ABSTRACT

Exploring Homilies and Hymnody: The Thematic Relationship Between
George Whitefield's Sermons and *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship*

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This thesis examines George Whitefield's *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* and presents a thematic analysis of the hymn book's lyrical content. This research contributes to a fuller understanding of Whitefield's evangelistic mission, provides a perspective on Whitefield's views on singing and hymnody, and suggests that the values that motivated Whitefield as a preacher also shaped his decisions as an editor and compiler of hymn texts. Whitefield's religious zeal, theatrical tendencies, rhetorical abilities, and desire for Christian ecumenism are underscored as important factors that impacted the way he crafted this resource for public worship. Context for the thematic analysis of this collection is provided by an exploration of Whitefield's published writings in journals and letters and a survey of his preaching ministry, with a focus on his endeavors at Moorfields in London.

Exploring Homilies and Hymnody:
The Thematic Relationship between George Whitefield's Sermons
and *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship*

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Context

Why Whitefield?

There are certainly other figures who might be expected to receive the spotlight in studies on eighteenth-century hymnody than evangelist and preacher George Whitefield. Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, and the numerous Moravian hymn writers were the notable leaders of the English hymn scene. Whitefield, on the other hand, authored no texts himself, although a particularly morbid text, "O Lovely Appearance of Death," is sometimes attributed to him. He was, however, the religious celebrity of the century, drawing crowds of tens of thousands to hear him preach. The eye-witness accounts of these revivals are full of frenzied, emotional language. His theatrical and dramatic proclivities synthesized with his impassioned evangelical fervor, making him much more than a common preacher. Whitefield was an authentic actor, a fiery revivalist, a master of rhetoric, and a visionary of evangelical unity. In other words, Whitefield was an artist in the pulpit.

Not only was Whitefield a dramatic and artistic orator, he was also a robust proponent of congregational hymn singing. He commended hymn singing to others in his writings, practiced it in his own devotional life, and counted it as an essential part of every revival meeting he led by opening each assembly with singing. In 1753, Whitefield published the first of many editions of *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* to be used at Moorfields, his outdoor preaching station near London. Through his editorial

decisions, Whitefield infused this hymn book with his theological values and aesthetic priorities.

Whitefield transported his ideas and values across the Atlantic thirteen times, up and down the New England colonies, and through Scotland, England, Ireland, and Wales, once exclaiming, "the Whole World is now my Parish!"[1] The dissemination of his hymnal covered this vast ground as well, and it continued to have cross-denominational and transatlantic influence for decades after his death. The popularity of this collection cannot be separated from Whitefield's charismatic personality and celebrity status; Whitefield's fame as a preacher confers a particular distinction to his hymn book. Given Whitefield's artistic approach to crafting and delivering sermons, his deeply-held values about hymn singing, and the wide-spread influence of both his theology and his hymn book, Whitefield as a hymn compiler and editor deserves to be brought into the spotlight for study.

Objectives and Research Questions

This thesis takes into account Whitefield's religious values and his perspective on singing and hymns found within his sermons, journals, and letters to identify recurring themes in his sermons and writings. Following this analysis, the thesis will explore the thematic ranges of the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* and juxtapose them alongside the emphases found in Whitefield's evangelistic preaching ministry. Whitefield's editorial priorities and intentions regarding the sung theology at Moorfields Tabernacle can be uncovered by analyzing the various editions of *Hymns for Social Worship* and

[1] George Whitefield, quoted in Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2012), 41.

noticing the most prominent themes from these texts. Comparing these hymn themes to the sermons Whitefield preached at Moorfields Tabernacle and other primary sources can shed light on how Whitefield's preaching ministry was supplemented and enhanced by hymnody.

The thesis is guided by five research questions that will be addressed again in the final chapter: (1) What theological values are found in Whitefield's sermons? (2) What can be said about George Whitefield's view of singing and hymnody from his personal writings? (3) How do the thematic emphases in Whitefield's sermons relate to the textual themes in *Hymns for Social Worship*? (4) How can a study of *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* contribute to a fuller understanding of Whitefield's evangelistic mission? (5) How can a study of *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* contribute to a fuller understanding of eighteenth-century hymnody?

An Overview of the Eighteenth Century

British History

The eighteenth century began with the final years of the reign of William III and Mary II over Britain, and a long period of Protestant rule ensued.[2] When Mary's sister Anne took the throne in 1702, Parliament held the primary power. Parliament was divided into two parties, the mostly Anglican Tories and the mostly Dissenting Whigs.

[2] For more in-depth descriptions of the historical context, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century,* vol. 2, *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Peter Clark, D. M. Palliser, and M.J. Daunton, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Tensions grew between the two parties over political and religious issues as both sides fought for primary control.

The period from 1714 to 1727 under German-born George I, formerly George of Hanover, was a time of peace, stability and ally-building. George II, who ruled from 1727 to 1760, sharply contrasted with his father George I in his openness to English culture, his military command, and his active role in governmental affairs. Under George II, Great Britain entered into war with Spain in 1739, which morphed into the War of the Austrian Succession. George II negotiated a resolution with France, but went to war with the French over imperial dominance just few years later. George III took the throne in 1760 and ended the Seven Years' War with France, and Britain began to lead Europe in colonial power, economic power, and naval warfare. George III's Britain did not stay peaceful for long, as the American colonies began to resist the mother country's taxation policies, and revolted in 1775, initiating the War of Independence.

From the reign of Mary and William at the beginning of the eighteenth century to the rule of George III at the end, the British nation moved in an overall trajectory of growth and expansion through burgeoning trade routes and colonization. Settlements in North America and the West Indies saw large increases in population, and Britain's slave route remained active over the entire century. Although it was marked by phases of both wartime and peace, Britain's colonization, trade, and naval dominance led to many demonstrations of the nation's strength and increasing power, making it an economic leader by the end of the century.

During George Whitefield's lifetime, England, especially London, was a musical center that attracted the attention of many continental composers. The vibrant musical

scene in England was partly due to the revitalization efforts of Charles II from 1660 to 1685, who supported the arts and promoted a strong musical culture in England after the closing down of many theaters under the power of Oliver Cromwell. As a result, genres such as opera and oratorio were flourishing by the time Whitefield was born. The first half of the century was governed by Baroque styles, but by the end of the century, classical styles of composition were beginning to take hold. During most of Whitefield's life, England's music was largely shaped by the compositions of Henry Purcell and George Frideric Handel.

The Evangelical Revival Movements

Evangelicalism defined. Evangelicalism has been defined both as a historical movement and as a set of ideas.[3] It has even been suggested that evangelicalism is better used as a descriptive word than as a noun.[4] Mark Noll has commented that "evangelical religion has always been more of a singing than a sacramental, doctrinal, or even a preaching expression of Christianity"[5] However, Noll does offer two angles in approaching the history of evangelicalism that balance each other and form a helpful

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[3] Further descriptions of evangelicalism can be found in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice,* vol. 3 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961); Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and George Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[4] Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 21.

[5] Mark A. Noll, "Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality," in *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*, ed. Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016), 2, accessed August 24, 2016, 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198747079.001.0001.

definition for this study. These two facets also allow for focus and flexibility when attempting to discuss perspectives on something as difficult to define as evangelicalism.

First, there is the approach of highlighting "individuals, associations, books, practices, perception and networks of influence" from the revivals which form a collective that embodies the ideas of evangelicalism.[6] Noll writes, "from this angle, a history of evangelicalism is an effort to trace out an ever-expanding, ever-diversifying family tree with roots in the eighteenth-century revivals."[7] This definition allows for many varying movements that have been influenced by the revivals to find a place within the broad scope of evangelicalism.

At the same time, Noll recognizes a specific set of convictions governing the participants in eighteenth-century revivals that has been preserved to create a sense of evangelical identity. These defining traits of evangelical thinking have been pinpointed by David Bebbington as conversionism, the idea of a new birth experience; biblicism, the commitment to the truths of Scripture; activism, the Christian mandate to serve; and crucicentrism, the emphasis on the work of Christ on the cross as a mitigation for our fallen nature.[8] While evangelicalism has a multi-faceted and complex history that spans centuries, evangelicals have found unity in these broad concepts.

Precedents and denominational identity. W. R. Ward has suggested that the characteristic piety of the evangelical movement has deep roots in forms of protest

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[6] Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 18.

[7] Ibid., 19.

[8] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1993), 4.

against previous systematic orthodoxy.[9] Ward sees the formation of evangelical identity as a series of reactionary responses following the period after the Reformation and continuing through the next century and a half. Johann Arndt's widely read *Wahres Christentum* (True Christianity) in 1605 was part of this initial groundswell of pietistic thinking. Ward writes that it was later the Lutheran minister Phillipp Jakob Spener in *Pia Desideria* (Heartfelt Longings) who "distilled the piety of Arndt and the theology of Orthodoxy into a policy of church reform."[10] In other words, Spener emphasized inward spiritual life and the responsibility of every believer to engage deeply with religious sentiment. This emphasis kindled the pietism that swept through circles of seventeenth-century German and French theologians, the Moravian church and Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, Swiss, Dutch, and German Reformed churches, and the English Puritans. Pietistic thinking across various denominations and traditions set the stage for the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century.

In England during this period, the state and the church were inseparable. While the 1689 Glorious Revolution made room for toleration of dissenters, the Church of England was the legally constituted religion, and dissenting congregations made up only six percent of England's population in the early part of the century.[11] Denominational proportions, however, were much different in the American colonies where non-Anglicans such as the Congregationalists and the Scottish Presbyterians were the majority.

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[9] W.R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21.

[10] Ibid., 24.

[11] Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 34.

Before the revivals of the 1730s and 1740s, the Church of England was consumed by political involvements and deistic influences that stressed duty, morality, and effort.[12] Noll suggests that "confident religious life, persuasive preaching of the gospel, and effective Christian pastoring [was] in relatively short supply."[13] The frequent political uproars between the Whigs and the Tories had an effect on the state of the church, which was "to sacrifice interest in the day-to-day religious belief and practice to the convulsions of political controversy."[14] Anglicanism was in a state of dryness that made it receptive to the stirrings and "anticipations of evangelical renewal."[15]

English Psalmody and Hymnody

Metrical psalms. As a result of John Calvin's emphasis on metrical psalmody, psalm-singing had been ubiquitous in England and Scotland since the Reformation. Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins' edition of metrical psalms and the Anglo-Genevan Psalter were two of the most important collections that fed into the creation of John Day's publication of *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* in 1562. This publication, commonly called the "Old Version," held sway in England until Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady published the *New Version of the Psalms* in 1696. The importance of this long-standing tradition of singing the psalms appears in Whitefield's life, as he quoted profusely from the Tate and Brady psalter in his published journals. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, though, metrical psalmody began to come under some critique.

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[12] Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 40.

[13] Ibid., 39.

[14] Ibid., 40.

[15] Ibid., 70.

A number of factors began to erode the stability of psalm-singing and cause a decline in the practice. Newly written hymns began to surface in appendices to psalters, and the practice of writing hymns began to emerge as a form of devotional poetry by authors such as George Wither, George Herbert, and Samuel Crossman. Additionally, leaders in various denominations began to introduce hymns into the English churches. In the Anglican churches, John Playford made attempts to introduce new hymns by adding them to his psalm book. Richard Baxter published a Presbyterian collection to promote hymn singing, and early Baptists, some of whom had rejected all forms of congregational song, began to sing hymns through the influence and leadership of Benjamin Keach.

The advances in hymnody made by the addition of appended hymns to psalters, the influence of devotional lyric poets, and the conscious efforts of particular leaders played a role in the emergence of hymnody from within the psalm-singing tradition in England. Louis Benson maintains that the movement from psalmody to hymnody was rooted in a motive to enhance liturgical worship.[16] The awkward metrical versions of psalms led to indifference toward singing and "unskilled performances of psalmody" in some English congregations.[17] These frustrations acted as a catalyst for Isaac Watts to breathe life into congregational song through English hymnody.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748). The streams of psalmody and hymnody from the seventeenth century met in the hymns of Isaac Watts, who "forged the different traditions into one art" and single-handedly directed the path of subsequent English hymnody by

[16] Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 73.

[17] Ibid., 109.

his influence.[18] Watts saw himself as a reformer of psalmody, but ended up establishing new standards for congregational song. He believed that the gospel found in the New Testament should be central to congregational song, and his texts are strongly christocentric. Benson gives three overarching descriptions of Watts's radically new approach to hymn writing: it was evangelical, freely-composed, and expressed the thoughts and feelings of the present singers.[19]

Watts's early hymns were published as Christian poetry in a collection called *Horae Lyricae* in 1706. Though his first collection of poetry was for devotion and meditation, Watts seemed to be testing its reception by those in the church, indicating in the collection's preface that these poems were merely a small sample of what he desired to publish.[20] J.R. Watson describes the texts in this early book of poetry as containing a "daring use of rhythm and metre" with a "pursuit of the religious sublime."[21] From the very beginning, Watts demonstrated his ability to experiment with imagery and explore the use of poetic contrasts.[22]

In 1707, Watts published his first collection of hymns, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, which immediately became a "spiritual delight to many."[23] This book contained sections of hymns based on Scripture, hymns on "divine topics," and hymns for the

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[18] J.R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study,* new ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 133.

[19] Benson, 110.

[20] William J. Reynolds, David W. Music, and Milburn Price, *A Survey of Christian Hymnody.* 5th ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 2010), 68.

[21] Watson, 146-147.

[22] Ibid., 147-148.

[23] Benson, 122.

Lord's Supper. Watts nearly doubled the number of texts in a second edition two years later due to the exceptional reception of the first edition. Watts's texts were welcomed in many different denominations, and in some cases, his hymns became the dominant source for what was sung in the worship service.

Watts's second important hymn publication was *The Psalms of David Imitated* in 1719, which was a collection of metrical psalms. This publication differed from the surrounding collections of metrical psalms because Watts "christianized" each psalm by adding language from the New Testament gospels and making these themes central to the psalm. In addition, he shaped the psalms in such a way that they became accessible to the British people by bringing in themes of national identity.[24]

J.R. Watson has made several insights about the rhetoric of Watts's poetry. He states that clarity was the "great aim" that governed Watts's style, going so far as to say that Watts "condemn[ed] obscurity."[25] This desire for clarity shaped not only Watts's choice of language, but also the structure of his ideas in logical and well-reasoned forms.[26] Watson points out that Watts kept his eye on the subject at all times, so that his hymns would "enact a drama in which the soul, if it could see God or heaven clearly, would at once become ordered, secure, settled."[27]

Watson also notes that Watts's personal theology was characterized by a "joy in the created world," and his poetry is also saturated with this theme.[28] This value on the

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[24] Reynolds, Music, and Price, 69.

[25] Watson, 138-139.

[26] Ibid., 142.

[27] Ibid., 138.

[28] Watson, 134.

created order was balanced by Watts's equally strong recognition of the importance of special revelation. Watson writes, "Watts's hymnody, therefore, is based on a system of belief which he drew from his study of natural philosophy and theology: it celebrates the glory of God in the created world, but it does not stop there, because it insists on the importance of revealed religion and on the saving grace of Jesus Christ."[29] Watts's hymn writing approach carried a sense of "discernment, and a combination of resources, spiritual, intellectual, poetic, utilitarian, possessed by none of his predecessors or all of them if put together."[30] He offered to all who followed him an example of employing creative license in writing hymns.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788). The Methodist movement grew from within Anglicanism with the efforts of John and Charles Wesley. Charles Wesley's prolific output of original hymn texts was organized, published, and promoted by his brother, who also translated thirty-three German hymns into English.[31] The two worked together toward "the revitalization of congregational song," publishing a total of sixty-four hymn collections between 1738 and 1785.[32]

The first Wesleyan hymnal is referred to as the "Charlestown Collection" due to the location of its publication in 1737, and it contains texts by Watts as well as translated German texts by Moravian authors. Unlike Watts, who wrote almost exclusively in long, short, or common meter, Wesley's poetry contains much more metrical variety. From the

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[29] Watson, 135.

[30] Benson, 206.

[31] Watson, 205.

[32] Reynolds, Music, and Price, 71-72.

very beginning, Wesley's creative metrical expressions were a distinctive characteristic of his poetry. Two smaller collections of texts were published in 1738 and 1739, but *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* in 1741 was the brothers' first major hymnal.[33] The most comprehensive collection of Wesley's hymns was *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* in 1780, which contained an impressive 525 texts.[34]

Wesley has been noted for his influence in three main categories: his distinctive evangelical tone, his textual focus on the Christian experience, and his expanded use of meters.[35] Benson writes that Wesley's hymns were "deeply written into the religious history of English-speaking people" because Wesley "perceived the spiritual possibilities of hymns and of hymn singing, and … realized them."[36]

Wesley's poetry is steeped in his unique gift for combining a "love of metaphorical language" with a "great variety of spiritual experience."[37] J.R. Watson writes, "Charles Wesley has an amazing range of mood and tone, and from the conversion hymns onwards his work has some affinities with the spiritual autobiographies of seventeenth-century Puritan writers."[38] The variety of moods in Wesley's hymns, which spans the experience of the "Christian pilgrimage," is one of the most noticeable differences between the poetic styles of Wesley and Watts.[39] Another

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[33] Reynolds, Music, and Price, 72.

[34] Ibid., 72.

[35] Ibid., 75.

[36] Benson, 244.

[37] Watson, 224.

[38] Ibid., 224.

[39] Ibid., 225.

characteristic of Wesley's style is "density," which Watson describes as "a compression of thought and image … a higher specific gravity."[40]

In the way that clarity was Watts's highest rhetorical ideal, persuasion seemed to be the highest value for Wesley.[41] His texts are full of rich references that are "compacted into the stanzas" to achieve this sense of persuasion.[42] Watson notes that language of physicality was prominent in Wesley's texts. He writes, "Wesley's hymns are forceful because they contain so many words which are physical: for him, the life of the Christian was to be experienced in the body as well as the soul … There are physical images everywhere in the hymns: thirst, hunger, fullness, strength, rising up, standing fast, melting down, fighting, shouting, singing."[43]

Benson makes an eye-opening statement about the contrasting perceptions and responses to the hymns of Wesley and Watts. He highlights reasons why Wesley's texts were more slowly adopted into mainstream congregational singing compared to the reception of Watts's hymns.

> Watts embodied the theology of his surroundings, and kept within the average range of spiritual experience. This self-restraint gave his work something like a universal appeal. But while Watts advanced by the high-ways seen and respected of all, the Wesleys worked behind the hedges separating them from both Church and dissent … They sought to reach the masses neglected by the Church and dissent alike, and by methods disapproved by both.[44]

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[40] Watson, 225.

[41] Ibid., 256.

[42] Ibid., 225.

[43] Ibid., 261.

[44] Benson, 257-258.

Following this observation, Benson notes how Whitefield affected the reception of some of Wesley's texts, stating that "Whitefield's use of some of the Wesleyan Hymns at his Tabernacle helped a few of them across the wall of separating Arminianism from Calvinism."[45]

[45] Benson, 258-259.

