

JAMES L. SCHWENK

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, M.A.

J.M. Picot sculpt.



The Reverend
George
Whitefield

Born at 1733 in
Embsay College
Oxford

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

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GEORGE WHITEFIELD

*A Guided Tour of His Life
and Thought*

JAMES L. SCHWENK



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Scripture quotations in Whitefield's text are from the King James Version, sometimes rendered loosely from memory.

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For Heather and Tyler

Your mother and I thank God for you every day. It has
been our pleasure to introduce you to C. S. Lewis,
J. R. R. Tolkien, and *Doctor Who*.

It has been an even greater joy to introduce you to
Jesus Christ.

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	9
Acknowledgments	11
Introduction: Why Read George Whitefield?	13

Part One: A Brief Account of the Life of the Grand Itinerant

1. The Gloucester Years: The Bell Inn and
St. Mary de Crypt School 25
2. The Life of God in the Soul of George
Whitefield: Oxford, Henry Scougal, and
the Holy Club 33
3. “Look at the Boy Preacher”: Closed Pulpits
and Open Fields 41
4. “It Seemed As If the Whole World Was
Becoming Religious”: Leading Revivals in
England and North America 55
5. “Catholic Spirit”: Controversy and Connections
Spread the Revivals 71
6. “I Would Rather Wear Out Than Rust Out”:
The Final American Tour 89

Part Two: The Grand Itinerant in Print

7. Excerpts from the Writings of George
Whitefield 107

Continuing the Journey: A Brief Guide to
Works by and about George Whitefield 187

Bibliography 191

Index of Subjects and Names 193

ILLUSTRATIONS

- 3.1 Preaching at Moorfields 45
- 3.2 Bethesda Orphanage 52
- 4.1 Unflattering portrait 68
- 5.1 *Illustrated History of Methodism* 73
- 5.2 Statue on the campus of the University of
Pennsylvania 81
- 6.1 Rosse engraving of George Whitefield 91
- 6.2 Death repose 99
- 7.1 Whitefield preaching 139
- 7.2 Whitefield, older 169

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“**F**riends at first are friends again at last.” So wrote the poet Charles Wesley as he reflected on the strained relationship and reunion of his brother, John, and George Whitefield. I have been living with these two friends for the last three decades since I was introduced to them at United Wesleyan College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. As one might expect, Wesley got some pretty good press in a college that bore his name. But while I appreciated Wesley and his role in the Methodist revivals in England and the importation of Methodism to the United States, I was drawn to the man they called the “divine dramatist.”

At Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown, Pennsylvania, my church history professor, Dr. Robert Hower, invited me to explore the friendship and strained relationship between Wesley and Whitefield. Later, during my doctoral work at Drew University, I expanded my research on their relationship into my dissertation and my first book, *Catholic Spirit: Wesley, Whitefield, and the Quest for Evangelical Unity in 18th Century British Methodism* (Scarecrow Press, 2008). My friend and colleague, Dr. Leon O. Hynson, a Luther and Wesley scholar, used to tell me, “I like Wesley, but I love Luther.” Over the years I have edited Leon’s maxim to read, “I like Wesley, but I love Whitefield!” Thank you, Leon and Bob, for encouraging me to pursue a deeper understanding of Whitefield and his message to the world. Thanks are due also to Dr. Ken Rowe, Dr. Chuck Yrigoyen, and Dr. Leigh

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INTRODUCTION: WHY READ GEORGE WHITEFIELD?

There are few people, dead or alive, for whom I will interrupt a family vacation.

George Whitefield is one of them.

My family has vacationed in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on three occasions. On our second trip, somewhere between the overpriced miniature golf, the afternoons on the beach, and our evening trips to the ubiquitous all-you-can-eat Calabash smorgasbords, I squealed the tires of our Dodge Durango, did a U-turn on the highway, and abruptly stopped along the divided highway. There was a gray-and-white state historical marker with the heading, “George Whitefield.”

