kindness by the Rev. Mr John and Charles Wesley.—Endangers his health by excessive bodily austerities but is happily recovered.—After his recovery feels great peace and joy in believing on the Son of God.—Erects a religious Society of young persons at Gloucester.—Is ordained by Bishop Benson in the 22nd year of his age.—His behaviour on that occasion.—Preaches his first Sermon in Gloucester.—Returns to Oxford.—Is called to officiate at the Tower.—And at Dummer in Hampshire.—Longs to go abroad, and preach the Gospel in Georgia.—Gladly embraces the first appearance of an invitation to go thither.—His great popularity at Gloucester, Bristol, and London, while he prepares to go abroad.—Preaches in London nine times a week.—Opposition from some of the Clergy.

CHAPTER III.
Embarks for Georgia, December 1737.—His behaviour on board.—Touches at Gibraltar, where he is courteously received.—Remarkable particulars in his voyage from Gibraltar to Georgia.—His observations upon the state of the Colony, at his first arrival.—Is convinced of the great utility of an Orphan house there.
CHAPTER IV.
Re-embarks for England to receive Priest’s orders, and get contributions for the Orphan-house.—Is driven into Limerick harbour in Ireland; and is kindly treated by Bishop Burscough, Dr Delany, Bishop Rundle, and Archbishop Bolton.—At his arrival in London, meets with a cold reception from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London.—The Trustees for Georgia receive him more cordially.—Offence taken at his Journals.—Several Churches are refused to him, but he is more followed by the people than ever.—Receives Priest’s orders from Bishop Benson, January 1739.—Makes collections for several charitable purposes.—Preaches to the colliers in Kingswood.—Preaches in Wales with Mr Howell Harris.—Ventures to preach in Moorfields.

CHAPTER V.
Preaches on Kennington-Common and Blackheath, to prodigious multitudes, who were all attention.—Embarks the second time for America, August 1739.—Preaches at Philadelphia and New-York, and in several places in Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas.—While making collections, for the Orphan-house, hires a place for the reception of the poor children.—Begins to build the house, March 1740.

CHAPTER VI.
Preaches in various places with great apparent success.—Receives pressing invitations to New England.—His reception there.— Comes back to Philadelphia, and preaches to several thousands, in a house built for that purpose, since his last departure.—Returns to England in spring 1741.

CHAPTER VII.
The people’s behaviour towards him greatly changed.—Unwillingly parts from Mr John and Charles Wesley.—Occasion
of building the Tabernacle.—Is solicited to visit Scotland.—
His parting from Messieurs Erskines.

CHAPTER VIII.
Letters showing his reception, ministrations, and success, at
the principal places in Scotland.—At Edinburgh.—At
Glasgow.—At Aberdeen.—At Dundee.—At smaller places.—A
view of the whole (in notes) from the posthumous papers of
a learned gentleman in Scotland.

CHAPTER IX.
Returns to England, October 1741.—His marriage at
Abergavenny.—His success at Bristol and London.—Ventures to
preach in Moorfields in the holiday season.—Remarkable
success of that hazardous attempt.

CHAPTER X.
Makes a second visit to Scotland, June 1742.—The religious
concern at Cambuslang, &c.—Mr Whitefield’s account of it.—
Preaches in many towns and villages of Scotland.—Is alarmed
with accounts of the Spaniards landing in Georgia.

CHAPTER XI.
His labours at London and Bristol, and in Gloucestershire and
South Wales, 1743.—Continues to travel and preach through
the country in the months of November and December.—The
birth and death of his only child.—Obtains a sentence
against certain rioters for abusing the Methodists.—Writes
his letters to the Bishops, and to the Rev. Mr Church.—Is in
danger of being murdered in bed at Plymouth.

CHAPTER XII.
Embarks the third time for America, August 1744.—Soon after
his arrival is brought to the gates of death.—His reception at
Boston different from what it was formerly.—Preaches to the officers and soldiers that went against Cape Breton, 1745.—Religious concern under the ministry of Mr Gilbert Tennent, among the people of New England; and of Mr David Brainerd among the Indians.—In Virginia he is much weakened by a complication of diseases; yet continues to preach as often as he could.

CHAPTER XIII.
Goes to Bermudas for the recovery of his health, and his Journal there.—Takes shipping for England, June 1748.—And when on board retires and corrects his Journals.

CHAPTER XIV.
On his arrival at London is sent for by Lady Huntingdon to preach at her house.—Several of the nobility desire to hear him.—Makes a third visit to Scotland.—Debates concerning him in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr.—Has thoughts of turning his Orphan-house into a College, if the Trustees would put the Colony of Georgia upon a better footing.—Corresponds with Mr Hervey.—Is invited to Leeds by Mr Wesley’s Societies there.—Has an interview with Dr Doddridge, Mr Hervey, &c.—Makes another visit to Scotland, July 1750.
After returning to London is seized with a fever, and inflammation of the lungs.