CHAPTER TWO

Whitefield's Life, Ministry, and Theology

Biographical Sources on George Whitefield

George Whitefield lived in a transatlantic, print-driven world in which copies of his letters, responses, and preaching advertisements were circulated as fast as they could be produced. As a result, his life and travels are documented from a variety of different perspectives, including his own autobiographical journals that he published in sections from 1738 to 1741. Whitefield spent time editing and republishing his own journals, revealing his personal growth and changes of behavior and opinion over his lifetime. Two years after Whitefield's death, Scottish minister John Gillies published *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield,* an edited collection of all of Whitefield's works and a biographical account of his life. Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones write that evidence exists that Whitefield had passed on an incomplete manuscript to Gillies to finish, making it difficult to determine what parts of the publication were authored or edited by Gillies himself.[1]

Other publications about Whitefield by Aaron Seymour in 1811 and Robert Philip in 1837 had little traction, but Luke Tyerman's *The Life of Rev. George Whitefield* in 1877 was the first comprehensive biography after Gillies. Almost a hundred years later, Arnold Dallimore published a biography of Whitefield titled *George Whitefield: The Life*

[1] Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones, eds., *George Whitefield: Life, Context and Legacy* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016), 5, accessed August 24, 2016, 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198747079.001.0001.

and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival. Thomas Kidd writes that both biographies are respected because they come from the perspective of detailed and committed ministers who "painstakingly pieced together comprehensive biographies through archival research."[2] However, they have also been described as "thoroughly hagiographic."[3]

In contrast to these two biographies, Harry Stout and Frank Lambert both published academic biographies of Whitefield in the early 1990s.[4] Hammond and Jones summarize these works by stating that "Stout made Whitefield appear startlingly modern. Lambert … has put considerable flesh on the bones of Stout's work" by focusing on the printing industry surrounding Whitefield that led to the shaping of a "distinct American identity."[5]

Each of these biographies offers helpful angles in understanding Whitefield, but two recent publications on Whitefield have sought a less one-sided approach by emphasizing the surrounding contexts, the variety of interfacing topics, and the dynamic and multi-faceted relationships that characterized Whitefield's entire ministry and life. Thomas Kidd's publication in 2014, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father,* is a biography that "places him fully in the dynamic, fractious milieu of the early

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[2] Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 2.

[3] Hammond and Jones, 7.

[4] Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991); Frank Lambert, "*Pedlar in Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1770* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[5] Hammond and Jones, 8.

evangelical movement."[6] In 2016, Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones co-edited the book *George Whitefield: Life, Context and Legacy* which has multiple contributing authors who tackle a variety of topics on Whitefield with different approaches. The following summary of Whitefield's life will be taken largely from these two recent publications.

A Brief Account of Whitefield's Life and Travels

Whitefield's birth in Gloucester, England, in 1714, coincided with the year that George I took the English crown. Whitefield's early childhood was spent learning at the Anglican parish school at St. Mary de Crypt and working at Bell Inn, managed by his mother and stepfather. It was during his early youth that Whitefield was introduced to the theatrical world that would both captivate and repulse him for the rest of his life. Influenced by devotionals such as Bishop Thomas Ken's *Manual of Prayers for the Scholars Belonging to Winchester College,* Augustine's *Confessions*, and Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*, Whitefield decided to pursue an education at Oxford.

At Oxford, Whitefield continued to read and meditate on works that encouraged inner devotion such as William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. He met John and Charles Wesley during the time they were starting the organization of Oxford students that eventually became known as the Holy Club. This group of students adopted a strict schedule of personal piety and spiritual discipline that included extreme fasting, praying, psalm-singing, and a lifestyle of frugality. During his years at Oxford, Whitefield's spiritual practices led him into a cyclical battle with poor health and mental instability. Kidd writes, "The bodily effects of the devil's assaults on Whitefield—

[6] Kidd, 3.

sickness, rigidity, and nausea—could have been interpreted by some in his era as symptoms of demonic possession."[7] J.C. Ryle's account of Whitefield mentions that while asceticism characterized much of his training and early ministry, it did not continue to be a part of his later life.[8]

Whitefield's physical and mental struggles culminated in what Whitefield described as his conversion during Lent in 1735. While continuing to pore over the Bible, Richard Baxter's A *Call to the Unconverted*, and Joseph Alleine's *An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners*, Whitefield moved from his conversion experience into a strong sense of calling to the ministry. He received Holy Orders in the Anglican Church in 1736, placing him among the youngest ordained deacons in the church at age twenty-one.

Within two years of his ordination, Whitefield was catapulted into the public eye due to his electrifying and unabashed sermons. Hammond and Jones write that he almost immediately began "attacking many of his fellow Anglican clergy for not preaching the true gospel" as he rose to fame, and publications from these ministers began to be printed and circulated both for and against Whitefield.[9] Ryle offers commentary about Whitefield's sudden popularity, stating that "a really eloquent, extempore preacher, preaching the pure gospel with most uncommon gifts of voice and manner, was at that time an entire novelty in London. The congregations were taken by surprise and by storm."[10] While preaching around London, Whitefield was contacted by the Wesleys with

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[7] Kidd, 30.

[8] J.C. Ryle, "George Whitefield and His Ministry" in *Select Sermons of George Whitefield: With an Account of his Life and a Summary of his Doctrine*, by George Whitefield, ed. J.C. Ryle and Richard Elliot (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 15.

[9] Hammond and Jones, 2.

[10] Ryle, 17.

an offer to travel to Georgia as a missionary, and he agreed. Although his voyage was delayed until 1738, he spent three months in Georgia battling bouts of sickness while ministering and preaching to those in parishes around Savannah. It was during this time that Whitefield received inspiration to start an orphanage that later became "the center of Whitefield's philanthropic ministry."[11]

Whitefield began field preaching upon his return, and Hammond and Jones state that it was only a few months before crowds of over ten thousand were gathering to hear Whitefield at Moorfields outside of London.[12] With growing confidence and an increasing group of followers, Whitefield became an ally of both the Wesleys and the Moravians. Whitefield's close connection to the large base of Moravians in London was likely due to their "fervent piety, intense missionary zeal, and an interdenominational sensibility, all of which matched Whitefield's convictions."[13] Although Hammond and Jones point to this time as the start of the evangelical revival movement, they also make it clear that the movement was not a uniform one, but rather "a series of competing awakenings."[14] In fact, revivals of a similar nature were breaking out not just in England, but in Wales, Scotland, and the New England colonies as well. Still, the interdenominational gatherings around Whitefield in London formed a "volatile mass eager for revival."[15]

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[11] Kidd, 56.

[12] Hammond and Jones, 2.

[13] Kidd, 59.

[14] Hammond and Jones, 2.

[15] Kidd, 59.

By 1739, Whitefield's reputation as a fiery field preacher was starting to be described with words such as "madman" and "fanatic."[16] He was banned from many Anglican pulpits, making his field preaching as much of a necessity as it was a choice. In these outdoor venues, public hostility toward Whitefield increased, and Kidd notes that Whitefield "filtered his experience through scripture" by using psalms and passages about persecution to describe his own situation.[17] The aging Isaac Watts wrote a letter to Whitefield during these years to warn him against delusional thinking, as Whitefield occasionally claimed to receive special revelation from God.[18]

Due to the popularity that he had garnered, Whitefield's second trip to America in August of 1739 was more like that of a celebrity than a missionary. He spent time in New York and Philadelphia, befriending Benjamin Franklin and developing a business partnership with him as his publisher. Whitefield preached in a variety of settings as he traveled south into New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia. Kidd remarks about this American tour, "The revival in England was largely an Anglican-Methodist affair among English people. In America, Whitefield encountered friends of revival in many denominations: Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, Moravian, German Pietist, and occasionally Anglican, too."[19] He connected with other itinerant ministers like Gilbert Tennent and Northampton minister Jonathan Edwards. During this trip Whitefield also invested much time in Bethesda, the orphanage that he had planted during his first visit to Georgia.

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[16] Kidd, 64.

[17] Ibid., 66.

[18] Ibid., 73.

[19] Ibid., 88.

When Whitefield returned to London in 1741, he found that the evangelical scene had "fractured into Calvinist, Arminian, and Moravian factions."[20] Although he had gained the support of Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, who was later influential in financing his hymn book, he was no longer on good terms with the Wesleys due to their disagreement over free grace. Between 1741 and 1744, Whitefield spent much time preaching in Wales and Scotland and working through the many feuds and schisms he found there, all while publishing his sermons, letters, and journals in an effort to encourage the idea that revival followers were "participating in one common transatlantic, interdenominational movement."[21]

In 1744, Whitefield was attacked in bed by a man who was attempting to take his life, and not much later, his wife Elizabeth gave birth to a son who died after four months. While experiencing these trials, Whitefield threw even more of his energy into preaching and ended up making partial amends with John Wesley through their correspondence. Making a journey to America for the third time, Whitefield found that both great revival and difficult controversies had been forming in his absence. American evangelicals had begun to splinter into two categories: the radical "New Light" revivalists, and moderate "Old Light" ministers who felt that the charged emotionalism was a detrimental addition to a true ministry.

Whitefield found himself in a "critical transition" of needing to find middle ground to prevent evangelical leaders from turning against him.[22] Kidd comments that

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[20] Kidd, 144.

[21] Ibid., 151.

[22] Ibid., 187.

Whitefield "moved into a moderate phase, emphasizing unity and sobriety rather than division and zeal."[23] Whitefield generally became more tempered, lamenting in his journal that he had been "too rash and hasty in giving characters, both of places and persons" and "used a style too apostolic … and been too bitter in [his] zeal."[24] It was as though Isaac Watts's words of warning to him from 1739 were beginning to take root.

In 1748, Whitefield's relationship with the Countess of Huntingdon became more involved. He was appointed to be her chaplain and he began to preach regularly in London to prime ministers and nobles who were associated with her. The "queen of Calvinist Methodists," Lady Huntingdon's own ministry involved owning and running a network of sixty chapels that became known as "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion."[25] As she recruited preachers for her chapels, Lady Huntingdon tried to draw from both Anglican and Methodist circles. She also organized classes on religious topics for those in her company. The financial contributions that she made to Whitefield's ministry should not be minimized; she financed the Moorfields Tabernacle and the chapel at Tottenham Court in London and received financial control of all Whitefield's American properties and the Bethesda orphanage upon his death.[26]

From 1748 to 1754, Whitefield's ministry centered around the Moorfields Tabernacle in London, although he did make a short fourth visit across the Atlantic to check on the orphanage. During this period, he cultivated relationships with both

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[23] Kidd, 183.

[24] George Whitefield, quoted in Kidd, 204.

[25] John S. Tyson and Boyd S. Schlenther, *In the Midst of Early Methodism: Lady Huntingdon and Her Correspondence* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 13.

[26] Kidd, 9; 15.

Anglican and Dissenting ministers, but made a decisive break with the Moravians that he did not rescind before his death. His relationship with the Wesleys "whipsawed between friendly generosity and bitter criticism."[27] Construction of the Moorfields Tabernacle began, and the Society that formed around the Tabernacle grew into an organized congregation.

Whitefield's fifth trip to the Colonies lasted from 1754 to 1755, and although Whitefield's own reports about his reception were as glowing as before, his preaching tours did not attract the same attention as they did earlier in his ministry. Kidd suggests that Whitefield's positive outlook during this time might have been due to "genuinely appreciate[ing] that he could preach now with relatively little controversy."[28]

By the time Whitefield was forty, he became "increasingly weary of personal conflict, illness, and traveling."[29] His sixth trip to America was made with difficulty due to his weak health, but Kidd notes that "nothing could be more incompatible with Whitefield's disposition than 'retirement'" and he persevered to preach as often as fifteen times a week.[30] During this time, Whitefield began to receive mocking attention as "Doctor Squintum" due to an illness-related facial defect. Samuel Foote's play *The Minor* referenced "the mad mansions of Moorfields," and Whitefield's preaching at the Tabernacle was interrupted at times by clamorous songs from these harsh theatrical farces.[31]

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[27] Kidd, 217.

[28] Ibid., 223.

[29] Ibid., 225.

[30] Ibid., 224, 226.

[31] Ibid., 231-232.

Although Whitefield's final years were marked by a "crabbier and more inflexible" attitude, he did put to rest most of the rivalries that had consumed his early years.[32] His wife Elizabeth died suddenly in 1768 while he was in Scotland, ending a long, dutiful relationship that was not an "affectionate marriage."[33] After preaching a farewell service at Moorfields and Tottenham Court, Whitefield took his seventh and final trip to his orphanage in Georgia. He passed away on September 30th, 1770, just before making it to Boston where he had a few preaching engagements. John Wesley preached his funeral sermon at Tottenham Court, and Charles Wesley wrote an elegy in his honor, two stanzas of which are shown below.

> Soon as he thus lifts up his trumpet-voice,
> Attentive thousands tremble, or rejoice:
> Who faithfully the welcome truth receive,
> Rejoice, and closer to their Saviour cleave:
> Poor christless sinners, wounded by the word,
> (Lovely and sharper than a two-edg'd sword,
> Spirit and foul almighty to divide)
> Drop, like autumnal leaves, on every side,
> Lamenting after Him they crucified!
>
> Though long by following multitudes admir'd,
> No party for himself he e'er desir'd,
> His one desire to make the SAVIOUR known,
> To magnify the names of CHRIST alone:
> If others strove who should the greatest be,
> No lover of pre-eminence was he,
> Nor envied those his LORD vouchsaf'd to bless,
> But you'd in theirs as in his own success,
> His friends in honour to himself prefer'd,
> And least of all in his own eyes appear'd.[34]

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[32] Kidd, 241.

[33] Ibid., 246.

[34] Charles Wesley, *An Elegy on the Late Reverend George Whitefield, M.A* (Dublin, 1771), 14; 17-18.

Whitefield's Values and Approach to Preaching

Preaching was unquestionably at the center of Whitefield's ministry; he preached an estimated 18,000 sermons in his lifetime.[35] Whitefield's sermon style and approach is helpfully outlined by Ian Maddock in *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield.*[36] Whitefield's itinerancy, views of Scripture, preaching style, sermon reception, and core doctrinal beliefs will be highlighted below with Maddock's scholarship as the main resource.

Whitefield's decision to preach in the fields was inspired by Howel Harris, a Welsh preacher, and William Morgan, an Anglican clergyman. Whitefield's connection to these men was not his only rationale; Maddock writes that Whitefield argued for a historical precedent and a biblical foundation for the practice as well. After a few "providential" occasions in which Whitefield spoke extemporaneously for a gathering of people outdoors, he became confident that he was "specially called to be a field preacher" and saw his field preaching as obedience to that call (41). Maddock argues that Whitefield's preaching was consistent with a fundamental value of evangelical ecumenism, stating, "Whitefield's consistent practice was to intentionally foster and maintain the denominational and spatial breath of his itinerant ministry by distancing himself from sectarianism and provincialism" (42).

One distinct characteristic of Whitefield's preaching was his internalization of biblical language in such a way that his speech often flowed in and out of biblical

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[35] Jonathan Yeager, ed., *Early Evangelicalism: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23.

[36] Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield (*Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2012). All of the quotations in this chapter with in-text citations are from this source.

quotations. Additionally, Whitefield would personally identify with biblical characters, finding parallels between his life and those in the passages he was presenting. For example, Whitefield saw many of his trials through the lens of the Apostle Paul and frequently associated Paul's life with his own. Maddock summarizes Whitefield's approach by saying that he "cherished, nurtured, and propagated a self-conception of his itinerant field-preaching ministry that was borne out of the events and characters described in Scripture, and expressed using biblical language" (50).

Although Whitefield was known as a dramatic orator, Maddock writes that Whitefield's aim was "to convert, not to entertain" (71). Scholars such as Harry Stout and John Carrick have pointed to different rationales for Whitefield's popularity and success as a preacher. Stout emphasizes the "theater-driven" elements in Whitefield, stating, "Before Whitefield, everyone knew the difference between preaching and acting. With Whitefield's preaching it was no longer clear what was church and what was theater."[37] In contrast to this perspective, John Carrick has emphasized the supernatural role of the Spirit of God working in Whitefield as he preached.[38] Both of these arguments show that Whitefield's early fascination with theater and rhetoric was foundational in shaping his preaching style, but his evangelical fervor and spirit-led motives also fueled his impassioned style.

Another characteristic of Whitefield's style was his extempore approach to preaching. Although this quality attracted many followers, Whitefield was careful to clarify that the absence of notes or script did not indicate a lack of preparation. In fact,

[37] Stout, xix.

[38] John Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching: A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 43.

Whitefield loved to study and meditate before sermons. Still, Whitefield's dramatic and extemporaneous style set him apart as a preacher. Maddock states that Whitefield saw extemporaneous preaching as an indicator of his active and lively faith and his dramatic style as his "earnestness in heart and action" for Christian truth (74). As a result, Whitefield showed a level of suspicion toward those who read sermons dryly and without emotion.

Whitefield was committed to "clarity and simplicity" (79). He believed strongly that the "poor and unlearned" were equally in need of hearing the gospel, and he did not want his own education to be a stumbling block for these people (79). Another reason that Whitefield wanted to present a simple and clear message was that his audience was always changing. In a letter to John Wesley early in his career, Whitefield indicated that he was in the "business … of planting" (82). In other words, Whitefield saw himself less in terms of nurturing a single body of Christians, but rather in spreading the news far and wide through his travels and by his influence. Ryle described Whitefield's approach as aggressive, like that of a "fisherman" who had to "go after souls."[39]

The reception of Whitefield's sermons has been documented in numerous eye-witness accounts and in Whitefield's journals. Both John Wesley and Benjamin Franklin also wrote about Whitefield's preaching style and its audience impact. Maddock observes that these reports and journal entries generally focused on the effects produced by the sermons on the listeners, the size of the crowd, and the amount of financial donations to his orphanage in Georgia, rather than on the content of the sermon.[40] The type of

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[39] Ryle, 31.

[40] Maddock, 91-93.

language that became commonly used to describe Whitefield's sermons can be seen in the following account by the preacher himself.

> After singing, I gave a word of exhortation. Oh, how did the Word fall like a hammer and like a fire! One poor creature in particular was ready to sink into the earth. His countenance was altered till he looked, as it were, sick to death … Others were dissolved to tears around him; and one of my fellow travelers was struck down, and so overpowered, that his body became exceedingly weak.[41]

Maddock observes that Whitefield's reception was often described with words such as being "struck" or "melted" by "the power of the proclaimed word," and weeping, fainting, and other "visceral reactions" were often recorded (91-93). Although Whitefield's inner motives for ministry seemed to be directly related to spreading the gospel, Maddock suggests that "Whitefield regarded the validity of his preaching ministry to be inextricably linked to its perceptible success" (94). Ryle has highlighted the all-encompassing nature of Whitefield's reception, writing, "Whitefield's preaching produced a powerful effect on people in every rank of life. He won the admiration of the high as well as the low, of rich as well as the poor, of learned as well as unlearned."[42]

Whitefield's printed sermons rarely conveyed the same drama and rhetoric that these audience accounts described. Kidd writes about this difference, "The itinerant certainly felt more comfortable preaching sermons than publishing them—fewer critics could capture and attack his ephemeral spoken words, but they pored over every published sentence for hints of doctrinal error or enthusiasm. His printed works, therefore, tend towards verbal and theological moderation."[43] Examples of the more

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[41] George Whitefield, quoted in Maddock, 92.