Two hundred fifty years before our family trip, George Whitefield traveled the Coast Road in Horry County. Just south of Little River, Whitefield, an evangelical priest of the Church of England, stopped at a local tavern to find lodging. These would have been familiar surroundings to Whitefield, who had grown up in the family-owned Bell Inn in Gloucester, England. The date was January 1, 1740. Much like today, the inn was filled with New Year’s revelers eating, drinking, and dancing. He wryly noted, “The people were more polite than those we generally met with; but I believe the people of the house wished I had not come to be their guest that night; for, it being New Year’s Day, several of the neighbors were met together to divert themselves by dancing country dances.”

Encouraged by his traveling companions, Whitefield interrupted a woman dancing a jig. He warned her of “the folly of such entertainments” and tried to “convince her how well pleased the devil was at every step she took.” Undaunted, the woman kept dancing; the fiddler played on.

But “there was a new sheriff in town.” In drama befitting a John Wayne western, soon the dancer’s feet were stilled and the fiddle fell silent by the force of Whitefield’s presence and message. But other foes came to the aid of the silenced and prepared to defend their right to “eat, drink, and be merry.”

They had met their match. Whitefield narrates victoriously,

It would have made anyone smile to see how the rest of the company, one by one attacked me, and brought, as they thought, arguments to support their wantonness; but Christ triumphed over Satan. All were soon put to silence, and were, for some time, so overawed, that after I had discoursed with them on the nature of baptism, and the necessity of being born again, in order to enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven, I baptized, at their entreaty, one of their children, and prayed afterwards as I was enabled, and as the circumstances of the company required.

Whitefield and his companions ate a late supper and retired for the night.

And, yes, the fiddler rosined his bow and the dancing resumed. While waiting for sleep to come, Whitefield reflected, “I heard their music and dancing, which made me look back upon my own past follies with shame and confusion of face; for such an one, not long since, was I myself.” He prayed,

Lord, for Thy mercies’ sake, shew all unhappy formalists the same favour, and suffer them not to go in such a carnal

security till they lift up their eyes in torment! Draw them, O draw them from feeding upon such husks. Let them know what it is to feast upon the fatted calf, even the comforts of the Blessed Holy Spirit. Amen.

The next day, Whitefield had the last word. “Rose very early, prayed, sang a hymn, and gave a sharp reproof to the dancers, who were very attentive, and took it in good part.”

Here were two days’ journal entries, the spirit of which was repeated dozens, if not hundreds, of times in the ministry of George Whitefield. He traveled to his next preaching location. He preached the gospel to eager listeners and hecklers alike. He reflected on his own life and how God had prepared him years before, through seemingly insignificant circumstances, for the events of the day. Finally he prayed, giving thanks to God for graciously calling him to be saved and to be one of his messengers, and asking that God might continue to call tavern regulars and innkeepers, fiddlers and dancers, loving parents and their children to become partakers of God’s grace.

There are no shortages of biographies of George Whitefield, dating from the eighteenth century to the present. While no recent offerings come close to the exhaustive two-volume classic biography by Arnold Dallimore, contemporary contributions have helped to round out the portrait of Whitefield for the twenty-first century. In his *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*, Harry Stout reminds readers that Whitefield developed an early love for the stage and employed the principles of effective acting and stage presence each time he took to the pulpit. Whitefield’s contributions as a missionary who was heavily invested in the planting of the Georgia colony have been masterfully celebrated by Edward J. Cashin in his work, *Beloved Bethesda: A History of George Whitefield’s*

Home for Boys. Jerome Mahaffey claims that Whitefield played a defining role in the birth of the new American republic as a “political preacher” and “accidental revolutionary” (*The Accidental Revolutionary: George Whitefield and the Creation of America*).