CHAPTER XV.
His first visit to Ireland, May 1751.—Returns from Ireland by Glasgow and Edinburgh.—Particulars relating to his visits in Scotland; in a note.—Embarks the fourth time for America, where he finds the Orphan-house affairs flourishing.—Does not stay the summer season in America, on account of his health.—Is glad to find at his return to England, May 1752, that Georgia was likely to be put upon a better footing.—Makes another visit to Edinburgh and Glasgow.—Mr Hervey
and he revise each others manuscripts.—Erects a large new Tabernacle in London, and opens it.

CHAPTER XVI.
Preaches at Glasgow against the Playhouse there.—His success at Newcastle, Leeds, Olney, &c.—Opens the new Tabernacle at Bristol.—Hastens to London to pay his last respects to Mr John Wesley, who was thought to be dying.—Is visited by Mr Tennent and Mr Davies from America.—March 1754, a fifth voyage to America, by Lisbon, where he stays some weeks.—His reflections upon the Popish processions, &c.—Visits the College of New Jersey, and preaches several times before the Synod that met there.—Has some thoughts of going to the West Indies.—Receives the agreeable news that a Governor was nominated for Georgia, and his friend Mr Habersham, made Secretary.—Prejudices against him in New-England, Virginia, &c. subsided.—In spring, 1755, returns to England, and rejoices to see the number of evangelical ministers increased.—Opens the Tabernacle at Norwich.—Preaches against Popery and arbitrary power (the nation being threatened with an invasion).—Is obliged to be silent a few days in November by a sore throat, which threatened an inflammatory quinsey.—Meets with great opposition, when preaching at Long-Acre Chapel, near the Play-houses.—His letters to the Bishop of B____ on that occasion.—May, 1756, he begins to build his Chapel in Tottenham Court Road.—Makes another visit to Scotland, where his usefulness is acknowledged by the friends of civil government.

CHAPTER XVII.
In spring, 1757, he again visits Scotland, and preaches at Edinburgh during the time of the General Assembly.—Many ministers attend his sermons.—At Glasgow he makes a public collection for the poor of that city.—From Glasgow goes a second time to Ireland.—Narrowly escapes being murdered
by the Popish rabble.—After his return to London is brought very low by his extraordinary labours and thoughtfulness.—February, 1758, builds almshouses for widows around his Chapel.—Goes again to Edinburgh, where his preaching is acknowledged, as formerly, to be useful to the community, in a civil as well as a religious light.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Summer 1759, he makes another visit to Edinburgh.—Collections made at his sermons, for the benefit of the Orphan-hospital in Edinburgh.—Is ridiculed in a farce called the Minor.—February 13, 1761, (the day of the public fast) collects near £600 for the distressed German Protestants, and the sufferers in Boston.—His health, which had long been bad, now grows worse and worse; so that he is quite laid aside from preaching for some weeks.—In spring, 1762, goes to Bristol, when his health is so far restored that he is able to preach four or five times a week.—When he returns to London, the cares and labours that throng upon him are ready to bring him low again.—Goes a voyage to Holland.—Visits Scotland again in autumn 1762, and preaches every day.—Summer, 1763, embarks the sixth time for America, at Greenock.—Is much pleased with the conversation of several young ministers in America; and with accounts of the students at New-Jersey College.—Is forbid by the physicians to go to Georgia, till he gets more strength.—While at New-York, during the winter, he finds prejudices strangely subsided.—March, 1764, preaches in the places round Boston (the small-pox being in the town) and is delighted with the sight of Mr Wheelock’s Indians.—Returns from Boston southward through New-York, Philadelphia, Virginia, and Carolina. and arrives at the Orphan-house in December.—Prosperous state of affairs there.—Judging that a College was much wanted in Georgia, he returns to England, to apply for a charter, summer 1765.—Opens Lady Huntingdon’s Chapel, at Bath.
CHAPTER XIX.
Invites Mr Occum an Indian minister to preach at Tottenham-Court Chapel.—Preaches to a numerous company of the nobility at Bath, November 1766.—Issue of his negotiations about the intended College at Georgia, October 1767.—Makes a collection at the Tabernacle for the Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor.—Summer, 1768, once more goes to Edinburgh.—Mistress Whitefield dies.—He opens Lady Huntingdon’s Chapel in Wales.—Is in a very poor state of health, yet still continues to preach.—Next summer (1769) preaches more frequently.—He opens Lady Huntingdon’s Chapel at Tonbridge.—In September, embarks the seventh and last time for America.