[42] Ryle, 33.

[43] Kidd, 154.

outrageous analogies and captivating measures of speech that appear in audience accounts often do not appear in the printed works.[44]

Hallmarks of Whitefield's Theology

Whitefield's preaching ministry reveals particular doctrinal emphases on the sinful human condition, free grace, election, justification, regeneration, the perseverance of the saints, and the Holy Spirit. A helpful account of Whitefield's theological values can be found in a document titled "A Summary of Gospel Doctrine Taught by Mr Whitefield" by Robert Elliot, who was converted under Whitefield's early ministry and remained connected to him throughout his life.[45] In this article, Elliot makes the bold claim, "Mr Whitefield was no partisan in religion. His spirit was not narrow and contracted, but he cordially embraced all the true followers of Christ, of every opinion, name and nation, however in circumstantials, modes, and external forms of worship they might differ from him: yet he was zealous, steady, and unshaken in the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel."[46] Elliot named five doctrines as central to Whitefield's ministry: original sin, the new birth, justification by faith, the perseverance of the saints, and eternal and unconditional election.[47]

Most of Whitefield's theological beliefs were evangelical in nature and continue to remain as hallmarks of evangelicalism.[48] However, Whitefield's personal history, his

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[44] An example of these differing accounts of Whitefield's sermons can be found in Kidd, 154.

[45] This essay is reprinted in Ryle, *Select Sermons of George Whitefield,* 51-71.

[46] Elliot, in Ryle, 51.

[47] Ibid., 52.

[48] See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992).

primary influences, and the education that he received are inseparable from the way he articulated his theology through preaching, providing an important context for his beliefs. Maddock writes that Whitefield's views of these doctrines had "subtle but highly significant theological differences" compared to his contemporaries like John Wesley, and these variances had "equally significant theological and pastoral implications" (176). Although Whitefield and John Wesley used "identical theological terminology," Maddock notes that it should not be assumed that they were in "theological agreement regarding their definitions of those terms" (179).

Whitefield's understanding of the human condition was shaped early on by his Anglican education at St. Mary de Crypt, and an emphasis on total depravity continued to be a major theme throughout his life.[49] For Whitefield, sin was not an abstract concept, but rather a daily inner battle against the flesh. Kidd writes that Whitefield was often "haunted by memories of his early acts of uncleanness."[50] Whitefield believed that understanding the human condition was pivotal because it brought the sinner to an appropriate understanding of free grace. Whitefield preached depravity in terms of Adam's imputed sin, as defined in the Thirty-Nine Articles.

> IX. Original sin … is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.[51]

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[49] Kidd, 9.

[50] Ibid., 11.

[51] "Articles of Religion" in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1562, accessed October 9, 2017, https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/book-of-common-prayer.aspx.

Whitefield's emphasis on "judicial and forensic" terms about sin contrasted with the analogies of disease and cure used more frequently by the Wesleys.[52] While Whitefield and Wesley both emphasized human depravity as a lynchpin doctrine, Whitefield's staunch Calvinism and his understanding of sin as it related to free grace was one of the biggest markers of division between them. Frequently charging Wesley with semi-Pelagianism, Whitefield's monergistic outlook constantly clashed with the synergism of Wesley so much that their views of sin and grace divided the evangelical scene into "Calvinist and Arminian lines."[53] Although neither Whitefield nor Wesley saw grace as a merited favor, Maddock writes that the two evangelists saw their definitions of sin and grace as "non-negotiable components of the gospel" (195). Because of this difference, Whitefield's understanding and frequent use of the term "free grace" should be seen partly as a conscious departure from the way it was used by the Wesleys and an attempt to "claim" the phrase.[54]

Many have noted that soteriological themes peppered Whitefield's sermons. Justification was a theme that was present in both Whitefield and Wesley, and unlike the doctrine of free grace, the two evangelists did not enter into public debate over this issue.[55] As a result, the eighteenth-century evangelical movement stood publicly unified on this front. Like his descriptions of human sinfulness, imputation was the primary analogy that Whitefield used to describe salvation.

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[52] Maddock, 185.

[53] Ibid., 195.

[54] Ibid., 194.

[55] Ibid., 210.

Regeneration, or the "new birth," was the final core doctrine espoused by Whitefield. Of all the doctrines found in Whitefield's sermons, the emphasis on the new birth was one that most clearly set apart the evangelical movement from the surrounding religious scene and became one of the most recognizable distinctives of evangelical revival theology. According to Jonathan Yeager, Whitefield's most famous sermon was on the topic of regeneration, titled "The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus," preached first in 1737.[56] Whitefield described the process of the new birth as "the life-changing conversion whereby a person is spiritually reborn as an authentic believer."[57] This sermon was given early in his ministry before his trip to America, and Whitefield's basic stance on the new birth did not change during his entire ministry.[58]

Although Robert Elliot's list did not include any mention of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Thomas Kidd points out that Whitefield's view of the Holy Spirit was another core part of his theology, especially in relation to the conflicts that characterized his ministry.[59] Kidd comments that if Whitefield would have backed down regarding the Holy Spirit's role in the life of the believer and the church, he could have "saved himself the time and emotional energy spent on repeated fallouts with the Wesleys, Moravians, Anglican adversaries, Scottish seceders, and others."[60] For Whitefield, defending his beliefs about the Holy Spirit was worth these disputes.

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[56] Yeager, 23.

[57] George Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in Order to Salvation." (London, 1737).

[58] Maddock, 211.

[59] Kidd, 224.

[60] Ibid., 261.

Whitefield's Ministry at Moorfields

Location and Architecture

Moorfields Tabernacle was Whitefield's permanent location for field preaching, where he began on April 29, 1739.[61] Moorfields spanned eighteen acres of land and was located north of London near another meeting house called Fetter Lane.[62] Kennington Common was another outdoor location near London at which Whitefield would preach during the week, but he tended to preach at Moorfields on Sunday mornings.[63]

Prior to being Whitefield's preaching station, Moorfields was a refugee camp for those displaced during the Great London Fire in 1666. Originally, the neighborhood there was poorly built, but it began to grow into a city when the infamous Bethlehem "Bedlam" Hospital moved to a nearby area. Over a period of sixty years, Moorfields turned into "a popular but seedy promenade filled with open-air markets, auctions, shows, beggars, and [street performers]."[64]

The reputation of this location did not bother Whitefield, and it could accommodate the large crowds who came to hear him preach.[65] Moorfields was a good location for carrying sound; Whitefield's booming voice combined with the acoustics of

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[61] John Gillies, *Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield* (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1772), 35-36.

[62] Kidd, 75.

[63] Ibid., 75.

[64] Stephen A. Marini, "Whitefield's Music: Moorfields Tabernacle, The Divine Musical Miscellany (1754), and the Fashioning of Early Evangelical Sacred Song," *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 2, no. 1 (2016): 102.

[65] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 103.

the park's walls to carry his voice for a mile and the crowd's singing up to two miles.[66] Around 1740, Whitefield's supporters assisted in building a wooden platform from which Whitefield could preach. The stage also helped protect Whitefield from rough weather and elevated him above the often-raucous crowds. This structure was the early stage of Whitefield's self-named "tabernacle," a term he chose to emphasize the temporary status of the site.[67]

By 1752, however, Whitefield indicated that he wanted a more permanent building at Moorfields. Construction for this building began on March 1, 1753, and it was built purposely as a "preaching structure."[68] Marini provides a detailed architectural description of this building.

> It was square, 80 feet on a side and two stories high. Seven Roman arches windows pierced the upper story of the main elevation and three of them flanked the entry below … The building offered no external ornaments except corner pilasters, two more pilasters to each side of the central portal, and a rudimentary cornice and balustrade. The closest architectural parallels to the new Tabernacle's square shape were seventeenth-century Puritan and Quaker meetinghouses, designed for maximal acoustical amplification so that every sermon and testimony could be heard.[69]

One unique feature of the new building was that it contained no seating; the congregation crowded in and stood to sing and listen to the sermon. As a result, Moorfields functioned more as a gathering place than as an institutional church.

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[66] Gillies, 36

[67] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 104.

[68] Ibid., 108.

[69] Ibid., 108.

Phases of Ministry

Whitefield's ministry in London from when he began to preach at Moorfields to when he published *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* went through a number of stages. Early on, Whitefield's ministry was like a "mad trick" full of unconstrained vigor, bordering on a spectacle.[70] Kidd describes the environment of Whitefield's preaching by saying it was "as much of a festival as a formal church gathering."[71] Having recently returned from his first trip to America, Whitefield's fiery preaching drew such crowds that he is quoted as having said that he would "never come out of that place alive."[72]

The second phase at Moorfields, following his second trip to America, was much more tempered. From 1741 to 1742, Whitefield faced problems related to the divisive issue of Calvinism in Methodist circles. This controversy caused some strain within the congregation that gathered at the Tabernacle, so Whitefield decided to start a permanent organization at Moorfields—a special society that was open only to Whitefield's converts. Admission was granted by showing a ticket that was given only when those in the gathering confessed to having experienced a new birth. It was in this phase that Whitefield began to adopt a more structured and regulated approach to ministry, implementing "rules of prayer, moral behavior, and attendance in worship," the details of which were not preserved.[73]

In 1742, Whitefield left for America, beginning a new phase at Moorfields that is characterized by sporadic visits to preach at the Tabernacle. The society at Moorfields

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[70] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 103.

[71] Kidd, 77.

[72] Gillies, 35.

[73] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 106.

continued to meet regularly and was led by guest preachers. Whitefield instituted the practice of the Love-Feast, which he borrowed from Moravian tradition. This service was characterized by a "prayer, hymn singing, the sharing of food and drink, testimony by members, and the reading of the society's covenant."[74]

It is the fourth and last phase at Moorfields that is the primary context for *Hymns for Social Worship.* Mark Noll writes that by 1750, Whitefield's ministry was characterized by maturation—a "cooling" of his earlier stages of "red-hot enthusiasm."[75] Whitefield was concerned with the upkeep of the orphanage in Georgia and had begun to show renewed interest in restoring relationships with other preachers and associations. He was also in the process of revising earlier editions of his journals, tempering some of the accounts and making editorial choices that aimed at evangelical unity.

This change in pace for Whitefield coincided with both the construction of Moorfields Tabernacle as well as the first edition of *The Collection of Hymns for Social Worship*. Marini offers a helpful summarization of Whitefield's ministry at Moorfields during this phase:

> By 1753, the Tabernacle had developed into a unique community that was neither Anglican nor Methodist nor Dissenting, unfettered liturgically by either the *Book of Common Prayer*, Wesley's conference *Minutes*, or the *Westminster Directory for Worship*. With its new meetinghouse and its community conceived by Whitefield as a religious society without ecclesial affiliation, he was free to prescribe the Tabernacle's ritual practice as he saw fit. Wesley had done the same thing for his religious societies, and in both cases hymnody proved to be central to the creation of their communal identities.[76]

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[74] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 106.

[75] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 3-4.

[76] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 109.

CHAPTER THREE

Whitefield's Preaching

Analysis of Representative Sermons

Whitefield's American colleague Gilbert Tennent wrote the preface to a collection of ten of Whitefield's sermons published in 1760, recommending it as "pious, pertinent, and instructive" for the present day. He called Whitefield's sermons "apples of gold in pictures of silver," alluding to Solomon's proverb.[1] This reference was meant to affirm Whitefield as a relevant and practical preacher whose words were fit for the occasion, and Tennent commended his style as "easy and natural … equally fitted to alarm sinners, and comfort the saints."[2]

According to James Downey, only seventy-eight of Whitefield's 18,000 sermons were transcribed aurally and published.[3] In the two years after Whitefield's death, these seventy-eight sermon transcriptions were republished and reprinted in over twenty-eight different collections in Europe and America. However, a complete collection of Whitefield's sermons did not exist until 1812. The following five sermons have been chosen out of the ones available in print according to two main criteria. First, the dates for these sermons intentionally correspond to the range of Whitefield's ministry from the time just before *Hymns for Social Worship* was published to the time of his death in order

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[1] Gilbert Tennent, preface to *Ten Sermons on the Following Subjects* by George Whitefield (London, 1760), iii.

[2] Tennent, iii.

[3] James Downey, *The Eighteenth Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkley, Secker, Sterne, Whitefield, and Wesley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 156.

to represent this later era in his ministry. As a result, these sermons will be summarized in this section in chronological order. Second, these five sermons are among Whitefield's more well-known pastoral addresses, representing many of the central beliefs that characterized his pastoral ministry. The context of revival offers a lens for a proper reading of these sermons. His primary beliefs and most common doctrinal emphases on sin, grace, salvation, perseverance, the Holy Spirit, and the new birth can also be found interspersed in the following selections.

"The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus"

As introduced in an earlier section, this sermon was first given by Whitefield to an audience in Bristol at St. Mary's, Radcliffe in 1737.[4] As Whitefield waited to leave for Georgia, he preached approximately five times a week to "persons of all ranks and denominations."[5] The sermon was edited for print by Whitefield "at the request of several hearers," since "God was pleas'd to give it surprising Success when delivered from the Pulpit" (vi).

In this sermon on the new birth, Whitefield made frequent use of contrasts as he stressed two opposing meanings of being in Christ. By positing inward transformation over external conformation, new nature over old nature, and spiritual baptism over water baptism, Whitefield expounded on true union with Christ and heartily attacked religious nominalism. Before launching fully into the topic, however, Whitefield summarized his

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[4] All quotations in this section unless marked otherwise come from George Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in Order to Salvation" (London, 1737).

[5] John Gillies, *Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield* (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1772), 13.

sermon topic in four concise and orderly points. This format became characteristic for Whitefield, appealing to the scientific method-driven minds of his audience.

Although his four points offered the listener a structure for following the sermon, Whitefield also offered a verbal clue for the main point of his sermon, stating, “The sum of the matter is this: Christianity includes Morality, as Grace does Reason; but if we are only mere Moralists, if we are not inwardly wrought upon, and changed by the powerful Operations of the Holy Spirit … it is to be feared that we shall be found naked at the Great Day” (21).

Throughout the sermon, Whitefield often alluded to the “strangeness” and “mystery” of this transformation. He stated, “How this glorious change is wrought in the Soul, cannot easily be explained … for no One knows the Ways of the Spirit, save the Spirit of God Himself” (8). In order to connect the listener to this abstract concept, Whitefield spoke through descriptive metaphors such as the refining of gold, the cleaning of filthy glass, and the physical healing of disease.

Whitefield saw the new birth as a radical, life-changing moment that would send the Christian on a battle-like journey to root out all hidden sinful desires. For Whitefield, adhering to the practices of prayer, fasting, and the hearing and reading of God’s Word was a pharisaical act for anyone who had not undergone the new birth. Whitefield described the transition of all who had experienced a new birth from profaneness to genuine godliness, and warned of the danger of moving only from a state of profaneness to mere civility.

Interestingly, Whitefield ended his sermon with the comment, “If he that is in Christ must be a new Creature, then this may be prescribed as an infallible Rule for every

Person of whatever Denomination, Age, Degree or Quality to judge himself by" (22-23). For Whitefield, the experience of a new birth was far more important than denominational lines. In fact, this was the second iteration of this idea in this sermon; he began the sermon by addressing "sincere Christians of whatever denomination" (1).

"The Putting on the New Man a Certain Mark of the Real Christian"

After spending a few months preaching in Scotland, Whitefield returned to London in November, 1749.[6] The crowds to which he had been preaching were "large and serious" and he had experienced "rough treatment" from the audiences.[7] By January, he wrote of being in a "very weak condition" which was worsened by the especially harsh winter. On the fifth of January, Whitefield preached a New Year sermon at Moorfields from Ephesians 4: "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."[8]

An anonymous "gentleman present" heard this sermon and recorded it in short-hand. At a later point, he translated it and published it in London, stating that for many years he had tried to record a sermon by Whitefield, but the "large and crowded Auditory" at Moorfields was not conducive to this task (iii). Whether it was the weather or some other reason, this morning worship gathering was less crowded and this

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[6] All quotations in this section unless marked otherwise come from George Whitefield, "The Putting on the New Man a Certain Mark of the Real Christian" (London: J. Towers, 1750).

[7] Gillies, 183.

[8] Eph. 4:22-24 (NIV).

gentleman was able to take down the sermon successfully. His preface states that accuracy was his highest value, and no alterations were made in his transcription. As a result, this anonymously recorded sermon captures more of the drama and vividness in Whitefield's preaching than in transcriptions that were altered for perceived clarity.

This sermon contains a number of parallels to "The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus." As was Whitefield's habit, he appealed to an explicitly diverse audience in this sermon by stating, "no Matter whether you are Presbyterian or Independent, Church-man or Dissenter, Methodist or no Methodist, unless you are new Creatures you are in a State of Damnation" (17). He also began this sermon with a list of his three main points, and frequently used contrasting ideas to make his argument.

For Whitefield, becoming a new person meant that the "renovation must be as diffusive as the Corruption was" (9). Whitefield often paralleled the idea of original sin and the new birth by using language such as "totally defiled" followed by "totally renewed" (10). Although Whitefield used many vivid metaphors in this sermon, he was careful to state that the experience of the new birth had real consequences and meaning beyond his metaphors. In fact, he asserted that those who "content themselves with a figurative Regeneration, will, bye and bye, run into a real Damnation" (9).

Whitefield framed the entire sermon with the statement, "All divine revelation terminates and centers in these two things: our fall by Adam and our rise by the Lord Jesus Christ" (5). Since Whitefield believed that all of Scripture pointed to this main theme of falling away and being brought back to God, this sermon functioned as a description of what Whitefield considered was the heart of the gospel.

Within these first few points, Whitefield spun the conversation in the direction of the Free Grace controversy, undoubtedly aiming his comments against John Wesley. “However some,” he contended, “who are enemies to the Doctrine of Grace, insist, that the consequences of such Doctrine is, that we may sin that Grace may abound” (6). Despite this comment, Whitefield moved directly into a discussion of the context of Ephesians in which he quoted significantly from research by the seventeenth-century Arminian theologian John Goodwin. Goodwin’s writing was frequently used by John Wesley, who even updated and edited some of his works in order to combat Calvinist ideas.

Whitefield acknowledged that this sermon was the first in the new calendar year, and he reminded his audience that the sermon he had given the week prior was on the topic of putting off the old self. This comment implies that by 1749, Whitefield was starting to see the crowd at Moorfields as a returning congregation. Relating the New Year to a new birth was not the only time Whitefield referenced the calendar year in the sermon; he subtly wove in a connecting theme of holiday celebrations like Christmas as well as analogies to the course of aging and the habits of starting afresh.

One of the most noticeable aspects of this sermon is Whitefield’s use of colorful and gripping imagery. From the picturesque description of God speaking light into the world as a way of envisioning God illuminating the soul to the almost graphic account of Esau and Jacob struggling in Rebecca’s womb like the “womb of the person’s heart,” Whitefield had a corresponding image to capture the imagination of his listener for every theological idea that he introduced (10).