This foray into the field of Whitefield biographies is written in honor of the 2014 celebration of the three-hundredth anniversary of Whitefield’s birth. Further, it seeks to do what other volumes in the Guided Tour series have accomplished: bring together an accessible biography of a key leader in church history with representative samples of his important contributions to the worship and witness of the church. It recognizes that it is nearly impossible to separate the life story of a Christian leader from the message he or she was called to proclaim. It affirms that the voice of the “Grand Itinerant” needs to be heard today.

As a biography, the first six chapters rediscover Whitefield’s life story. Starting with his unassuming beginnings as the son of innkeepers in Gloucester, chapter 1 explores the impact those “blue-collar” surroundings had on young Whitefield. Along with instilling within him a determined work ethic, growing up in the Bell Inn gave Whitefield a deep compassion and concern for the physical and spiritual needs of the working classes. The chapter concludes with an introduction to another formative influence from Whitefield’s youth. While a student at St. Mary de Crypt School, Whitefield fell in love—not with learning, but with the stage. His youthful obsession with acting proved providential, as God used that dramatic flair as an important part of Whitefield’s powerful gospel proclamations.

Chapter 2 follows Whitefield to Oxford, the city that will provide no fewer than three turning points in his life. Like thousands before and after him, Whitefield studied at Pembroke College, directly across the St. Aldate’s Street from

the towering edifice of Christ Church. The location proved to be life changing, as Christ Church was the college of John and Charles Wesley. Thousands went to Oxford to study. Few were converted to Christ in the process. Whitefield's conversion, thanks in part to the witness of especially Charles Wesley (and a carefully chosen book), proved to be the most notable conversion at Oxford until the twentieth century, when C. S. Lewis received God's grace after a moonlight stroll along Addison's Walk at Magdalen College with colleagues J. R. R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson.

Upon his graduation from Oxford, Whitefield sought and received ordination from the Church of England. His ordination to Word and Sacrament, according to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, opened doors for ministry within the established church of his homeland. His message of salvation by grace through faith closed many of those doors as quickly as they opened. The closed pulpits did little to dishearten Whitefield; he simply took the proclamation of the gospel outdoors. His desire to preach where the gospel was not being faithfully proclaimed led him to accept a call to take over from the Wesley brothers as missionary to the fledgling Georgia colony in North America. In Savannah, among the live oaks and Spanish moss, the Wesleys experienced failure and left, never to return to the colonies. Whitefield, however, again fell in love—with Savannah and her citizens, orphans, and slaves—and in the process he began a lifelong relationship with the American colonies that would draw him back six additional times. These are the subjects of chapter 3.

George Whitefield's unique contributions to Christian history include his leadership of revivals in both the British Isles and England's North American colonies. Chapter 4 explores Whitefield's love of his countries: his homeland and his adopted "home." Throughout his ministry, he never

forgot about the land of his birth. He was indebted to her for his citizenship and, through the Church of England, his ordination. While often downplaying his connection to the Anglican Church, Whitefield never left, though he was tempted to do so on several occasions—the most notable being Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine’s invitation for him to join the Scottish Presbyterians.

Whitefield was torn, however, between his commitments to his homeland and his passion for the fruitful fields of ministry he found in North America. Decades before the American Revolution, Whitefield celebrated the freedom he discovered on the colonial shores: freedom to proclaim the gospel in churches and public settings; freedom to work with like-minded pastors, regardless of denominational label; freedom to express his growing support for the fledgling American calls for independence. Historians from the eighteenth through twenty-first centuries have branded Whitefield “an American patriot,” including popular American conservative commentator Glenn Beck, who goes so far as to describe Whitefield as “a rock-star of the Revolution.”¹

Christian leaders of every generation have both attracted controversy and benefited from the power of personal networks of friends and colleagues. George Whitefield was no exception. Whitefield masterfully harnessed the power of America’s newspapers and pulpits, and America was blessed with an abundance of both. Pastors and newspaper publishers served as Whitefield’s publicists, marketing department, and agents. Major newspapers up and down the East Coast carried announcements of upcoming Whitefield appearances, accounts of his outdoor services, manuscripts of his

1. Glenn Beck, “Founders’ Friday: George Whitefield,” *Fox News*, May 17, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2010/05/17/glenn-beck-founders-friday-george-whitefield/>.

sermons, and rebuttals by opponents. Through this, Whitefield learned a valuable lesson: both good press and bad press could help promote a revival. While saying that Whitefield welcomed controversy may be overstatement, to say that he used controversy to further the spread of the gospel would not.