CHAPTER XX.
Extracts from his Journal before he left the Downs.—Is very happy to see matters exceeding his most sanguine expectations at the Orphan-house; and the colony so greatly increased.—The Governor, Council, and Assembly of Georgia, express their gratitude to him as a benefactor to the colony, in the most respectful terms.—His health grows better; and he preaches almost every day.—Goes to the northern colonies to preach in the summer season, and proposes to return to his Orphan-house in winter.—While preaching daily in New-England, is taken very ill about the middle of September; but being recovered continues in the same course, and hopes to see Georgia about Christmas.—Dies at Newbury-Port Sabbath morning, September 30, 1770.—Mr Smith’s account of his death and funeral.—Reception of the news at London.

CHAPTER XXI.
Description of his person.—Striking parts of his life and character.—Extracts from his Funeral Sermons preached in America:—by the Rev. Mr Parsons of Newbury, September 30;
with a letter, giving an account of the interment.—Dr Pemberton’s of Boston, Oct. 11.—Mr Ellington’s at Savannah, Nov. 11.—Extracts from his Funeral Sermons preached in England:—by the Rev. Mr D Edwards, November 11.—Mr John Wesley, November 18.—Mr Venn, November 25.—Reference to several others.—Extract from the Rev. Mr Josiah Smith’s Sermon upon Mr Whitefield, in 1740; to show the uniformity of his conduct from that early period of his ministry till his death.—Mr Newton’s Manuscript Funeral Sermon.—Conclusion referring to other Sermons.—His Will.—Present supply of Tabernacle and Chapel.
MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE
OF THE
Rev. Mr GEORGE WHITEFIELD

CHAPTER I.

From his Birth, to his going to the University of Oxford,
Anno 1732.

This eminent and pious servant of Christ, Mr George Whitefield, was born at Gloucester, on the sixteenth day of December, OS¹ 1714. His father, Thomas Whitefield, nephew of the Rev. Mr Samuel Whitefield of Rockhampton, in Gloucestershire,² was first bred to the employment of a wine

¹ OS refers to Old Style, Julian Calendar, dates. Great Britain adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1752, when the day after 2 September 1752, became 14 September. Whitefield was therefore born on 27 December 1714 according to the present day calendar [ed.]
² The Rev. Mr Samuel Whitefield, great-grandfather of George, was born in Wantage in Berkshire, and was rector of North Ledyard in Wiltshire. He removed afterwards to Rockhampton. He had five daughters, two of whom were married to clergymen, Mr Perkins and Mr Lovingham: And two sons, Samuel, who succeeded his father in the cure of Rockhampton, and died without issue; and Andrew, who was a private gentleman, and lived retired upon his estate. Andrew had fourteen children, of whom Thomas was the eldest, the father of Mr George Whitefield.
merchant in Bristol; but afterwards kept an Inn of Gloucester. In Bristol he married Mistress Elizabeth Edwards, who was related to the Blackwells and the Dimours of that city; by whom he had six sons and one daughter.\(^3\) Of these, George was the youngest, who being bereaved of his father, when only two years old, was regarded by his mother with a peculiar tenderness, and educated with more than ordinary care.

He was early under religious impressions; but the bent of his nature, and the general course of his younger years, as himself acknowledges\(^4\) with expressions of shame and self-condemnation, was of a very different kind.

Between the years of twelve and fifteen, he made a good progress in the Latin Classics, at the public school: and his eloquence began to appear, even at that early period, in the speeches which he delivered at the annual visitations. It is probable the applause he received on these occasions, contributed to his fondness for theatrical amusements: From whence it has been insinuated that he learned his oratory upon the stage. This, however, seems to have no other foundation, than his acting a part sometimes with his fellow-scholars; particularly, in certain dramatic performances prepared for them by their master: For that he was more indebted as an orator to nature, than to art of any kind, must be evident to all persons of discernment who were acquainted with him. Such could not fail to observe, that his eloquence was in a great measure the effect of his genius, and proceeded chiefly from that peculiar assemblage of extraordinary talents with which God had endowed him.

\(^3\) Elizabeth, the daughter, was twice reputedly married at Bristol. John, his son, lies interred with the family in St Mary Decrypt Church in Gloucester. Joseph died an instant. Andrew settled in trade at Bristol, and died in the twenty-eighth year of his age. James was captain of a ship, and died suddenly at Bath. Thomas and Richard are still living. The father died December 1716. The mother continued a widow seven years, and was then married to Mr Longden, an ironmonger in Gloucester, by whom she had no issue. She died December 1751, in the seventy-first year of her age.