In addition to these metaphors, Whitefield often mentioned relevant events and ideas to which the crowds could connect. He introduced the Scripture passage as "Paul's Golden Verses," referencing the popular "Golden verses" of Pythagoras (7). At two different times, he shared a story of interactions he had with an acquaintance in order support his argument, employing humor in one of the stories. Near the end of the sermon, he began to address hypothetical members of the crowd, suggesting specific reasons that some might have come to hear him preach and commenting on different stages of life to appeal to different ages of those in his audience. Whitefield even referenced a local scandal when he spoke to those who had been born again, stating that God had kept them from being "numbered with the poor Criminals in Newgate last Monday" (22).

As Whitefield progressed in the sermon, he seemed to reach a dramatic peak in which his analogies increased in frequency and he began to restate metaphors, stringing them together one after another. A visual cue of Whitefield dramatic intensity is the increased use of exclamation points by the gentleman who transcribed and published the sermon. Whitefield also began to apply a sense of temporal urgency in his statements, evoking fear through comments such as "Were there to be an Earthquake to Night, and this Tabernacle swallowed up, good God! What an awful Separation would there be!" and "I pray God send you away restless to-night, till you have obtained [the new birth]" (27-28). It is not difficult to imagine the impact that Whitefield, with his booming voice, would have had in his closing statement: "Oh! That every one of you this Night may be awakened, and that every one of you may have these Words continually ringing in your Ears, 'Put on the New Man' (29).

"The True Nature of Beholding the Lamb of God" and "Peter's Denial of His Lord"

In the same year that the Moorfields Tabernacle was built, Whitefield gave two sermons that were transcribed and published together.[9] Although they were likely preached at different times, their similarity in form, as well as evidence within the material that they were preached to the same audience, makes it possible for them to be discussed together. Whitefield rarely preached on more than a verse or two at a time, and he usually chose a verse that contained a powerful expression or summarizing statement. For these sermons, he preached on the admonition to behold the Lamb of God from John 1 and Peter's denial of Christ in Matthew 26.

The first sermon contained two simple points, first addressing why Jesus is called the Lamb of God and then moving into an application section on beholding the Lamb. The sermon on Peter's denial was structured similarly with three points on the acts leading up to Peter's denial, his act of sin, and his recovery. Whitefield's sermons frequently followed the structure of an exposition followed by application, and as the sermon progressed into the application section, the emotional intensity of his language usually increased. A comment from the end of "The True Nature of Beholding the Lamb of God" sheds light on Whitefield's rationale for this two-part structure:

> We have now then, my dear Hearers, done with the Doctrinal Part of our Text; in opening of which, that we might deal with you as rational Creatures, we have endeavour'd calmly, and in the Fear of God, to address ourselves to your Understandings: but the hardest Work is yet behind, namely, to affect and warm your Hearts. This I take to be the very Life of preaching. For man is a compound Creature, made up of Affections, as well as Understanding; and consequently, without addressing both, we only do our Work by Halves … Without a proper Mixture of these, however, a Preacher may acquire the Character in the Letter-learned and

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[9] All quotations in this section unless marked otherwise come from George Whitefield, "The True Nature of Beholding the Lamb of God, and Peter's Denial of his Lord, Opened and Explained in Two Sermons" (London: Strahan, 1753).

> polite World, of being a calm and cool Reasoner, yet he never will be look'd upon by those whose Senses are exercis'd to discern spiritual Things, as a truly Evangelical and Christian Orator. (17-18)

In many ways, Whitefield's head-to-heart sermon structure aligned with his emphasis on moving out of nominal faith into one characterized by inward zeal. When moving from the exposition to the application, Whitefield rarely passed up an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the new birth. In "The True Nature of Beholding the Lamb," Whitefield stated that beholding could not mean either physical seeing or a "rational Conviction," but must be "the Consequence of a true spiritual Conviction … this is believing on him with the Heart, and is sometimes expres'd by *coming to, receiving*, *and trusting in him*" (10).

Whitefield's comments in the first part of his sermon stayed close to the biblical text. In the first of the two sermons, Whitefield discussed a variety of characteristics of Christ as a Lamb—meek, perfect, and sacrificial—and he often brought in supporting examples from the Old Testament and other places in Scripture. Although most of the application is found in the second half of the sermon, Whitefield occasionally broke away from the exposition with passionate statements such as "Help us, holy Jesus, to come at thy Invitation, and to learn of thee, who gavest such amazing Evidences of thy being meek and lowly in Heart!" (4).

In the second sermon, Whitefield provided contextual details before discussing the text. He introduced the topic by discussing the ways one can learn from historical biographies, and then stated that Scripture offered both the "shade and light" on biblical characters in order that readers learn from both their virtues and shortcomings (28). He also told his listeners that the topic of "shameful denial" was to be approached with a

serious spirit, stating, "We are going to tread on holy Ground. I set an Hedge about it in the Name of the Living God" (28). Whitefield used Peter's story as a grim warning for other believers to be on guard against self-confidence, spiritual pride, spiritual slumber, misguided zeal, keeping bad company, and the temptation of returning to a previous sin.

Both sermons addressed a crowd of young preachers in the audience who were evidently being trained in the ministry. He specifically applied certain sermon points to this group, admonishing them to preach with the "zeal of John the Baptist" and to avoid the spiritual pride of Peter (21, 46). In the first sermon, Whitefield also mentioned the Thirty-Nine Articles "of our own Church," implying that these sermons were probably given in an Anglican parish and Whitefield was appealing to that denominational context (13). He also made an aside during the sermon about the congregation having Bibles with them—a statement that would have been much less likely in a crowded outdoor setting. With the exception of these specific comments, Whitefield's overall tone was his usual universal one, speaking words of exhortation to "as many as hear me this Day, whether high or low, rich or poor, young or old, one with another" (22).

As he did in "The Putting On the New Man a Certain Mark of the Real Christian," Whitefield took a detour in his sermon to comment on the Free Grace controversy, calling the other perspective on this matter a "delusive Dream" and asserting, "I dare venture to tell the Preachers and Abettors of any such Doctrine, however knowing they may be in other Respects, that they know not the true Nature of Gospel-Holiness, nor the Completeness of a Believer's standing in the unspotted imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ" (5-6). Before resuming his point, Whitefield asked the congregation to "pardon this short, tho' too necessary a digression" (6).

The texts of these two sermons also reveal three of Whitefield's most impassioned theatrical techniques: dramatizing a biblical narrative through added emotional details, embodying the character of an eye-witness in a biblical scenario to offer multi-sensory descriptions, and using successive exclamatory or interrogative sentences. Although these techniques are found in many of Whitefield's sermons, passages in these two sermons offer representative examples of these homiletic techniques.

In the first sermon, Whitefield discussed the context of John the Baptist's command, "Behold the Lamb of God." Rather than reading a few verses prior for context, Whitefield offered the narrative in his own words, adding emotional details in his description. Although the biblical text provides little explicit commentary on John the Baptist's frame of mind, Whitefield stated that he "scorned" those who thought he was the Messiah, was "impatient," and "seized the very first Opportunity" to point out Christ to the people (2). Whitefield also added to what John the Baptist originally said by quoting him as crying out, "Gaze not, on, nor let your Views terminate in me, but look to and Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the World" (2) Whitefield's description of John the Baptist's interaction with the disciples included the following enhanced detail, "Thus does this disinterested, honest-hearted Baptist, unweariedly, and repeatedly recommend the Lord Jesus, under the same endearing Character of the Lamb of God" (3).

In the second sermon on Peter's denial, Whitefield took a similar approach by imagining Peter's emotional process through his act of denial. With an unabashed reference to the stage, Whitefield claimed that Jesus must have looked at Peter with the

expression, “Et tu, Peter?” (39). Whitefield then stepped into the narrative himself, acting as Peter’s accuser with sharp and repetitive language:

> What? Not know him, who called thee from the poor Occupation of catching Fish, to make thee an Apostle and Fisher of Men? What? Not know him, who bade thee come to him upon the Waters, and him who with his own almighty Arm saved thee from drowning, when thou wast answering thy Name Cephas, and sinking like a Stone? What? Not know him, with whom thou hast so intimately conversed for three Years last past, who so lately pronounced thee blessed, washed thy Feet, gave thee a new Name, and took thee to Mount Tabor, where he displayed before thee his excellent Glory … Hast thou forgot all this *Peter*? (37-38)

The most gripping of Whitefield’s techniques was to transport the audience figuratively into the scene by acting out the role of an eye-witness. Whitefield used this tactic sparingly, usually to express the sentiment of pain, agony, or sadness. Examples of this particular technique from the two sermons are seen below.

> To satisfy you of this, if you can bear to be Spectators of such an awful Tragedy, as I desire you just now to go with me to the Entrance, so I must now entreat you to venture a little further into the same Garden. But stop, what is that we see? Behold the Lamb of God, undergoing the most direful Tortures of vindictive Wrath! Of the People, even of his Disciples, there is none with him. Alas! Was there ever Sorrow like unto that Sorrow, wherewith his innocent Soul was afflicted in this Day of his Father’s fierce Anger? … His Agony bespeaks it to be exceedingly sorrowful, even unto Death. It extorts Sweat, yea, a bloody Sweat. His Face, his Hands, his Garments, are all over stain’d with Blood. It extorts strong Cryings and many Tears— see how the incarnate Deity lies prostrate before his Father, who now laid on him the Iniquities of us all. See how he agonized in Prayer! Hark! Again! (6-7)

In describing Peter’s repentance after denying his Lord, Whitefield exclaimed:

> Methinks, I see him wringing his Hands, rending his Garments, stamping on the Ground, and with the self-condemned Publican smiting upon his ungrateful Breast—see how it heaves! Oh what piteous Sighs and Groans are those which come from the very Bottom of his Heart! Alas! It is too big to speak. But his Tears, his briny, bitter, repenting Tears plainly bespeak this to be the Language of his awakened Soul. (40-41)

Whitefield also acted out the role of Peter's enemies during his denial, evidenced in the quotation below.

> The wicked, no doubt, rejoiced when they heard of Peter's Fall, and in all Probability frequently vented their Spleen in saying, 'Here is Religion for you! Here is a pretty Family of Reformers, and Setters forth of new Doctrines. One of them hath betrayed his Master with a Kiss, and another with Oaths and Curses denied that ever he knew him: If this be the beginning, what will the end of their boasted Reformation be?' (47-48).

A final dramatic technique that Whitefield employed in most of his sermons was the use of successive exclamations, usually at the end of an idea or at the end of the entire sermon. These sections were often doxological in nature, and Whitefield frequently focused on a single phrase or analogy from earlier in the sermon that he would reiterate. In the first sermon, Whitefield's application section included a long string of commands that all began "Behold him!" or "Behold the Lamb of God!" (22-24). In the second sermon, he orated for long period of time with successive questions for his listeners.

> For how often have we been sleeping, when we ought to be watching? And how often have we been warming and indulging out Bodies, when we should have been in our Closets warming our Hearts in Prayer? … How often have we been drowsy when hearing the Word of God? Nay, how often have we been stupid, and even as dead as Stones at the Tables of the Lord, when Christ has been evidently set forth crucified before us? (43-44)

These long exclamations, interrogations, and other theatrical elements imbedded in the text of Whitefield's sermon make the dramatic reception of Whitefield's preaching more understandable. As mentioned before, Whitefield desired to appeal to the head as well as the heart, and his combination of doctrinal content with dramatic eloquence was one of his ways of meeting both needs.

"A Farewell Sermon"

Whitefield gave a farewell sermon at Moorfields on August 30, 1769, before embarking on his seventh and final journey to America.[10] This sermon was taken in short hand by another anonymous "Gentleman eminent" and printed for the price of a sixpence. Whitefield wrote in his journal that this was a "most awful parting season," and the audience that gathered in the early part of the morning at the Tabernacle was "more than full."[11] The short-hand recorder stated in his preface to the publication that "those who are acquainted with Mr. Whitefield's preaching, will not expect to find this Sermon (though taken verbatim) in every respect answerable to its delivery from the pulpit, as it is impossible for the press to convey an idea of that pathetic, moving manner, which is peculiarly his own" (iii).

Unlike most of Whitefield's sermons, his farewell speech contained a large amount of personal reflection. The we-centered language and the dialogical approach that characterized most of Whitefield's sermons was replaced in this sermon with many sentences that began "I remember once" and "I was thinking." Equally unusual is the fact that this sermon did not begin with two or three concise points, making it almost a stream-of-conscious narrative rather than a dialectic sermon.

Throughout the sermon, Whitefield named people, places, and moments during his ministry that were important to him, quoting two American preachers as well as Isaac Watts, and giving a detailed update on his orphanage in Georgia. Another one of these reflective moments was directed specifically to the congregation at Moorfields when he

[10] All quotations in this section unless marked otherwise come from George Whitefield, "A Sermon by the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield Being His Last Farewell to His Friends" (London, 1769).

[11] Gillies, 257.

stated, "The congregations at both ends of the town are dear to me; God has honoured me to build this and the other place" (26). Still, he made it clear that his affections were not in one geographical place; "I might have settled in London, I was offered hundreds then, yet I gave it all up to turn pilgrim for God."[12]

The themes and emphases found in Whitefield's farewell sermon are of special importance because they represent the final ideas that Whitefield wanted to leave with those at Moorfields. His choice of theme was assurance of faith expounded from Jesus's words in John 10, "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, no one will snatch them out of my hand."[13] Given Whitefield's poor health and his awareness that he was in his final years, this topic is not surprising. Whitefield exclaimed early in the sermon, "There is not a more glorious text, that stands by the perseverance of the Saints, than this" (24).

Whitefield began by elaborating on the characteristics of sheep, relating each characteristic to the people in the crowd. He told the crowd that sheep generally flocked together for company, were "little creatures" in the world's eyes, were "quiet harmless creatures," and were the most likely of all animals to wander (12-14). Following this, Whitefield juggled back and forth between two main ideas: the assurance that Christ knows his sheep and the proclamation to all to follow the Shepherd. Whitefield urged this final point with passionate and engaging language such as "Man! Woman! Sinner! Whoever thou art, put thine hand to thy heart, and say, Didst thou ever hear Christ's voice, so as to follow him?" (19-20).

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[12] Whitefield, "Farewell Sermon," 26. The exact context of Whitefield's statement is ambiguous, and the "hundreds" might refer to the number of church positions or a salary.

[13] John 10:27-28 (NIV).

Two themes that have been present in nearly all of the sermons studied in this section are also found in this farewell sermon: Whitefield's anti-Arminian viewpoint and his emphasis on cross-denominational unity. Although he never named John Wesley explicitly, Whitefield contended, "People say because we preach *faith*, we deny *good work*s; this is their objection against *imputed righteousness*. But this is a slander. It became a proverb in the reformation that the *Arminians,* who boasted so much of good works, must go to the *Calvinists* for works" (15). In the same breath, however, Whitefield applauded the Methodist movement, saying that it is the "glory of the Methodists, that while they have been forty years preaching, there has not been (that I know of) one single pamphlet by them about the non-essentials of religion" (7-8). Second, Whitefield stated his ecumenical sentiments in clear terms.

> It is very remarkable, there are but two sorts of people. Christ does not say, Are you an Independent, or Baptist, or Presbyterian? Or are you a Church of England-man? Nor did he ask, Are you a Methodist? All these things are of our own silly invention. But the whole world the Lord divides into two classes of people, sheep and goats. The Lord gives us to see this morning to which class we belong! (11)

Throughout this sermon, Whitefield mentioned moments from his own life as examples for the biblical text. In describing Jesus's ministry, he emphasized the harassment, accusations, and interruptions that Jesus would experience when preaching the gospel. Whitefield's audience was no doubt also thinking about the hostility that followed Whitefield when he preached, especially when he was describing what he imagined Jesus's reactions were to public threats—"He walked pensive, foreseeing the dreadful calamities that should come upon them, and he walked to let them see he was not ashamed to appear in publick [sic], and he walked to shew them that he put himself in their way. Lord God make all thy ministers like this!" (8).

Many times, Whitefield alluded to his travels across the Atlantic, drawing different theological ideas from that image. Some of these references were subtly incorporated, such as in the statement, “Following Christ represents following him in life and death, following him in self-denial, in humility and heavenly mindedness, following him in every word, and every good work, out of one climate into another, by sea or by land” (18).

Another memory he shared was how he wrestled with God over feelings of inadequacy in his early days as a preacher. He reflected on having cried out, “I am undone, unfit to speak in thy name, my God send me not yet” (22). Bringing his sermon back around to his main point, Whitefield said that the verses of Scripture from John 10 brought comfort to him at that time. Most of the personal reflections Whitefield shared were linked back to the original focus of the biblical text. It was evident that Whitefield did not want his farewell sermon to turn into a speech of self-recognition, and at one point he stressed, “Oh sinners! … I want you to forget the *creature* and his *preaching*; I want to lead you farther than the Tabernacle, to mount Calvary, to see with what an expense of blood, Jesus Christ purchased his own” (15).

Although most of the sermon was characterized by unusually tempered language, the strong emotional impact described earlier by the anonymous author of the preface became evident near the sermon’s conclusion. Whitefield turned to a distressing analogy, likening his last experience preaching at Moorfields to “a person coming to be executed publickly” (24). As he started his final remarks, Whitefield admitted that this last farewell was the “hardest part I have to act” and begged the audience, “My friends, spare your tears! I cannot bear your tears!” (30).

One can imagine that Whitefield's own tears and the tears of the entire crowd made his final words poignant and memorable. In his characteristic style, Whitefield began to increase the emotional intensity of his words by rhythmically punctuating his sermon with the recurring plea, "Lord! Let nothing pluck them out of thy hands!" He boldly concluded, "Some of you are certainly hearing *my dying* sermon; some of you are certainly hearing *your last* sermon. But my brethren, however that may be, we shall part, but to meet again for ever!" (30). By ending his sermon with the Aaronic benediction, Whitefield added a final cadence to his ministry at Moorfields (32).

Scholarship on Whitefield's Preaching

Whitefield's Persuasive Techniques

John Piper and James Downey are two writers who have studied the eloquence and persuasive elements of Whitefield's preaching. In *The Eighteenth Century Pulpit,* Downey focuses on Whitefield's specific context and the verbal techniques in his sermons. Downey suggests that Whitefield's impact was heightened by the contrast of his surroundings; the "special appeal" of his approach lay "partly in the fact that it answered an emotional need the established Church had for too long tried to ignore."[14]

Although this context should be acknowledged, Whitefield's use of rhetorical techniques is equally important. Downey writes, "By virtue of his sonorous voice and acting ability, Whitefield could enliven an otherwise indifferent homily or give verisimilitude to a Biblical scene."[15] Downey lists Whitefield's techniques, many of

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[14] Downey, 157.

[15] Ibid., 169.

which were noticed in the previous five sermon examples. He notes, "Whitefield excelled in impromptu dramatization of all kinds. One of his favorite techniques was to select an appropriate metaphor and sustain it to a climax."[16] This idea of reiterated metaphor gave Whitefield's sermons a poetic flavor. Similar to this metaphor-climax technique, Whitefield frequently continued a repetition of certain key words or phrases.[17] Much like a hymn refrain, Whitefield would take a key concept from his sermon and insert it at regular intervals in his speech.