Whitefield's use of the press helped him to nurture a friendship with American printer, philosopher, and statesman, Benjamin Franklin—one of church history's most unique relationships. While this relationship started as a business arrangement and led to witnessing opportunities, another was established on common faith and was tested in controversy. Whitefield, along with brothers John and Charles Wesley, shared leadership of the revivals that swept England during the 1700s. Their friendship deteriorated as theological differences surfaced that were exacerbated by supporters both in print and from the pulpit. While differences never disappeared, Whitefield and the Wesleys ultimately agreed to spread the gospel according to their own convictions and to continue to work together as conscience allowed. For them, their common faith and the importance of sharing God's good news trumped theological differences that their spiritual children continue to debate today.

A third set of relationships provided an audience for Whitefield from the upper crust of English society. Thanks to his friendship with Lady Selina, Countess of Huntington, Whitefield gained a hearing in the drawing rooms and libraries of some of England's most influential people. While Whitefield's message never changed, his versatility in tailoring his message to his audience allowed him to be equally comfortable preaching to Bristol miners or to lords and ladies. Chapter 5 probes the controversies and connections that provided hearers for the popular preacher.

The final biographical chapter follows the Grand Itinerant through the final years of his earthly journey. The transatlantic travel and grueling preaching schedule began to take their toll on a man not yet sixty years of age. Traveling to America one final time, Whitefield renewed old friendships and faithfully preached release from sin's bondage to colonists who would soon be fighting for their independence from the British Crown. While he planned on one day being laid to rest in his London Tabernacle between the brothers Wesley, the One who numbers man's days had other plans. In Newburyport, Massachusetts, in September 1770, Whitefield appealed to God that he might "speak for thee once more in the fields, seal thy truth, and come home and die." His request granted, Whitefield was laid to rest in the crypt of the local Presbyterian church, a location that became a site of pilgrimage for many Protestants.

The concluding section of this work contains representative sermons, letters, and journal entries from the hand of George Whitefield. They were chosen to highlight his Reformed theology, his commitment to the preaching of the gospel, his passion for the souls of men and women, and his dedication to principles of freedom.

In 2008 I had the honor of presenting a paper at the C. S. Lewis Foundation's "Oxbridge 2008." An avid fan of "the Inklings," especially of Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, I relished the opportunity of visiting the city that was both their home and their academic community. My experience was heightened by the fact that my wife and children were able to accompany me and by the discovery, upon my arrival, that I would be reading my paper at Pembroke College—the school where Tolkien taught and the alma mater of George Whitefield. I find it amusing that two sets of friends—George Whitefield and John Wesley, C. S. Lewis

and J. R. R. Tolkien—counted Oxford as an important city to both their academic preparation and to the nurturing of their friendship. The four of them have made an indelible impact on my life. May Whitefield continue to leave such an impact on the lives of those who study his life and ministry and who hear his message thunder down through the centuries.

PART ONE

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE
OF THE GRAND ITINERANT

THE GLOUCESTER YEARS: THE BELL INN AND ST. MARY DE CRYPT SCHOOL

Eighteenth-century English mothers did not dream for their children to grow up to be Kingswood coal miners. Work in the mines around Bristol was hard, backbreaking labor. Young boys went into the mines and, if they were fortunate, came out decades later as bent and broken old men. During the 1700s, there was little hope of a Kingswood boy receiving any kind of education that would feed the mind or nourish the soul. Yet coal mining fueled the Kingswood economy since the Middle Ages and continued as such until the last mine closed in the 1950s.