\(^4\) See the two first parts of his Life at the beginning. Confessions of a like nature, are to be found in the Writings of St Augustine.
Notwithstanding this, it appears from his conduct, that he either had not yet discovered where his talents lay, or could not find means to qualify himself for entering into any profession where they might be properly exercised: for when he was about fifteen years of age, he declined the pursuit of learning, and talked of getting an education that would better fit him for business. During this period, he still continued to reside with his mother; and as her circumstances were not then so easy as before, he did not scruple to assist her in the business of the tavern. But the prevailing bent of his genius began now strongly to discover itself; for even in this unfavourable situation he composed several sermons, one of which he dedicated to his eldest brother: And after having visited him at Bristol, he came home with a resolution to abandon his present employment, and to turn his thoughts a different way.

After this, being for some time disengaged from every pursuit, and but poorly supported out of his mother’s scanty subsistence, he was in no small danger of being utterly ruined by the influence of his former companions: but it pleased God to break the snare, by filling him with an abhorrence of their evil deeds.

About this time, the impressions of religion began again to recover their influence in his breast: And when he was seventeen years of age he received the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. He now became more and more watchful, both over his heart and conversation. He was frequently employed in fasting and prayer; spent much of his time in reading books of devotion; attended public worship twice every day; and so deeply was he engaged in these exercises, that his thoughts were constantly set on the great things of religion.
CHAPTER II

From the Time of his going to the University of Oxford, to his embarking for Georgia, Anno 1737.

When Mr Whitefield arrived at eighteen, he was sent to the university of Oxford, where he was again exposed to the society of the wicked: But remembering his former danger and deliverance, by the grace of God, he resisted all their solicitations, and cultivated an acquaintance with the Methodists, as the only persons that seemed to preserve a sense of religion, through the whole of their deportment.

It would be going beyond our purpose to give an account of the rise of Methodism: For this, the reader is referred to the Rev. Mr John Wesley’s first Journal. But it may not be improper to notice the spirit of the age, when it first appeared. At that time, serious and practical Christianity in England was in a very low condition; scriptural, experimental religion, (which in the last century used to be the subject of the sermons and writings of the clergy) was become quite unfashionable; and the only thing insisted on was a defence of the out-works of Christianity against the objections of infidels. What was the consequence? The writings of infidels multiplied every day, and infidelity made a rapid progress among persons of every rank, not because they were reasoned into it by the force of argument, but because they were kept strangers to Christ and the power of the Gospel. We have a most affecting description of this, by Bishop Butler, whom none will suspect of exaggerating the fact:¹ “It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious; and accordingly they treat it, as if in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule; as it were by way of reprisals, for it’s having so long

¹ Preface to his Analogy, May 1736.
interrupted the pleasures, of the world.” Such was the state of
religion in England, and Scotland was greedily swallowing
down the poison, when it pleased God to raise up the
Methodists, as instruments to revile his work in the midst of
abounding impiety, and to bring multitudes who had scarcely
a form of godliness, to experience its quickening and
renewing power.

Happy was it for Mr Whitefield, that there was a Society of
Methodists, at that time, in Oxford; but especially that he
became acquainted with the Rev. Mr Charles Wesley, by whom
he was treated with particular kindness. Such benefit did he
receive under his ministry, that he always accounted him his
spiritual father. And Mr Wesley’s reciprocal affection for him,
stands recorded in the verses at the beginning of Mr
Whitefield’s second and third Journals.

Like the other Methodists, Mr Whitefield now began to live
by rule, and to improve every moment of his time to the best
advantage. He received the communion every sabbath,
visited the sick, and the jail prisoners, and read to the poor.
For daring to be thus singularly religious, he soon incurred
the displeasure of his fellow-students, and felt the effects of
it in their unkind behaviour. In the mean time, he was greatly
distressed with melancholy thoughts, which were augmented
by excessive bodily austerities. And at last, by reading, and
perhaps misunderstanding some mystic writers, he was driven
to imagine, that the best method he could take, was to shut
himself up in his study, till he had perfectly mortified his own
will, and was enabled to do good without any mixture of
corrupt motives. He likewise imagined, that he must
relinquish external duties, and public worship, and lastly,
(which was no small trial and affliction to him) that he must
deny himself the pleasure of converseing with his religious
friends. In this pitiable state of mind, Mr Charles Wesley found
him one day, when he went to see him; apprised him of his
danger, if he persisted in that way of life, and recommended
to him his brother as a person of greater experience; who
readily gave him, from time to time, his friendly advice. Soon