Downey also discusses Whitefield's use of questions in his sermons, saying "It is not uncommon in a single sermon by Whitefield to count sixty or more questions, most of which are clustered together in a series of six to ten, and frequently more. Sometimes the pace is changed, sometimes the tense, but the attack is relentless."[18] Through this barrage of questions, Whitefield could accelerate the emotional intensity of his sermon.
The use of antithesis, according to Downey, was the most characteristic figure of Whitefield's prose. Antithesis could show up in several ways in Whitefield's speech, but the "most emphatic form" of this was "the juxtaposition of two strong nouns" within the same sentence.[19] Examples of this include pairs of opposites such as hatred/love, joy/sorrow, evil/good, and fleeting/eternal.

Finally, Downey suggests that Whitefield's persuasive power came through his "inexhaustible store of anecdotes and illustrations," which ranged from fear-inducing to

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[16] Downey, 170.

[17] Ibid., 175.

[18] Ibid., 174.

[19] Ibid., 174-175.

humorous.[20] Whitefield's use of these tactics in a message that he truly believed is part of what shaped his public appeal. Given the poetic nature of these tactics, it is not surprising that hymnodist William Cowper wrote the versified tribute to Whitefield, "And he that forg'd, and he that threw, the dart/ Had each a brother's int'rest in his heart!" and hymn writer Augustus Toplady referred to Whitefield as "the apostle of the English Empire."[21]

John Piper takes a different approach in *Seeing Beauty and Saying Beautifully,* focusing more on Whitefield's mode of delivery than his technical devices. Likening Whitefield's artistry to that of the poet George Herbert, Piper writes,

> Herbert's poetic effort focused on the making of poems. Whitefield's poetic effort focused on the making of sermons … I mean the entire energy of mind and soul and body that created, in the electrifying moment of preaching, something more than just intelligible words transmitting information. Specific biblical passages and doctrines were chosen, and specific words, sequences, consonance, assonances, cadences, images, narratives, characters, tones, pathoses, gestures, movements, facial expressions—all combined for an astonishing impact on believer and unbeliever alike.[22]

Piper attempts to address the question of whether or not Whitefield's preaching came from a supernatural or a natural source. He suggests that Whitefield was not a "repressed actor" but rather was "consciously committed to out-acting the actors because he has seen what is ultimately real."[23] Although Piper is claiming that Whitefield's commitment to what is spiritually "real" is what redeems his theatrical approach, Piper's views can be restated in a more neutral way. Whitefield was effective because he was

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[20] Downey, 176- 177.

[21] William Cowper, quoted in Downey, 187; Augustus Toplady, quoted in John Piper, *Seeing Beauty and Saying Beautifully: The Power of Poetic Effort in the Work of George Herbert, George Whitefield, and C. S. Lewis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 82.

[22] Piper, 85.

[23] Ibid., 94.

authentic; the sincerity of his methods aligned with the conviction of his message. In other words, Piper is noticing that Whitefield saw his own message as "real." As a result, his persuasive techniques and his dramatic presentation did not require Whitefield to put on an actor's mask because his passion flowed freely from the content. This idea of authenticity is crucial to understanding Whitefield as an artist.

Whitefield's "Evangelical Parachurch"

Stout's book *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* functions primarily as a biography, but he also analyzes certain aspects of Whitefield and his ministry, especially his theatrical gifts, and crafts them into historical hypotheses. One of his key arguments is that Whitefield inspired a "transatlantic parachurch" that continued to have a major influence in shaping cultural identities in Europe and America.[24] Given other scholars' analyses of Whitefield as a type of poet, the way Whitefield's sermons shaped entire cultures is especially important in deciphering how Whitefield's values might relate to musical and artistic aspects of eighteenth-century religious culture.

Stout discusses how Whitefield's mindset transformed the prevailing culture, explaining, "Before him there had only been established 'churches' and tolerated 'sects.' Aspiring religious leaders and reformers could think of nothing grander than reviving their own denominations and convincing those in other denominations of the errors of their ways. Only Whitefield thought to transcend denominational lines entirely and, in

[24] Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 205.

effect, ply a religious trade in the open air of the marketplace."[25] For Stout, Whitefield's refusal to align himself exclusively with a single denomination was the key to his success.

Stout finds 1748 to 1754 to be the phase in which Whitefield's irenic mindset was most noticeable; a date range that corresponds generally with Whitefield's most focused attention on Moorfields and with the creation of *Hymns for Social Worship.* Although Whitefield's refusal to promote an existing denomination exclusively or to form a new one most likely had a variety of motives, Stout suggests that Whitefield might have "had in mind an alternative religious vision" that he had picked up from his ministry-driven travels.[26] Stout suggests that Whitefield anticipated an end to religious culture as "traditional, localistic, and coercive" and wanted to replace it with a culture that was "transdenominational and revival-centered."[27]

Whether intentional or subliminal, Whitefield's preaching and ministry promoted a new religious culture. This new evangelical force that Stout describes as a "transatlantic parachurch" provided Protestants with a connective, non-institutional affiliation.[28] Stout says that on one hand, Whitefield cleverly "got away from having to craft creedal statements of faith or establish doctrinal requirements for membership that would set one group of Christians off from another."[29] On the other hand, Whitefield's new parachurch mentality created an "alternative model" that placed individual experience— specifically

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[25] Stout, xviii.

[26] Ibid., 203.

[27] Ibid., 204.

[28] Ibid., 205.

[29] Ibid., 205.

the experience of the new birth—as the "ultimate arbiter of religious faith."[30] Stout's astute recognition of Whitefield's adjustment of the church culture from denominational allegiance to an experiential allegiance suggests that the best way to understand evangelical theology is less through creedal statements and more through actions of preaching, singing, and praying.

Whitefield's Identity-Shaping Rhetoric

Like Stout's research, Mahaffey's book *Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation* resembles a biography but also discusses how Whitefield's influence on political ideology developed and produced the American nation. While Mahaffey deals almost exclusively with Whitefield's ministry in America, he describes his research approach as "closely examining his sermons to understand the essences of his messages, to uncover the logic with which he persuaded his hearers, and to learn about the audiences themselves from Whitefield's perspective.[31] Although the American context has not been the primary focus of this thesis, Mahaffey's conclusions can also speak broadly to how Whitefield's preaching was absorbed by those who heard him.

Mahaffey states that the American colonies were full of motley, disconnected communities shaped by factors such as "diversity of ethnic and national heritage, the agrarian economy, physical isolation, and ever-shifting social environment, financial

[30] Stout, 205.

[31] Jerome Mahaffey, *Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), xi-xii.

prosperity, and diverse religious affiliations."[32] Because of this context, Whitefield's unifying message, spread through mass revivals and through printed propaganda, forced these communities to wrestle with their differences. Whitefield's preaching tour throughout the colonies challenged an estimated eighty percent of the American population who heard him with "a particular and dynamic message tailored to expose spiritual inconsistencies and address identity concerns."[33] Mahaffey's study points out that there were "susceptible identity-shaping conditions" in the colonies, and Whitefield's preaching provided a "religious answer to any identity ambiguities they may have held."[34]

Although the colonies were denominationally and social diverse, a religious controversy over revivalism began in the 1740s that "goaded groups into bifurcation instead of a mosaic of positions."[35] As addressed briefly in chapter two, these two groups were the resistant Old Lights and the radical New Lights. Established Anglican and Congregationalist churches lost membership to the New Light churches, which favored the revivalist approach. Although Whitefield's fiery preaching partially sparked this controversy, Whitefield identified with a "growing coalition of moderate ministers who promoted a doctrinal and practical middle ground" by 1745.[36] These two sides eventually followed Whitefield's middle-ground approach and reconciled, sometimes even merging back into a single denominational branch.

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[32] Mahaffey, 50.

[33] Ibid., 63.

[34] Ibid., 246.

[35] Ibid., 126.

[36] Ibid., 141.

Mahaffey argues that Whitefield's preaching ministry "brought people together."[37] The new birth theology of his sermons and the culture-shifting values that were attached to it "would syllogistically steer subsequent thought not just in the religious sphere, but also in other spheres," from politics and ethics to possibly aesthetic values.[38] The "common vocabulary" that was found in Whitefield's sermons broke down the lines of traditional religion and gave individuals "a sense of unity and fellowship with other colonists where before there had been various levels of division or indifference."[39] Mahaffey concludes these influences came through Whitefield's "rhetoric of community."[40]

Although Mahaffey's argument is rooted in the culture of the American colonies, there is a broad parallel between the colonies and the sectarian nature of the religious environment in England. Although the differences of environment between the colonies and England are important in understanding Whitefield's precise impact, the general idea of Whitefield's "rhetoric of community" and Whitefield's identity-shaping preaching ministry extends to both sides of the Atlantic.

Whitefield as Artist

In contrast to the other sources in this section, Hughes Oliphant Old looks at Whitefield through a historical-homiletical lens in the fifth volume of *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church.* In taking this

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[37] Mahaffey, 103.

[38] Ibid., 103.

[39] Ibid., 247.

[40] Ibid., 244.

approach, Old is driven frequently to musical language and metaphor in order to describe Whitefield's preaching ability. Although this is merely an analogy, it points again to Whitefield's unusual power in crafting and delivering a sermon.

Old connects Whitefield's message to that of Philipp Spener and John Wesley, stating that his content was not vastly different from other pietist preachers. In contrast to these theologians, Whitefield employed a delivery approach that was more consistent with the message. He states, "If pietism sought to develop a religion of the heart, it had really been very slow to shape rhetorical forms suitable to these aims."[41] Old suggests that Whitefield's success was due to his single-focused aim, writing that his "attempt at ecumenism was perhaps more successful than that of other pietists simply because he aspired to be nothing more than a preacher."[42]

By reviewing a number of Whitefield's sermons, Old summarizes that the literary legacy of Whitefield's sermons was not marked by "quality" because they were often published quickly by popular demand and could only "give us a hint of his superb oratory."[43] Nevertheless, he comments on the material that does exist, stating that the "literary remains, as imperfect as they are, show us that he was indeed a great artist."[44] The bulk of his commentary on Whitefield consists of pointing out important homiletic elements in his sermons. Over and over, Old identifies Whitefield's use of climax to achieve a sense of direction in his sermons.

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[41] Hughes Oliphant Old, "*The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: Moderatism, Pietism, and Awakening*," vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 152.

[42] Ibid., 136.

[43] Ibid., 137.

[44] Ibid., 137.

In his analysis of Whitefield's sermon, "Christ the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption," Old notices a parallel between the sermon and a musical work. He writes, "Whitefield ascends into a hymn of praise for the redemptive work of Christ that concludes with a thunderous paraphrase of that mighty chapter. He sets up the words of Scripture as an organist introduces a hymn. When the hymn tune finally begins, one knows it is the most beautiful melody in the world."[45] Later, he refers to this moment in the sermon as a "fugue of homiletical doxology."[46] By describing Whitefield's preaching with musical words, Old points to the underlying artistry in each of his sermons.

Old goes so far as to call the language of Whitefield's sermons "high art."[47] Although this metaphor for Whitefield's preaching might be perceived as inflated, the descriptions of Whitefield's gift of preaching from a variety of scholars makes this analogy more legitimate. He concludes, "One can only imagine how a preacher with a sense of rhythm, timing, and pace might have turned this into a great oratory. According to all reports, Whitefield had this sense of flow, and with it his prose became poetry."[48] In light of these secondary sources, it becomes clear that Whitefield's artistic approach to preaching and his rhetorical presentation skills helped him make a powerful social impact on the eighteenth-century religious scene in a way that is not far from descriptions of other artistic means—like that of congregational singing.

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[45] Old, 139.

[46] Ibid., 140.

[47] Ibid., 141.

[48] Ibid., 141.

CHAPTER FOUR

Whitefield's Perspective on Singing and Hymnody

Whitefield never published a specific tract or essay dedicated to the topic of music or singing beyond his preface to *Hymns for Social Worship*, so any definitive perspective on this topic has to be pieced together from passing comments in his sermons, letters, journals, and other miscellaneous documents. This section is based on a key-word search through Whitefield's writings for the words "sing," "hymn," and "music" and their relatives.[1] By examining the context in which Whitefield used these words in his writings, a general idea of Whitefield's beliefs about music and singing can be sketched. Although some interesting insights on Whitefield's mindset about music emerge from this study, a full analysis of Whitefield's aesthetics is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Whitefield's Comments on Music in Sermons

As noted earlier, one of Whitefield's gifts was using metaphors and analogies in his sermons that would connect best to his immediate audience. Since Whitefield usually opened public worship with the singing of a psalm or hymn, it follows that he might

[1] The search included the following sources: George Whitefield, *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield in 6 Volumes* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771-1772), accessed August 1, 2017, http://digitalpuritan.net/george-whitefield/; George Whitefield, *Selected Sermons of George Whitefield,* Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed August 1, 2017, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/whitefield/sermons; and George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, foreword by Ian Murray (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960). For this last resource, the copyright-limited word search feature of the digital version of the book on Hathitrust Digital Library was used to find relevant pages. Difficulties with word searches in the first resource listed included poor PDF scans and old-style fonts that prevented some words from appearing in the search, especially words with letters s/f. Searches that worked best for this resource were "fing, finging, mufic").

return to the idea of public singing in his sermons. Whitefield took a variety of approaches when referring to music, singing, or hymns in his sermons; however, these references can be grouped into several broad categories: as a contrast with worldly behaviors, as an outward witness of living a holy life, or as a description of worship in heaven.

Since Whitefield seemingly loved to capitalize on contrasting ideas for dramatic effect, the most frequent context for comments about music and singing in the sermons were in a contrast against sinful behaviors, especially drunkenness. In his sermon, "Christ the Only Preservative Against a Reprobate Spirit," Whitefield proclaimed,

> While they are singing the songs of the drunkard, you are singing psalms and hymns: while they are at a playhouse, you are hearing a sermon: while they are drinking, reveling and misspending their precious time, and hastening on their own destruction, you are reading, praying, meditating, and working out your salvation with fear and trembling.[2]

Similarly, Whitefield reprimanded those who drank in excess in "The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness."

> But think you, O ye drunkards, that you shall ever be partakers of this inheritance with the saints in light? Do you flatter yourselves, that you, who have made them often the subject of your drunken songs, shall now be exalted to sing with them the heavenly songs of Zion? No, as by drunkenness you have made your hearts cages of unclean birds, with impure and unclean spirits must you dwell.[3]

In "An Exhortation to the People of God Not to Be Discouraged in Their Way," Whitefield used music as a social contrast rather than an individual one. Whitefield juxtaposed the company of the world against the company of believers, and encouraged

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[2] Whitefield, *Selected Sermons*, par. 2.

[3] Ibid., par. 30.

those who had experienced the new birth to hold fast to their faith despite their rejection from worldly company.

> If you were of the world it would love you; it would then be pleased with your company; it would not thrust you from a tavern, or an alehouse; it would not dislike you for singing the songs of the drunkard, or for going to plays, balls, or other polite and fashionable entertainments, as they are called; no, these the children of the world like; but if you will sing hymns and psalms, and go to hear what God hath to say unto your souls, and spend your time in reading, praying, and frequenting religious assemblies, then it is that they dislike you, and thrust you out of their company, as unworthy thereof; but let none of these things move you, for the rest which Jesus Christ hath prepared for you, is an ample recompense for all you may meet with here.[4]

Although most of the previous examples reveal Whitefield contrasting hymn singing with secular behaviors, he also occasionally used analogies about the beauty and pleasure of music. In an analogy about a person's spiritual life before the new birth in his sermon "On Regeneration," Whitefield discussed a variety of physical pleasures.

> For instance; what delight can the most harmonious music afford to a deaf, or what pleasure can the most excellent picture give to a blind man? Can a tasteless palate relish the richest dainties, or a filthy swine be pleased with the finest garden of flowers? No: and what reason can be assigned for it? An answer is ready; because they have neither of them any tempers of mind correspondent or agreeable to what they are to be diverted with.[5]

Another prominent category for Whitefield's use of musical language was as a sign of a living a holy life and as a witness for Christ. Whitefield assumed that a regenerate soul was a singing soul, and he often hinted that those who disliked singing hymns may not be prepared for heaven. In a sermon titled "A Penitent Heart: The Best New Year's Gift," Whitefield stated, "If you hate the ways of God, and cannot spend an

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[4] Whitefield, *Selected Sermons,* par. 3.

[5] Ibid., par. 15.

hour in his service, how will you think it to be easy, to all eternity, in singing praises to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."[6] At times, Whitefield used critical language in his sermons about those who did not practice their faith through singing, saying, "What do you think of a person that cannot bear … singing of Psalms? We must learn the new Song in this World, or we shall never sing it in the World to come."[7]

In his farewell sermon at Moorfields, Whitefield mentioned that hymn singing was a distinguishing mark of a Methodist. He continued on in the same breath to quote Isaac Watts, writing:

> Why, if it were fashionable to be a Methodist at court, if it were fashionable to be a Methodist abroad, they would go with a Bible or a hymn-book, instead of a novel; but religion never thrives under too much sun-shine. 'Not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.' Dr. Watts says, 'Here and there I see a king, and here and there a great man, in heaven, but their number is but small'.[8]

For Whitefield, singing hymns was also a bold and noticeable mark of the new birth. In his sermon, "Christ the Only Preservative against a Reprobate Spirit," Whitefield declared, "Do not be afraid to confess the blessed Jesus; dare to be singularly good: Don't be afraid of singing of hymns, or meeting together to build each other up in the ways of the Lord: Shine ye as lights in the world amidst a crooked and perverse generation."[9]

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[6] Whitefield, *Selected Sermons*, par. 18.

[7] George Whitefield, "The Putting on The New Man a Certain Mark of the Real Christian" (London: J. Towers, 1750), 19.

[8] Whitefield, *Selected Sermons*, par. 7.

[9] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 6, 296.

By singing, Whitefield thought that the believer was aligning his or her inner life with their outward profession. In one of his earliest sermons, Whitefield charged his congregation, "Labor, therefore, my beloved brethren, to let your practice correspond to your profession: and think not that it will be sufficient for you to plead at the last day, Lord have we not assembled ourselves together in thy name, and enlivened each other, by singing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs?"[10]

A third prominent context for hymn singing descriptions in Whitefield's sermons was as a portrait of worship in heaven. This eschatological emphasis on singing was important to Whitefield, which he stated most clearly in the preface to *Hymns for Social Worship.* In many sermons, Whitefield discussed singing with doxological language. One particularly vivid description is at the end of his sermon, "The Extent and Reasonableness of Self-Denial."

> Hark! Methinks I hear them chanting forth their everlasting *Hallelujahs,* and echoing triumphant songs of joy, and do you not long, my brethren, to join this heavenly choir? And then, we, even also shall ere long be lifted up into the same most blissful regions, there to join an eternal rest with the people of God, and join with them in singing doxologies and songs of praise, to the everlasting, blessed, all-glorious, most adorable Trinity, for ever and ever.[11]

An atypical comment by Whitefield appears in "The Potter and the Clay." Of his many sermons, this was one of his most theologically dense, as he discussed topics of human affections, nature, freedom, and the natural conscience. In order to offer clarity on one of his points, Whitefield paralleled the idea of harmony and musical dissonance to ideas about the human will. He explained,

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[10] Whitefield, *Selected Sermons*, par. 43.