On a February afternoon in 1739, twenty-four-year-old George Whitefield ventured out into the Kingswood coalfields. He was not there looking for a job, nor was he there to lobby for better working conditions for the miners. He had a much deeper concern: the eternal souls of the Kingswood miners. As the miners emerged from their coal pits at the end of the work day, Whitefield, a young Oxford-trained preacher, “went upon a mount, and spoke to as many people as came” to hear him. According to his count, two

hundred miners gathered to hear the good news of salvation through Christ. Whitefield became exuberant. “Blessed be God that I have now broken the ice! I believe I never was more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields.” After another sermon at the mouth of the mine, Whitefield, filled with emotion, noticed the “miners, just up from the mines, listened and the tears flowed making white gutters down their coal-black faces.” It was a dramatic snapshot—one that the young preacher could not miss, and one that would be repeated countless times over the evangelist’s thirty-year ministry.

Whitefield, in fact, rarely missed anything dramatic. His sermons were filled with vibrant illustrations drawn from everyday life and from the natural world surrounding him. He has been described as a “divine dramatist,” employing stagecraft as he proclaimed God’s truth from God’s Word. He noticed things that only a trained actor would notice, like white gutters on cheeks stained with coal dust. His movements, his presence, his diction, and his projection all worked together as part of the proclamation of the message that God in his grace had provided a way for lost sinners, even Kingswood miners, to be saved.

Love of the theater was not something Whitefield had developed as an adult. He had developed that passion as a young boy in Gloucester. Many aspiring actors today find waiting tables a necessary occupation while waiting for their “big break.” Perhaps Whitefield was the first in a long line of actors just waiting to be discovered, as his first job as a young boy was working in the family inn. God, the Divine Director, had a much more important role for him to play than any he might have played on the London stage.

People in Western cultures love to cheer for the underdog. It may be the team, winless the previous season, who one year later wins the championship. Perhaps it is the city, rav-

aged by a natural disaster, that rebuilds and restores a booming economy. We cheer for George Bailey, who stands up to Mr. Potter in Frank Capra's classic film *It's a Wonderful Life*, and in the process proves that "Davids" can still defeat even corporate "Goliaths." We embrace those who started life in humble, even difficult, circumstances, and who grow up to succeed far beyond what their beginnings foretold.

This alone attracts students of history to George Whitefield. Born into a still-stratified English society, Whitefield knew nothing of privilege or comfort during his early years. He was born the underdog, but God has a habit of using the foolish, the weak, and the unremarkable to turn the world upside down.

George Whitefield was born into the home of Thomas and Elizabeth Whitefield on December 16, 1714—the same year that Queen Anne died and the Hanoverian, George I, arrived from Germany. The Whitefields owned and operated the Bell Inn located on Southgate Street in Gloucester, England. George was the youngest of seven children Elizabeth bore. Sadly, Thomas died when George was only two years old. Elizabeth remarried, but by all accounts, her second marriage was an unhappy one. Whitefield wrote his reflections on his early years twenty or more years after the fact, so some of the material may not be remembered as accurately as contemporary historians would like it to be. That being said, Whitefield's journals are the best commentary on his early life, as no one else took the time to record it. Who could have imagined the promise that rested deep inside the Bell Inn busboy?

According to Whitefield, someone did get a glimpse of that promise. Elizabeth Whitefield prophesied that "she expected more comfort" from her youngest son than from his older siblings. Whitefield echoed this sentiment, telling the readers of his journals, "I can recollect very early moving

of the blessed Spirit upon my heart, sufficient to satisfy me that God loved me with an everlasting love, and separated me even from my mother's womb, for the work to which He afterwards was pleased to call me." Even being born in the Bell Inn fired Whitefield's imagination. It motivated his "endeavors to make good my mother's expectations, and so follow the example of my dear Saviour, who was born in a manger belonging to an inn." Such statements inspired Whitefield and undoubtedly pleased his mother, but they would give his critics ammunition in their attacks on Whitefield as an "Enthusiast"—the eighteenth-century equivalent of being labeled a "Holy Roller."