[11] Whitefield, *Works,* vol. 5, 438-439.

> This will appear yet more evident, if we consider the *perverse bent of his will*. Being made in the very image of God; undoubtedly before the fall, man had no other will but his Maker's. God's will, and Adam's, were like unisons in music. There was not the least disunion, or discord between them. But now he hath a will, as directly contrary to the will of God, as light is contrary to darkness, or heaven to hell.[12]

Whitefield's References to Singing in Letters

Until Whitefield's letters were published, they were originally intended for an audience of one. Like his sermon commentary, Whitefield's language about hymns and singing falls into broad categories of similarity. In searching through three volumes of Whitefield's letters, it becomes evident that Whitefield's comments were discussed most often in four contexts: earthly hardships, worship in heaven, acts of devotion and discipline, and brief descriptions of public worship.

First, Whitefield frequently mentioned a hymn text or the act of singing in order to offer comfort through a difficult time of life. In a letter addressed to "My dear brother" and dated December 24, 1746, Whitefield wrote, "It is this promise that makes me now to rejoice in the midst of all the tribulations that has befallen my dear *Tabernacle* friends—For ere long you shall sing, 'O happy Rod! That brought us nearer to our God!' Courage, therefore, my brother, courage." Although the specific hardship that those in London were enduring is unclear, Whitefield comforted his addressee with part of a hymn text. This text, "I Have a God to Whom I May," was written by an unknown author and was not included in any edition of *Hymns for Social Worship.*

The second most frequent context about hymnody in Whitefield's private letters was in a description of heavenly worship. This eschatological thinking was also noted in

[12] Whitefield, *Selected Sermons*, par. 10.

in his public sermons. In July 1742, Whitefield wrote a letter to an aging minister in Dublin, bluntly addressing the topic of impending death.

> You, dear Sir, are an old weather beaten soldier. You are ripened for glory, and are ready to sing your *Nunc dimittis.* I am just about to begin to be a soldier. But blessed be God, I shall follow soon. The hopes of bringing more souls to Jesus Christ, is the only consideration that can reconcile me to life … His love fills my soul, O free grace! Surely I shall sing the loudest in heaven."[13]

Whitefield's comments about heaven and singing also included the idea of preparing in the present for future worship in heaven. In a letter to "Mr. T. A----ms," Whitefield quoted a line from "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," remarking, "'O to grace what might debtors! &c. &c.' I suppose you will sing that hymn soon; and if we should die in singing it? What then? Why then, welcome, welcome eternity!"[14] For Whitefield, singing also served as a reminder of heaven. In a letter to a "dear sister in Christ" named Mrs. C----, Whitefield referenced a specific memory of hymn singing.

> Just now we have been singing the hymn which we sung at Broad-oak; and as I generally do at such seasons, I thought of that happy time wherein we sung it in your great hall. It was a time much to be remembered, an anticipation, I believe, of that blessed time when we all shall meet to sing the song of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.[15]

Another common context for comments about music and singing was as an act of personal devotion or spiritual discipline. Whitefield wrote about singing both in his own devotional habits as well as in describing the habits of his friends. Although most of these comments appeared as a small detail or parenthetical phrase, the frequency with which they occur shows that Whitefield sang often. In a comment about some children at a

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[13] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 1, 408.

[14] Ibid., vol. 3, 387-388.

[15] Ibid., vol. 1, 139.

hospital that he had visited, Whitefield wrote of his thankfulness that "one of the mistresses told me … they meet together every night to sing and pray, and when [the master] goes to their rooms at night to see if all be safe, he generally disturbs them at their devotions."[16] In a letter to "Mr. R--- W----" in July 1752, Whitefield responded to an invitation to visit his friend by saying, "I thank you and yours, for your kind invitation of us to your pleasant villa; had I wings I could fly thither to talk of Jesus and sing a hymn, but the clouds seems to move westward, and I fear my visit to beloved Scotland must be deferred till next spring.[17]

Finally, Whitefield would often describe acts of public worship in his letters. These references usually appeared in narrative form as he outlined to a friend something that had recently happened in public worship. Comments such as "After we had sung a hymn," and "We sung a hymn, prayed, and parted in great harmony" are scattered on nearly every page of Whitefield's letters.[18] Whitefield repeatedly indicated in his writings that he believed public worship consisted of three primary elements: preaching, prayers, and singing. As a result, most of his descriptions of opportunities to preach in public worship also mention hymn singing.

A few specific comments from Whitefield's letters and other documents do not fit in these four broad contexts and should be mentioned separately. One of these occasions was in a letter from the time that Whitefield's infant son died, not long after the child's baptism. He wrote, "I publickly [sic] baptized him in the Tabernacle, and in the company

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[16] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 1, 337.

[17] Ibid., vol. 2, 438-439.

[18] Ibid., vol. 2, 13, 22.

of thousands solemnly gave him up to that God, who have him to me. A hymn, too fondly composed by an aged widow, as suitable to the occasion, was sung, and all went away big with hopes of the child's being hereafter to be employed in the work of God."[19] After writing about his grief and the ensuing funeral, Whitefield included the entire text of the hymn sung at the baptismal service at the end of the letter.

A less somber comment about hymns is found in a postscript to a letter dated September 23, 1764. Whitefield wrote to "Mr. R---- K----n" that he had received some hymn books in the mail. He followed this comment with the joyful exclamation, "This day has been a good day indeed. Grace! grace!"[20] A year before Whitefield's death, he wrote to this same man to say, "If I die, let not the hymn-book be cashiered. I am glad to hear of the *Amens* at Tottenham-Court. I doubt not but it is the same at [the] Tabernacle."[21] These comments suggest that Whitefield might have entrusted following editions of *Hymns for Social Worship* to this friend.

Similarly, Whitefield often wrote about hymns and hymn books in letters to "Mr. Reverend H----". In a letter to this minister in 1747, Whitefield commented that he "remembered the book with the hymn tunes."[22] In another correspondence between Whitefield and this minister, Whitefield made a remark that might allude to his mental preparation for *Hymns for Social Worship.* This excerpt is from a letter dated February 25, 1750, indicating the possibility that Whitefield's mind was turning to the creation of a hymnal as early as three years before its publication.

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[19] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 2, 51.

[20] Ibid., vol. 3, 315.

[21] Ibid., vol. 3, 398.

[22] Ibid., vol. 2, 124.

> O that I may be a pilgrim indeed, and desire no continuing city till I come to the New Jerusalem which is above, and the mother of us all. There, all that are born of God, whether Mysticks [sic], Calvinists, &c. shall join in one common song, even the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Your hymn, for which I thank you, is a preparative for this. I sent it to good Lady Huntingdon, who has been ill, but is now, I hope, recovered."[23]

This desire for all believers to be able to "join in one common song" mimics the language of the preface in *Hymns for Social Worship* in which Whitefield discusses his desire that all may be able to sing the hymns without disagreement. The unnamed hymn that was sent to Whitefield by this minister could have easily been a hymn that Whitefield was gathering for inclusion in his hymn book. The fact that he sent the hymn to be reviewed by Lady Huntingdon supports this interpretation, since she financed Whitefield's hymn publications and might have assisted in other ways.

Whitefield's Opinions on Hymns in Tracts and Miscellaneous Documents

Comments scattered through a variety of miscellaneous documents by Whitefield provide additional evidence for his supportive position on singing and hymnody. One way that Whitefield's priority for hymn singing comes to light is through an examination of his instructions for the students at the orphanage in Georgia. In "An Account of the Orphan-House in Georgia," Whitefield's gave explicit directions for worship and hymn singing throughout the day. These times of singing included before and after meals, after waking, before going to bed, and at specific services.

Whitefield also specified which hymns were to be sung during these occasions at Bethesda. The hymn "Father of Mercies, Hear Our Prayers" was to be sung as a group for visiting benefactors; "Come Let Us Join Our God to Bless" was to be sung daily; "Let Us

[23] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 2, 335.

Go Forth, Tis God's Command" was to be sung before work; and "Welcome Dear Brethren, Whom We Love" was sung at the admission of a new child to the orphanage.[24] In addition to these specific requirements, Whitefield also gave general instructions about other types of music at the orphanage, stating, "No music but divine psalmody; such as *Butt's Harmonia Sacra*, *Knibb's* and *Madan's* collection of tunes."[25]

Two brief references in Whitefield's writing reveal that he saw hymn books as important sources of Christian doctrine. In his well-known work, *A Letter to the Rev. John Wesley in Answer to His Sermon Entitled Free-Grace,* he reprimands Wesley for comments that the latter made in the preface to his hymn book about universal redemption and sinless perfection.[26] This comment shows that Whitefield took the content of hymn prefaces seriously enough to challenge Wesley not only in his sermon, but also in his hymn book preface. In the preface to a publication of homilies titled *A New Edition of the Homilies; As Intended to Have Been Published by Mr. Whitefield,* Whitefield included a hymn text and a collect along with each of his short sermons. Whitefield's decision reveals that he valued the place of prayers and singing in worship.[27]

In a letter to David Durell, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, Whitefield wrote a public response about the recent expulsion of six students from the university in 1768. These students had been expelled for being "of trades before they entered into the university" and for holding an unapproved meeting as Methodists for "extempore prayer,

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[24] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 3, 435-438.

[25] Ibid., vol. 3, 498.

[26] Ibid., vol. 4, 72.

[27] Ibid., vol. 4, 442.

reading, and singing hymns."[28] Whitefield argued passionately against the decision by contending that the students were, in fact, being good witnesses to Christ.

> When Elijah the Prophet was about to prophesy before two kings, he called for a minstrel … to sooth his ruffled passions, and prepare his heart the better for the reception of the Holy Spirit. And were the sons of the Prophets more frequently to entertain themselves thus, I believe it would be as suitable to the ministerial character, and recommend them as much, perhaps more, to all serious Christians … And was the voice of spiritual melody more frequently heard by those who come occasionally to visit our colleges, it might be as much to the honour of the university, as the more common and too, too frequent noise of box and dice, at the unlawful games of hazard and back-gammon."[29]

One of the most unusual comments about music made by Whitefield reveals his disproval of elaborated art and music connected with Catholicism. In a long letter to an unknown gentleman, dated April 1, 1754, Whitefield wrote about an experience he had in a Catholic service during Lent in Lisbon, Portugal. He chose to attend the service because he believed it would be "serviceable" to him as "a preacher and a Protestant, to see something of the superstitions of the church of Rome."[30] Whitefield described in great detail the large crowds of religious people and the various images and icons, especially of the Virgin Mary. In his letter, Whitefield discussed the music he heard and his reaction to the scene.

> The music on this occasion was extremely lofty, and the church was illuminated in a very striking manner … And towards the conclusion [of the service], he called upon the people to join with him in an extempore prayer. This they did with great fervency, which was expressed not only by repeating it aloud, but by beating their breasts, and clapping their cheeks, and weeping heartily. To compleat [sic] the solemnity, immediately after the delivery of the blessing … there was heard a most soft and soothing symphony of music, which being ended, the assembly

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[28] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 4, 314; 318-219.

[29] Ibid., vol. 4, 318.

[30] Ibid., vol. 3, 74.

> broke up, and I returned to my lodgings; not a little affected, to see so many thousands led away from the simplicity of the gospel, but such a mixture of human artifice and blind superstition, of which indeed I could have formed no idea had I not been an eye witness.[31]

Whitefield's Ideas of Singing in Journal Entries

During the summer of 1738, Whitefield wrote an account of his first trip to America to send to a few friends in London. This document was printed and disseminated without Whitefield's permission, and the success of this item prompted him to begin journaling for the purpose of publishing.[32] Whitefield published a total of seven journals in a variety of formats, documenting his ministry until March 1741. In 1938, an unfinished and unpublished journal of Whitefield's ministry from 1744-1745 was found in the Library of Princeton Theological Seminary and added to the collection of Whitefield's complete journals.

In general, almost all the references to singing and hymns in Whitefield's journals are in the context of a concise description of public or private worship. It was common for Whitefield to use the language of Ephesians 5, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," as a way of describing his or others' devotional practices. A word-search through Whitefield's journals brings up data about the frequency of the following words, shown in Table 4.1 below.

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[31] Whitefield, *Works*, vol. 3, 75-76.

[32] Murray, foreword to George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 13.

Table 4.1. Frequency of musical words in Whitefield's *Journals*

Word	Frequency
Singing/sing/sang	117
Psalm(s)	85
Hymn(s)	42
Song/s	17
Music	1

The frequency with which Whitefield mentioned music and singing in his published journals offers additional supporting evidence that singing was an inseparable part of Whitefield's mindset toward ministry. Not only did Whitefield quote full stanzas or larger portions of hymns in his journals, he also ended every section of his journals with a full hymn text. These hymn texts are discussed in depth in chapter six.

Although most descriptions of Whitefield's hymn singing took place in worship and with gatherings of friends, there are a noticeable number of accounts in which Whitefield sang while he traveled. Some of these descriptions of singing while traveling were in times of distress on ships during a storm. Whitefield writes of a particularly stormy and difficult trip to Georgia in 1744 in which two foreign ships came upon them. All of the passengers prepared to be taken as prisoners, only to find that they were not enemy ships. The events brought the crew close together, and Whitefield wrote at the end of the trip that "Harmony and love has reigned amongst us. We have had prayers and singing twice and preaching once every day excepting the Lord's Day, when I have preached twice. Many of the sailors have attended orderly and learnt one or two of our hymn tunes."[33]

[33] Whitefield, *Journals*, 514-515.

Not all of Whitefield's travels were so difficult, and other times Whitefield's singing while traveling was out of joy rather than fear. He wrote about a twelve-mile trip in a small boat in December, 1739, "God favoured us with a calm and pleasant night, and we praised Him as we went over by singing hymns."[34] During one time in America, Whitefield wrote after a long day of preaching, "the moon was shining very bright [and] we went back to town very pleasantly. We sang hymns a good part of the way."[35]
The one occurrence of the word "music" in his journals was in the context of his disproval of secular dancing and music at a particular tavern he visited. In this account, Whitefield recorded that he threw himself in the middle of the dancers and musicians and began to preach loudly against their behavior. Whitefield wrote that "all were put to silence" and he continued to preach about the "nature of baptism and the necessity of being born again."[36] Much to his chagrin, he noticed that as soon as he had gone to bed, he heard the music and dancing beginning again.

A Summary of Whitefield's Perspective

Whitefield's various comments about hymns and singing scattered throughout his sermons, letters, and journals may seem at first glance to be unrelated, incidental, or peripheral. While these comments are not sufficient to reconstruct a full account of Whitefield's philosophy of congregational song, they can support the conclusion that hymn singing was integral to both his public ministry and his own spiritual life. In addition to this general conclusion, some of the associations that Whitefield had with

[34] Whitefield, *Journals*, 275.

[35] Ibid., 410.

[36] Ibid., 382.

singing and hymns can be seen by noticing the recurring patterns of context in which Whitefield wrote about the topic. The following list shows the primary contexts for singing that appear within his sermons, letters, and journals.

1. For comfort and endurance through hardship
2. As a visible witness to and contrast with the world
3. To prepare for and foreshadow worship in heaven
4. As an act of spiritual discipline
5. As a fundamental element in public worship

While these categories are not unusual or surprising, they offer a helpful way of classifying Whitefield’s thoughts about the role of hymnody and singing in his pastoral ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE

An Overview of *Hymns for Social Worship*

Editions and Influence

When Whitefield published *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* in 1753, he indicated that it was designed particularly for the informal gatherings at Moorfields. However, this hymnal became Whitefield's most widely circulated work, with sixteen editions by 1770 and thirty-five printings before 1794.[1] The hymn book was continually in print until the nineteenth century, and distribution extended to the American colonies and the Caribbean.[2]

The first publication of this hymnal did not indicate the beginning of hymn singing in Whitefield's ministry; rather, it was a collection of hymns that was most likely pruned from the body of songs that was already being used in Whitefield's ministry. The production of this hymnal was part of the larger organizational movement in Whitefield's ministry that inspired the new architectural facilities and the organization of a permanent society of believers.

As mentioned in chapter two, this hymnal came at a time of a noticeable disunity in the evangelical scene.[3] The death of Watts in 1748 and Doddridge in 1751 had left

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[1] Stephen A. Marini, "Whitefield's Music: Moorfields Tabernacle, The Divine Musical Miscellany (1754), and the Fashioning of Early Evangelical Sacred Song," *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 2, no. 1 (2016): 111.

[2] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 111; Mark A. Noll, "Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality," in *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*, ed. Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016), 5.

[3] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 2.

gaps that had not been filled by "figures of comparable influence."[4] In addition to this, Jonathan Edwards had been banished from his church in Northampton, Charles Wesley had stopped itinerant ministry to marry his wife Sarah. John Wesley was embroiled in Anglican controversies, and John Cennick had left Methodist connections to join the Moravians. Noll concludes, "Evangelical religion had demonstrated an unusual power to convert individuals, create informal societies, and influence traditional churches; but evangelicals had also proved incapable of harnessing their energies in unified organizations."[5] In the context of an un-unified evangelical setting, *Hymns for Social Worship* had an organizing and unifying effect. Noll has pointed out that the collection was a "fixture of evangelical worship" for two generations after Whitefield's death.[6]

The first sixteen editions, overseen by Whitefield himself and printed by William Strahan and later Henry Cock, corresponded to one edition for almost every year before Whitefield's death. The first fifteen editions were indicated to be sold specifically at Moorfields, but the last of these editions was to be sold at Tottenham Court Road Chapel as well. Figure 5.1 shows the title page of the first edition of *Hymns for Social Worship*.

In addition to the numerous re-printings and editions, another indication that Whitefield's hymn book was influential is seen in Noll's observation that many of the hymns in the collection became "standards" in evangelical Protestant circles. Noll connects twenty-nine of the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* to the list in Stephen Marini's study "American Protestant Hymns Project: A Ranked List of the Most

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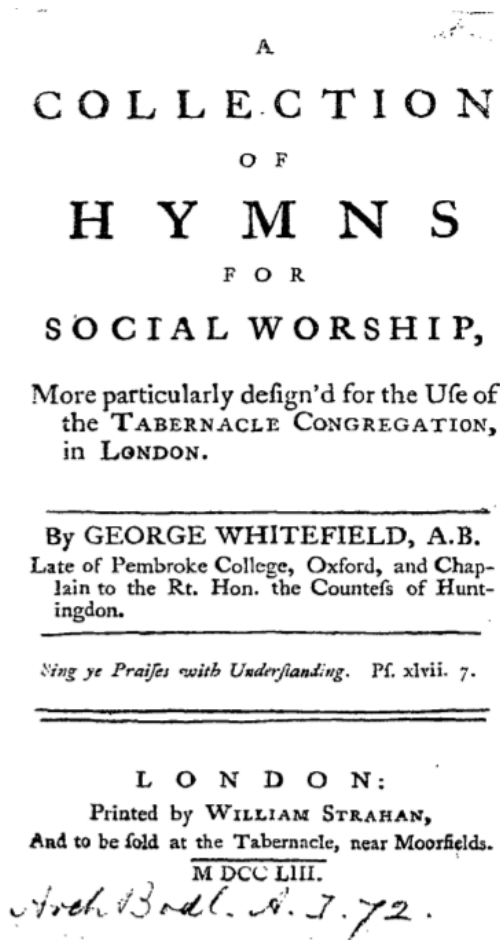
[4] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 3.

[5] Ibid., 4.

[6] Ibid., 5.

Frequently Printed Hymns, 1737-1960s," making it clear that Whitefield's collection certainly helped circulate these texts.[7]



A
COLLECTION
OF
HYMNS
FOR
SOCIAL WORSHIP,

More particularly defign'd for the Ufe of the TABERNACLE CONGREGATION, in LONDON.

By GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A.B.
Late of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Chaplain to the Rt. Hon. the Countefs of Huntingdon.

Sing ye Praifes with Underftanding. Pf. xlvii. 7.

LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM STRAHAN,
And to be fold at the Tabernacle, near Moorfields.
M DCC LIII.

Arch. Bodl. A. I. 72.

Figure 5.1. Title page of *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* (1753)

Whitefield's Preface

A number of important insights into Whitefield's priorities for the collection and his own beliefs about music are highlighted in his preface. His own stated purpose for the collection was to offer songs that would "abound much in Thanksgiving, and to be of such a Nature, that all who attend may join in them without being obliged to sing Lies, or

[7] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 5.

not sing at all … and so altered in some Particulars, that I think all may safely concur in singing them."[8]

This opening comment reveals Whitefield's generally inclusive mindset toward choosing text themes to avoid "controversial theological or sectarian references."[9] Noll makes a similar comment, stating, "Whether self-consciously or intuitively, George Whitefield's hymn *Collection* of 1753 expressed what many evangelicals, perhaps most evangelicals, believed, while neglecting or minimizing the aspects of personal or organized religion about which they disagreed."[10] However, Whitefield's value of inclusiveness had clear limits; Louis Benson has noted that Whitefield specifically altered Arminian phrases in some of the Wesleys' texts, despite the fact that they wrote strongly against such alterations and "bitterly resented" these changes.[11]

In wanting to choose songs that all who gathered could fully sing, Whitefield was making an ecclesiastical decision that was unusually ecumenical in context of the surrounding scene of evangelical disunity and division. Whitefield's irenic spirit, stated explicitly in the preface, reappears in many different features of *Hymns for Social Worship*, making it an important distinctive of the collection.

In the preface, Whitefield also indicated his intended audience and context for the hymn book. He addressed his preface to born-again Christians who were "acquainted with the Divine Life" and aware of "all the acts and exercises of Devotion … [that are]

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[8] George Whitefield, ed. *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* (London: William Strahan, 1753).

[9] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 111.

[10] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 5.

[11] Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 319.

sweet and delightful." He also stressed the hymn book's importance for public worship, in contrast to private devotional use. However, Whitefield quickly countered any misassumption that communal public singing was only a routine or external action by affirming the act of singing as a devotional act that should engage the "Heart and Lips unfeigned."[12]

Whitefield anchored his rationale for public singing in eschatological grounds; despite his relatively brief introduction, he emphasized this idea in two different places. The act of public singing, Whitefield argued, was the closest earthly resemblance to "the Blessed Worshippers above … singing Praises to him who sitteth upon the Throne for ever." Likewise, Whitefield wrote that he included the dialogue hymns at the end of the collection because they were similar to those "represented in the Book of Revelations [sic] as answering one another in their heavenly anthems" and could allow those "singing below" to be "translated after Death to join them in singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb above."[13]

Interestingly, Whitefield's heaven-oriented rationale was balanced by two distinctly pragmatic comments. He preferred short texts of three to four stanzas with a doxology, stating, "I am no great Friend to long Sermons, long Prayers, or long Hymns—They generally weary instead of edifying." His second pragmatic choice for the hymn book was cheapness; Whitefield wanted the "poor of the flock" as well as the rich to have

[12] All quotations in this paragraph are from Whitefield, "Preface," *Hymns for Social Worship.*

[13] Ibid.

access to the collection and decided to print the book as economically as possible. "Much in a little" was his motto.[14]

Structure and Sections

Hymns for Social Worship originally contained 181 hymn lyrics which were grouped into two main sections for different purposes. The first section was designed for public social worship and included 132 texts over a broad array of topics, eight single-stanza doxologies, and three single-stanza closing hymns. The second half comprised thirty-eight texts for the organized society of "persons meeting in Christian Fellowship." The texts in this section emphasized the theme of familial community and also included the eight dialogue hymns that were written for divided groups to sing antiphonally. Stephen Marini has found the presence of these dialogue hymns to be one of the more distinctive aspects of the publication.[15]

The first two sections of *Hymns for Social Worship* remained essentially unchanged over the first sixteen editions except for the addition of another doxology that appeared in the fourteenth edition. Instead, Whitefield added new hymns to a supplement in the back of the book. The first appendix of twenty-six hymns was added to the sixth edition in 1757. Over the next ten editions, the appendix expanded to forty-six texts.[16]

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[14] All quotations in this paragraph are from Whitefield, "Preface," *Hymns for Social Worship.*

[15] Marini, "Whitefield's Music," 112.

[16] Stephen Marini indicates that there are 44 hymns in the supplement (112) but a careful count of the 16th edition shows 46 texts. This discrepancy might be due to hymns accidently printed in both the main body of the book and the supplement, which Marini may have subtracted from the total number.

Table 5.1 compares the appendices of the sixth and sixteenth editions, showing which hymns were added.[17]

Table 5.1. Added hymns in the sixth and sixteenth editions of *Hymns for Social Worship*

#	6th Edition Supplement	16th Edition Supplement
1	A Good High-Priest Is Come (Cennick)	Come Thou Almighty King (first associated with Whitefield's publication, possibly Wesley.)
2	Ah! Lovely Appearance of Death (Wesley)	Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing (Robert Robinson st. 1-2, Martin Madan, st. 3)
3	All Glory to God and Peace upon Earth (Wesley)	Grace, How Exceeding, Sweet to Those (Esther Grünbeck, tr. Charles Kinchin)
4	Away with Our Fears (Wesley)	He Comes, He Comes, the Judge Severe (Wesley)
5	All-Wise, All-Good, Almighty Lord (Wesley)	Jesu, Let Thy Pitying Eye (Wesley)
6	Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Wesley)	Jesu, Lover of My Soul (Wesley)
7	Ere I Sleep, For Ev'ry Favour (Cennick)	In Every Trouble Sharp and Strong (John Killingham)
8	Hosanna to Jesus on High (Wesley)	If Jesus Is Yours (unknown)
9	Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise (accidental reprint, Wesley)	Love Brought Down God's Dear Only Son (unknown)
10	Jesus Come, our Dearest Jesus (unknown)	Now Begins the Heav'nly Theme (unknown, possibly Martin Madan)
11	Jesu Shew Us Thy Salvation (Wesley)	O Jesu! Our Lord, Thy Name Be Ador'd (unknown)
12	Love Divine, All Love Excelling (Wesley)	O Lord How Great's the Favour (unknown)
13	Let Angels and Archangels Sing (Wesley)	Our Most Indulgent Saviour (unknown)
14	Lo He Cometh! Countless Trumpets (Cennick)	Son of God! Thy Blessing Grant (unknown)
15	Lord, Thou Hast Bid Thy People Pray (Wesley)	Salvation, O the Joyful Sound (Watts)
16	O Come Let Us Join, Together Combine (anonymous)	Take my Poor Heart, Just as It Is (Maria Stonehouse)
17	O Come Let Us Join, In Music Divine (Wesley)	Thou Shepherd of Isr'el Divine (Wesley)
18	Offspring of David, David's Root (unknown)	What Shall We Render unto Thee (unknown)
19	Rise, My Soul, Adore Thy Maker (Cennick)	When Saints Survey the Wond'rous Cross (Watts)
20	Soldiers of Christ Arise (Wesley)	Who Hath Our Report Believ'd (unknown)
21	Saviour of the World Attend (unknown)	
22	'Tis Finish'd, 'Tis Done (Wesley)	
23	Thanks Be to Christ, Whose Fruitful Love (unknown)	
24	Thou Hidden Love of God, Whose Height (Gerhardt, tr. J. Wesley)	
25	Ye Children of My God (unknown)	
26	Ye Serious Souls, Draw Near (unknown)	

[17] The complete supplement for the 16th edition also includes the texts that are listed in the first column of the 6th edition supplement.

As is made clear from this table, most of the texts that were added in later editions were authored by Charles Wesley. This trend might have been due to the growing amity that characterized Whitefield and Wesley's friendship later in life. It is also possible that Whitefield chose to incorporate these hymns into later editions of the books as he became familiar with them. The thematic content of the hymns is discussed in chapter six.

Structurally, *Hymns for Social Worship* does not contain the same type of organization as most of Charles Wesley's hymn publications. The Wesleyan hymnals and tracts usually contained grouped headings for special days, scriptural references, or other thematic topics in addition to an alphabetical index. Although Whitefield did provide an alphabetical list of incipits and gave a broad title for each text, there is no other thematic organization to the book.

Text Authorship

In looking at the primary authors of the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship*, it becomes obvious that Whitefield drew from many of his contemporaries. Mark Noll has hypothesized that "Whitefield's *Collection* gathered between two covers as many varieties of Western Christianity as any comparable work of his era" and states that the "denominational promiscuity of this work is striking."[18] The majority of the published hymn collections during this time were single-author books or contained texts by only a few writers, and Whitefield's collection was one of the first to include texts by both Watts and Wesley.[19] The following table offers a visual reference to the authorship of the

[18] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 11.

[19] Ibid., 12.

texts that combines Noll's research with details related to the supplemental texts from the sixth and sixteenth editions.

Table 5.2. Text authorship in *Hymns for Social Worship* with supplements

Name	Dates	Denominational Association	# Ed. 1	# Ed. 16
Isaac Watts	1674-1748	Dissenter	84	2 added
Unknown authorship	-	-	32	16 added
Charles Wesley	1707-1788	Methodist	25	17 added
John Cennick	1718-1755	Moravian	14	4 added
William Hammond	1719-1793	Moravian	5	
Robert Seagrave	1693-1759	Methodist	4	
Joseph Humphreys	1720 - ?	Evangelical	2	
John Taylor	1694-1761	Dissenter	1	
Thomas Shepherd	1665-1739	Dissenter	1	
Joseph Stennett	1690-1713	Baptist	1	
John Fellows	? - 1785	Baptist	1	
Samuel Wesley, Jr.	1691-1739	Anglican	1	
Thomas Ken	1637-1711	Anglican	1	
Tate and Brady	1652-1715 and 1659-1726	Anglican	1	
John Mason	1646-1694	Anglican	1	
Edward Perronet	1721-1792	Independent	1	
Anna Dober	1712-1739	Moravian	1	
John Dryden	1631-1700	Roman Catholic	2	
John Austin (pen name William Birchley)	1613-1669	Roman Catholic	1	
Robert Robinson	1735-1790	Baptist	-	1 added
Paul Gerhardt	1607-1676	Lutheran	-	1 added
Maria Stonehouse	1722-1751	Moravian	-	1 added
Martin Madan	1726-1790	Anglican	-	1 added
John Killingham	? - 1740	Congregational	-	1 added

In addition to Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, whose hymns and influence were discussed in the first chapter, four authors who were associated with Whitefield's ministry are clearly featured in the hymn book: Robert Seagrave, Joseph Humphreys, William Hammond, and John Cennick. Although neither Seagrave nor Humphreys had a

widespread audience or a large sphere of influence, Hammond and Cennick each wrote a number of hymns that were preserved and continued to have influence, especially in Moravian circles and sources.[20] Following are brief summaries of the key contributing authors as well as some of the more unusual writers found in in *Hymns for Social Worship.*[21]

John Cennick was brought up in the Church of England and found the Wesleys during their time at Oxford. He joined the Moravian/Methodist Society at Fetter Lane in 1739 and started field preaching on occasion. He joined Whitefield for a period of four years during a debate with the Wesleys over Calvinism, but ended up returning to Moravian circles, where he remained for the rest of his life. Cennick is associated with the publication of two collections of hymns, *Sacred Hymns for the Children of God* (1741) and *Sacred Hymns for the Use of Religious Societies* (1752), although his exact role in the latter publication is unclear.[22] Cennick was the author of the dialogue hymns that Whitefield included in *Hymns for Social Worship.*

William Hammond was born in Sussex and attended St. John's College in Cambridge. J.R. Watson writes that Hammond's life "parallels" that of John Cennick; he associated with both Whitefield and later the Moravians.[23] He is known for his role in translating Latin hymns as well as a publication of his own texts in *Psalms, Hymns, and*

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[20] Benson, 316-317.

[21] Biographical information for these authors comes primarily from corresponding entries in the *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology,* J.R. Watson and Emma Hornby, eds, accessed August 1, 2017, http://www.hymnology.co.uk/. This resource is hereafter referred to in the notes as *CDH.*

[22] "Cennick, John," *CDH.*

[23] "Hammond, William," *CDH.*

Spiritual Songs (1745). This collection was prefaced by a lengthy essay on the topic of assurance of faith and the doctrine of sanctification.

Robert Seagrave was educated at Clare College as a young man. After graduating, he heard about the religious movement surrounding Whitefield and the Wesleys and became ordained in order to join them. He authored a number of pamphlets addressing the clergy of the day, and preached occasionally in London, sometimes filling the pulpit at Moorfields. In 1742, he published *Hymns for Christian Worship* to be used at Loriner's Hall in London. Like Seagrave, Joseph Humphreys took great interest in Whitefield. His commitment to Whitefield showed up in an extreme way; he was expelled from an academy in London that trained men for ministry on the sole basis of his association with Whitefield. He also was known for preaching in Bristol, London, and Deptford.

John Mason, described by Noll as "eccentric," was an Anglican rector whose hymns became popular in both Anglican and Dissenting circles.[24] His ministry was characterized by an obsession with apocalyptic themes and the second coming of Christ. His sermons and hymns were often inspired by visions. At one point in his life, Mason preached a sermon about the immediate end of times and then gathered five hundred people to wait outside for Christ's return. Marilyn Lewis writes of this event, "The spectacle of constant singing and dancing … attracted another thousand people to the village."[25]

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[24] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 11.

[25] "Mason, John," *CDH.*

Anna Dober lived a short life of twenty-six years, but in that time she wrote many hymns, eighteen of which became staples in the 1778 Moravian hymn book.[26] She married a missionary and spent time doing mission work in Amsterdam. John Wesley came across her hymn "Holy Lamb Who Thee Receive" and translated it into English. Very little is known about the other female author in *Hymns for Social Worship,* Maria Stonehouse. Like Dober, Stonehouse was also a Moravian. She and her husband George knew Lady Huntingdon and were influential and wealthy affiliates with the Fetter Lane Society. Katherine Faull states that Maria Stonehouse was "a leading member of the London Moravian Congregation" and a "supporter of the British Moravian enterprises."[27]

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[26] John Julian, ed, "Dober, Anna" in *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (1957, repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1907), 305.

[27] Katherine Faull, trans., *Moravian Women's Memoirs: Their Related Lives, 1750-1820* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 98.

CHAPTER SIX

A Thematic Analysis of *Hymns for Social Worship*

Methodological Approach

Having surveyed Whitefield's ministry emphases through sermon analysis and a review of his published writing, this chapter seeks to notice patterns of similarity and difference between Whitefield's preaching ministry and his choice of texts in *Hymns for Social Worship.* Approaching a thematic analysis of *Hymns for Social Worship* through the lens of Whitefield's preaching ministry offers a few key advantages. First, it allows the hymns to be seen in light of the evangelical revival setting in which they were sung. Second, this approach focuses on Whitefield as editor. Since Whitefield had his hand in choosing these particular texts, it follows that his personal beliefs and values would impact his editorial choices. This process, in turn, offers both a fuller understanding of Whitefield's ministry as well as a more comprehensive understanding of this collection. Third, this method presents a framework of specific evangelical themes that can inform a reading of the texts and bring out recurring themes that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Expanding on Existing Scholarship

The only current publication that focuses on a thematic analysis of the 181 texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* is the chapter titled "Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality" by Mark Noll in the book *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy.*[1]

[1] Mark A. Noll, "Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality," in *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*, ed. Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016). All quotations in this section come from this source unless otherwise noted.

Because of the paucity of research on this hymn collection, Noll's research is a crucial starting point for this chapter, and his conclusions deserve attention.

Noll's article begins with some ground-laying details, and he points out the unusually large range of authors and the impressive metrical diversity as two of the most important characteristics of the collection. Although Noll examines all the hymns in his textual analysis, he pays special attention to two elements of the hymn book: the titles given by Whitefield for each hymn and the wide variety of names for Christ that are mentioned in the texts. These two factors supply the majority of supporting evidence for Noll's conclusions. He notices that the thematic titles are "overwhelmingly … centered on the defining theme of the *Collection*, namely, the saving life, death, resurrection, and example of Jesus Christ" (12). Of the 119 titles given in the book, Noll points out that sixty-four explicitly address Christ or a theme of redemption, and "at least half" of the texts under other headings still continue to "advance Christological motifs" (12). To Noll, even the hymns under different headings were still "tangentially soteriological" and "regularly underscored the saving work of Christ" (14).

Noll also notices the "stunningly capacious array of names addressing the Saviour" (15). After recording the occurrences of words referencing Christ, Noll concludes that "in all, the hymns contain almost seventy different synonyms for speaking to or of the 'Lord', 'Jesus/Jesu,' and 'Christ'" (15). He observes that there was also an unusually high number of references to the deity of Christ, and an equally strong focus on Jesus as "the Lamb" (16).

After giving special attention to names and titles, Noll offers his conclusion: "the great bulk of Whitefield's selections focused, refocused, and focused again on two main

subjects: the character and work of Christ the redeemer, and the believer's response to the redeeming transaction between a loving Trinity and sinful humanity" (14). In other words, Noll's research indicates that the atonement was the primary textual theme in *Hymns for Social Worship*, referring to it as "the hymn book's centre of gravity" (17). Noll also acknowledges a smaller, secondary emphasis on "the intimate fellowship created among those conscious of their redemption" (14). This emphasis on the fellowship of believers, especially in the second section of texts, was still framed as a "natural extension" or byproduct of the atonement theme (19).

For Noll, the "affectional atonement" theme was singular, and Whitefield's collection revealed a "nearly complete absence of attention to almost anything else" (22). The metrical variety and diversity of authorship in the book contrasts sharply with Noll's conclusion of a nearly exclusive theme. He writes of this dynamic between the many artistic expressions on the single theme: "Taken together, the hymns' multifaceted evocation of the Son of God in his saving work reflect an extraordinary single-minded theological focus and an equally extraordinary expression of emotional commitment" (16-17).