But Whitefield did not stop there in the vivid description of his early years. Two things stand out in Whitefield's account. First is the description that he gives of himself as a vile sinner. He remembers "such early stirrings of corruption in my heart." He catalogues the sins of his childhood, including lying, filthy talking, foolish jesting, cursing, swearing, and stealing. Growing up in the public house atmosphere, he not surprisingly picked up some of the "local dialect." He broke the Sabbath and behaved "very irreverently in God's sanctuary." Stealing from his mother, he sometimes bought food to satisfy his "sensual appetite." Occasionally he bought plays to read—the most alluring of his boyhood temptations. He played cards, read romances, and played practical jokes. Readers get the sense that they are back in North Africa with young Augustine as Whitefield records among his early sins the theft of his neighbor's pears. Whitefield is disturbed, and rightly so, by the catalogue of sins he records. But the listing serves to remind him of the overwhelming free grace of God, which he understood was an undeserved gift.

Whatever foreseen fitness for salvation others may talk of and glory in, I disclaim any such thing. If I trace myself from my

cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned. . . . If the Almighty had not prevented me by His grace, and wrought most powerfully upon my soul, quickening me by His free Spirit when dead in trespasses and sins, I had now either been sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death, or condemned, as the due reward of my crimes, to be forever lifting up my eyes in torments.

The second thing that stands out in Whitefield's account of his childhood is the account's brevity. Whitefield provides few details for his readers. He covers his entire life from birth to his going up to Oxford in ten pages of a five-hundred-page document. Perhaps he is again modeling the account of his early years on the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, which highlight his birth and a cameo appearance when he is an adolescent. Perhaps this is because the growing-up years of both men were so very much like those of their contemporaries.

The Gloucester in which Elizabeth Whitefield raised her children may not have been as important a city as Oxford or London to the English-speaking Christian world, but neither was it an insignificant footnote. Its founding is shrouded in the mists of pre-Roman Britain. Its Christian heritage dates back at least to the seventh century, when Osric, King of Hwicce, founded the monastery of St. Peter, which would become the foundation of the Gloucester Cathedral. Rebuilt after a fire in 1088, the new, yet-to-be-completed cathedral was dedicated in 1100. If the walls of Gloucester Cathedral could talk, the stones would bear witness to the murder of King Edward II, who is buried in its crypt. They would speak of visits by Richard II, Henry VII, and even Henry VIII. And they would recount the burning of Bishop John Hooper, reformer of Gloucester, who died at the behest of Queen Mary. And now, nearly two hundred years later, Elizabeth Whitefield was raising a new reformer who would wear the mantle passed on by the heroic Hooper.

The city of Gloucester has entertained royal visits and sessions of Parliament. During the English Civil War, it sided with Parliament and defied the rule of Charles I. Now, each Christmas, the city sends a gift of an eel pie to the monarch as a symbol of its loyalty to the Crown.

Gloucester cathedral stood as a symbol of Christianity's enduring legacy in the city. But it was a much smaller church where young George Whitefield received his early Christian nurture. He was baptized as an infant at a font that still stands in the St. Mary de Crypt Church on Southgate Street. One of only twelve medieval English churches with a crypt, St. Mary's is first mentioned in twelfth-century annals, and it went through major reconstruction in the late fourteenth century, with further remodeling accomplished through the next two centuries. During the siege of Gloucester in 1643, the church served as an ammunition factory and magazine—a bit of its martial history preserved in chevrons and cannonballs baked into some of the tiles in the choir.

The crypt of St. Mary's holds the earthly remains of several notable people. Robert Raikes, who founded the Sunday school movement in the Old Crypt Schoolroom, is buried under the floor of the South Chapel. Jemmy Wood is also buried at St. Mary's. Wood, a notorious, miserly banker, reportedly scoured the docks of Gloucester for wayward pieces of coal so he would have to purchase less. Once he traveled home to Gloucester in the back of an empty hearse so he would not have to pay carriage fare. His penny-pinching reputation reached the ears of Charles Dickens, who reportedly immortalized Wood as literature's most famous miser, Ebenezer Scrooge.

The Whitefield family worshiped at St. Mary's, and young George received his early education in the grammar school connected to the church. The school, founded in 1539, provided Whitefield with the basic educational skills that would serve him throughout his lifetime. Here again, Whitefield's

training would have been no different from any of his contemporaries who attended a grammar school attached to a local parish church. The study of Greek and Latin and of the classics of Greek and Rome were staples of the eighteenth-century educational diet, and any young man expecting to pursue higher education would be expected to master these elements of the curriculum. Young Whitefield does not distinguish himself as a scholar at St. Mary's. He does, however, attract the attention of the schoolmaster with his acting ability. At times he stayed away from school for days so he could devote the bulk of his time to memorizing lines for an upcoming school performance. Recognizing his talent, Whitefield's schoolmaster wrote a play and cast George in a female role. Of having to dress as a woman and play the part, Whitefield admitted it "covered me with confusion of face, and I hope will do so, even to the end of my life."

Poor grades, no clear future direction for his life, no motivation to pursue university studies, and the necessity of helping to keep the family business afloat encouraged fifteen-year-old George to leave school. He worked in the Bell Inn even after his mother passed it on to one of his older brothers. A disagreement with his sister-in-law led him to leave Gloucester to settle with another brother in Bristol. Two months later he was back in his hometown, living with his mother and actively seeking an apprenticeship. No doors opened for him. At this point in his life, with no apparent direction on the horizon, Whitefield details another prophecy he privately shared with his sister: "God intends something for me which we know not of. As I have been diligent in business, I believe many would gladly have me for an apprentice, but every way seems to be barred up, so that I think God will provide for me some way or other that we cannot apprehend."

God's provision of "a way" came through the visit of a former classmate of Whitefield. The visitor was a student

at Pembroke College, Oxford, where he paid for his education as a servitor to wealthier students. This position can be likened to today's work-study programs. Servitors cooked, cleaned, and did menial tasks for wealthy students who understood such work as beneath their social status. Whitefield's former classmate reported that by working as a servitor, he had paid all his expenses the previous quarter, with a whole penny left over! The news convinced Elizabeth that this was the way her son could attend Oxford and perhaps fulfill the premonition of great things in store for George she had had at his birth. George agreed with her conclusion. His years of on-the-job training, waiting tables in the family inn, prepared him well for life as an Oxford servitor.

Now that he had caught a glimpse of where his future might lead, George returned to school in Gloucester to better prepare for the academic rigors of university life. He went up to Oxford in November 1732, enrolling as a student in Pembroke College, a school located behind St. Aldate's Church, directly across St. Aldate's Street from Christ Church College and Cathedral—a piece of geographic serendipity that would play a meaningful part in Whitefield's spiritual journey.

At Pembroke, the former server at the Bell Inn served wealthy students as a means to pay for his education. The work was hard, not only physically but emotionally, as the social stratification of England encouraged the students from the upper crust to look down upon those, like Whitefield, from the merchant class. When his work serving other students was done, Whitefield still had to attend to his own studies. Disconnected from family and home, subjected to the whims of his social superiors, and facing the pressures of keeping up with his own studies, Whitefield sought solace in the faith planted in him in his youth at St. Mary's in Gloucester. Those seeds, planted years before, would soon bear fruit as George Whitefield met Charles Wesley.

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