The absent themes that Noll identifies are formal Church order, ministerial office, the Lord's supper, Scripture, the relationship of divine and human activity in redemption, the natural world, social action, and cultural formation (22). Likewise, the minimal references to British nationalism, baptism, and the "structures or rites of institutional Christendom" were not enough to divert attention from the primary theme of the collection (12). Noll did suggest that Whitefield's inclusion of a text for infant baptism and another for adult baptism pointed to his "broad ecumenicity" (14).

In this discussion on absent themes, it is important to notice the thematic parallel between Noll's conclusions about *Hymns for Social Worship* and Stephen Marini's research on the most frequently published evangelical hymns in America from 1737 to 1800.[2] Marini's discussion of absent themes is remarkably similar to Noll's list. Since the majority of texts that Marini studied were by British authors like Watts, Wesley, Cennick, and Newton, this pattern is expected. However, Marini's list of absent themes in the most published texts in American hymnals indicated which topics were "highly contested areas of evangelical religious culture."[3] Marini writes, "Subjects missing from the most popular hymns—ecclesiology, mission, Communion, baptism, the Bible, the Godhead, and the Last Judgement—were deeply controverted by the early American evangelicals."[4] In contrast, the most popular themes on Marini's list of evangelical hymns were "invitation, salvation, sanctification, witness, perseverance, death, and heaven."[5] The similarity between absent themes in Whitefield's hymn book and Marini's list reinforces a transatlantic evangelical consensus on which topics were controversial in eighteenth-century hymnody.

Noll's article offers several conclusions about eighteenth-century evangelical spirituality. He remarks that Whitefield's collection of hymns "reflected, represented, and strengthened" the shape of evangelical spirituality (25). To Noll, the thematic focus in *Hymns for Social Worship* aligned with what was also the "centrepiece" of eighteenth-

[2] Stephen A. Marini, "Hymnody as History: Early Evangelical Hymns and the Recovery of American Popular Religion" *Church History* 71, no. 2 (June 2002): 273-307.

[3] Ibid., 283.

[4] Ibid., 283.

[5] Ibid., 286.

century spirituality—"the strongest possible concentration on the death of Christ as the savior of humankind and the centre of all human history" (22). He suggests that Whitefield's editorial rationale for the collection was to "breath[e] life into the structures of a British Christendom that to a considerable degree he also valued" (22). Finally, Whitefield's nearly exclusive focus on the theme of atonement "promoted a spirituality both potent for good and primed for distortion" (23). Essentially, Noll argues that Whitefield's atonement-focused hymn book embodied an evangelical "energy" that could inspire later groups of evangelical worshippers to spiritual revival or prompt others into "social disengagement, and intellectual malfeasance" (23).

While Noll's research lays an essential foundation for an analysis of this hymn book, the many themes found in Whitefield's preaching ministry and throughout his letters and journals prompt a further and deeper exploration. The following section investigates the presence of additional themes inspired by Whitefield's preached and published commentary. This study suggests the following expected themes in addition to the two mentioned in Noll's research: ecumenism, perseverance of the saints, sin, the Holy Spirit, justification, the new birth, election, and free grace. The values found within Whitefield's writing that may appear as editorial preferences in his hymn book are: hardship and trials, witness to and contrast with the world, foreshadowed worship in heaven, acts of spiritual discipline, and acts of public worship.

Themes and Examples

Doctrinal Themes in Whitefield's Preaching

Ecumenism and unity. Because of Whitefield's custom of preaching in places with a variety of denominational associations and his explicit comments on ecumenism in the preface, it would be expected that themes of ecumenism would come out in Whitefield's text choices for *Hymns for Social Worship.* This topic is not only expressed plainly in many of the hymn texts, it is also realized in an overall impression of the source due to Whitefield's editorial alterations. Throughout the collection, Whitefield replaced singular personal pronouns with personal plural language.

As a preacher who emphasized individual salvation and the responsibility of each soul to respond to the gospel, Whitefield's editorial change to group-oriented pronouns is important to highlight. Although the majority of texts were already written in first and third person plural, Whitefield made an intentional effort to change the few texts with singular pronouns. Going out of the way to rewrite texts to include these pronouns shows that it was more than a minor preference for Whitefield, and he must have been driven by a strong pastoral motivation.

Given Whitefield's insider perspective on the power of rhetorical speaking and actor-audience connection, it is likely that Whitefield also recognized the power of singing congregationally as an act of solidarity. The closest Whitefield came to expressing this idea directly was in his preface when he spoke of his desire that "we all may be inspired and warmed with a like divine Fire whilst singing below."[6] From

[6] George Whitefield, ed., "Preface," in *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* (London: William Strahan, 1753).

Whitefield's preaching comes a theology of individual responsibility; from his decisions about hymns, however, comes a theology of oneness and group identity and formation.

Table 6.1 shows a sample of how Whitefield's "our/we/their" editorial language makes each hymn text sound ecumenical in tone in comparison to the original text. Coupled with the typical context of an outdoor revival gathering of thousands, these texts take on even more of a communal meaning.

Table 6.1. Whitefield's editorial changes to pronouns

Author/Original incipit	Whitefield's incipit	Original line	Whitefield's change
Watts / My Shepherd Will Supply My Need	The Lord Supplies his People's Need	He brings my wand'ring Spirit back / When I forsake his ways (2:1-2)	He brings their wand'ring spirits back / When they forsake his ways
Watts / Far from My Thoughts Vain World Be Gone	Far from Our Thoughts Vain World Be Gone	My heart grows warm with holy fire / And kindles with a pure desire (2:1-2)	Oh warm our hearts with holy fire / And kindle there a pure desire
Watts / Long I Have Sat Beneath the Sound	Long We Have Sat Beneath the Sound	Write thy salvation in my heart / and make me learn thy grace (5:3-4)	Write thy salvation on our hearts / and make us learn thy grace
Watts / O Lord, How Many Are My Foes	O Lord, How Many Are Our Foes	Supported by thine heav'nly aid / I laid me down and slept secure / Not death should make my heart afraid / Though I should wake and rise no more (3:1-4)	Supported by thine heav'nly aid / We laid us down and slept secure / Not death should make our hearts afraid / Though we should wake and rise no more (3:1-4)

Although Watts's original texts were always the far more popular republished versions, Whitefield's version of the Psalm 23 text does reappear in places such as Thomas Hastings's tune book *Musica Sacra* in 1818.[7]

In addition to the pronoun changes, which reinforced a sense of community throughout the entire corpus, an impressive number of hymns that Whitefield chose to include in this hymn book have irenic or unifying language. Specifically, three broadly ecumenical ideas emerge from the texts. First, there are texts with a general tone of agreement and peace among believers. Second, there are repeated occurrences of the phrase "one song" in reference to praise by believers in a variety of contexts. Third, there are a number of texts that reframe and redefine the scope of the word "church" to encompass the whole world and all nations.

One hymn text that emphasizes peace and unity in each of its stanzas is Charles Wesley's "Christ From Whom All Blessings Flow."

> Christ from whom all Blessings flow,
> Comforting thy Saints below,
> Hear us, who thy Nature share,
> Who thy mystic Body are;
> Join us, in one Spirit join,
> Let us still receive of thine,
> Still for more on thee we call
> Thee who fillest all in all.
>
> Move and actuate and guide,
> Diverse Gifts to each divine;
> Plac'd according to thy Will,
> Let us all our Work fulfill;
> Never from our Office move,
> Needful to the others prove,
> Use the Grace on each bestow'd
> Temper'd by the blessed God.

[7] "The Lord Supplies His People's Need," Hymnary.org, accessed August 1, 2017, https://hymnary.org/text/the_lord_supplies_his_peoples_need.

Many are we now, and one,
We who Jesus have put on:
There is neither Bond nor Free,
Male nor Female Lord, in thee.
Love, like Death, hath all destroy'd,
Render'd all Distinctions void;
Names and Sects and Parties fall,
Thou, O Christ, art all in all! (133-134)

Immediately following this hymn are two other texts by Wesley that have a similar tone. All three of these hymns come from the very end of the second part of *Hymns for Social Worship*, which was meant for the use of believers in the society. Whitefield's desire that believers join in peaceful amity cannot be missed. The second Wesley text, "King of Saints to Whom Are Given," includes the following lines, "King of Saints, to whom are giv'n / All in Earth and all in Heav'n / Reconcil'd thro' thee alone / Join'd and gather'd into one" and proceeds to the following stanza.

We our Elder-Brethren meet,
We are made with them to sit;
Sweetest Fellowship we prove
With the general church above;
Saints who now their Names behold,
In the Book of Life enroll'd,
Spirits of the righteous, made
Perfect now in Christ their Head. (134-135)

More ecumenical lines in the third text, "Jesu, Lord, We Look to Thee," reinforce these ideas of unity—"Jesu, Lord, we look to thee / Let us in thy Name agree / Show thyself the Prince of Peace / Bid our Jars forever cease." The hymn includes other lines throughout the five stanzas such as "By thy reconciling Love / Every Stumbling-Block remove," "Make us of one Heart and Mind," and "To thy Church the Pattern give / Shew how true believers live" (136).

Unifying themes are present in the hymn “Father, Son and Spirit, Hear” which makes use of anaphora with the word “one” in an interior stanza.

> Build us in one Body up,
> Called in one high Calling’s Hope;
> One the Spirit whom we claim,
> One the pure baptismal Flame,
> One the Faith, and common Lord,
> One the Father lives ador’d,
> Over, thro’ and in us all,
> God incomprehensible. (132)

In the hymn above, the description of unity references Christ as the source. This emphasis on unity in Christ as a bridge for earthly division is seen in other places, such as in a line from “Once Slaughter’d Now Exalted Lamb”—“Brethren and Sisters all agree / To sing he lov’d and dy’d for me” (112). Another hymn that addresses believers and commends a sense of unity is “Loving Saviour, Prince of Peace” to which Whitefield gave the title “Peace of God’s Children.” The first and last stanzas suggest the idea that disagreeing “foes,” through unity in Christ, could become “loving children.”

> Loving Saviour, Prince of Peace,
> Author of our Unity
> Making Wars and Jarring cease,
> Causing Men, tho’ Foes, t’agree,
> Kindly rule in us;
> Making us happily go on,
> Helping each to bear his Cross
> Stedfast [sic] ‘till our Work is done.
>
> Let us Hand in Hand proceed,
> Little loving Children be,
> Dead to sin to all Things dead,
> But alive, dear Lamb, to thee;
> So continue firm;
> While beneath us thou wilt lay
> Thy eternal out-stretch’d Arm,
> ‘Till we ‘wake in endless Day. (114-116)

In addition to the general emphasis on unity and peace, there are an equal number of texts that reference human harmony through the act of singing "one song" of praise together. As these songs were sung in evangelical revival settings, the actions that the texts describe were simultaneously being accomplished by the crowds. Thanks to the vast scope of Whitefield's travels and the transatlantic publishing of *Hymns for Social Worship*, the idea of "one song" was also spread through various geographical locations and through congregations of different denominations. John Austin, writing under the pseudonym William Birchley, expressed this theme in a middle stanza of "Hark! Dull Soul, How Every Thing."

> Call whole Nature to thy Aid
> Since 'twas he whole Nature made;
> Join we in one endless Song,
> Who to one God all belong. (66)

William Hammond's hymn "What Good News the Angels Bring" about the birth of Christ has a final stanza that also champions Christ as both belonging to the nations and being "our song."

> Shout ye Nations of the Earth
> Sing the Triumphs of his Birth
> All the World by him is blest
> Sound his Praise from East to West
> Jews and Gentiles jointly sing,
> Christ our common Lord and King
> Christ our Life, our Joy, our Song,
> To eternity prolong. (26)

Likewise, Charles Wesley writes in "Meet and Right It Is to Sing,"

> Meet and right it is to sing,
> Glory to our God and King,
> Meet in ev'ry Time and Place,
> To rehearse his solemn Praise. (53)

Often, the language of "harmonious tongues" was used to express human unity. In two hymns by Watts that are placed next to each other but listed under different topical headings by Whitefield ("Resurrection of Christ" and "Praise to the Redeemer"), a similar idea of human harmony emerges. The text "Plung'd in a Gulph of Dark Despair" has a middle stanza that expresses this idea.

> Oh! For this Love let Rocks and Hills
> Their lasting Silence break,
> And all harmonious human Tongues
> The Saviour's praises speak. (82)

Then, in "Come All Harmonious Tongues," Watts writes,

> Come all harmonious Tongues,
> Your noblest Music bring;
> 'Tis Christ the everlasting God
> And Christ the Man, we sing. (83)

A third way that ecumenical language is expressed is through a world-wide definition of the church. The few times that the word "church" is mentioned, it is nearly always referenced in terms of the universal church. For example, Whitefield included the Watts text "This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made" which ends with the following stanza.

> Hosanna in the highest Strains,
> The Church on Earth can raise
> The highest Heav'n in which he reigns,
> Shall give him nobler Praise. (13)

Similarly, in "The Lord the Sovereign King," Watts both mentions the church in plural and places it next to the idea of "vast kingdoms."

> Let the bright Hosts who wait
> The Orders of their King
> And guard his Churches when they pray,
> Join in the Praise they sing.
>
> While all his wondrous Works,
> Thro' his vast Kingdoms shew

Their Maker's Glory, thou my Soul
Shall sing his Graces too. (48)

World-wide church unity is also seen in a stanza of Cennick's dialogue hymn, "We Sing to Thee, Thou Son of God."

Thro' all the World thy Churches join
T'acknowledge thee the Head;
Father of Majesty Divine
Who ev'ry Power hast made. (118)

Another mention of the church is in Watts's paraphrase of Psalm 135, "Praise Ye the Lord, Exalt His Name," which mentions the church in the context of Israel. While it is not explicitly ecumenical, Whitefield titled this text "The Church is God's House and Care," again emphasizing God's presence in the universal church.

Praise ye the Lord, the Lord is good,
To praise his Name is sweet Employ;
Israel he chose of old, and still
His Church is his peculiar Joy.
Bless ye the Lord, who taste his Love,
People and Priests exalt his Name;
Amongst his Saints he ever dwells,
His Church is his Jerusalem. (60)

In addition to the texts with explicit references to the church and the world, there is an abundance of lyrics with descriptions of praise that inhabits the whole world and all nations and languages. The Watts text "From All That Dwell Below the Skies" has a number of lines that carry this idea, such as "Let the Redeemer's name be sung / Thro' ev'ry land by ev'ry tongue," and "Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore / 'Till suns shall rise and set no more" (62). Watts's text "Bless O My Soul, the Living God" ends with the following stanza.

Let the whole Earth his Power confess
Let the whole Earth adore his Grace

The Gentile and the Jew shall join
In Work and Worship so divine. (6)

In a hymn near the end of the book, "Saviour King, Assume thy Pow'r," Whitefield gave the title "All Nations Shall Serve Him," adding an extra emphasis to the universal church themes within the text.

Japhet's Isles do bless thy Name
Let the West thy Worth proclaim;
Wash the Ethiopian clean,
In the East new Signs be seen.

Great the Band of those be found,
Who proclaim the joyful Sound;
Let it to thy Israel come,
Let it bring the Wand'rers Home. (141)

The perseverance of the saints. Nearly a fourth of the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* contain a line, stanza, or more about the perseverance of believers, and many refer to this doctrine in an implicit way. This theme, which was so consciously prevalent in Whitefield's Calvinist theology and preaching, is not an accidental emphasis in his choice of hymn texts. Perseverance of the saints was at the center of Whitefield's disagreement with the Wesleys, and many of their verbal battles centered on this theme. John Wesley was known for having said "the best may finally fall away."[8] Whitefield wrote at one point to Charles Wesley, "If your brother will be but silent about the doctrine of election and final perseverance, there will never be a division between us. The very thought of it shocks my soul."[9] Whitefield would not have passed up a chance to emphasize this core doctrine as he selected texts for his hymn book.

[8] John Wesley, quoted in Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 72.

[9] George Whitefield, quoted in Kidd, 79.

Perseverance appears in three particular angles throughout the texts. The most prominent description of perseverance is the endurance of the believer through life to heaven. Less frequently, Whitefield included texts that describe perseverance in terms of God's active role in bringing people back after patterns of sinful living. Another small but present emphasis on perseverance is the steadfastness of the Lord to believers through difficulties in life. A large majority of the texts on this theme were written by Watts, whose moderate Calvinism would have appealed to Whitefield on this topic.

The topic of heaven-bound perseverance is seen both in hymns that Whitefield titled explicitly with this language and in hymns under other seemingly unrelated thematic headings. The hymn "To God the Only Wise" by Watts is titled "Persevering Grace" and states the theme in clear language.

> He will present his Saints
> Unblemish'd and compleat [sic]
> Before the Glory of his Face
> With Joys divinely greet. (71)

Similarly, Robert Seagrave's hymn "Rise My Soul and Stretch Thy Wings" was titled by Whitefield as "The Pilgrim Song." This hymn subtly addresses the doctrine of perseverance with metaphors for the natural, unfailing gravitation of believers to their God.

> Rivers to the Ocean run,
> Nor stay in all their Course;
> Fire ascending seeks the Sun,
> Both speed them to their Source:
> So a soul that's born of God
> Pants to view his glorious Face,
> Upwards tends to his Abode,
> To rest in his Embrace. (111)

The hymn "Once Slaughter'd Now Exalted Lamb" brings up the subject of perseverance through life to eternity, but is placed by Whitefield under the title "General Praise to Christ." In this hymn, as in many others with this theme, the idea of perseverance is closely linked to assurance of faith.

> Or if thou here would'st have us stay,
> A longer Space, lo! we obey;
> Only let us be sure,
> That Heav'n is ours, die when we will,
> And let thy Spirit be with us still,
> And we'll desire no more. (122)

"Come Let Us Adore" by John Cennick references salvation "completed" in Christ, recalling the idea in Philippians 1:6 that Christ will carry out the good works he starts in his people. Language of preservation and continued perseverance characterize this final stanza.

> Preserve us in Love,
> While here we abide
> Nor ever remove
> Nor cover, nor hide
> Thy glorious Salvation;
> Till joyful we see
> The beautiful Vision
> Compleated [sic] in thee. (10)

Another text by Cennick, which is printed as the final hymn in the collection, uses shepherd/sheep language to connote the idea of persevering to heaven.

> Shout ye little Flock, and blest,
> You on Jesu's Throne shall rest;
> There your Seat is now prepar'd,
> There your Kingdom and Reward! (144)

Watts writes about the sure promise of salvation in the text "Begin My Tongue, Some Heav'nly Theme." By moving from the permanence of Christ's work in one stanza

to his ownership of his people in the next, Watts highlights a sense of assurance and comfort about eternal salvation.

> Engrav'd as in eternal Brass,
> The mighty Promise shines;
> Nor can the Pow'rs of Darkness raze
> Those everlasting Lines.
>
> Oh might we hear thine heavn'ly Tongue,
> But whisper Thou art mine!
> Those gentle Words should raise my Song
> To Notes almost divine. (81)

In addition to heaven-bound perseverance, the idea of God bringing back true believers after sinful patterns is seen in some of the texts Whitefield chose for the collection. This variation on the theme of perseverance is found in the second stanza of Watts's hymn on Psalm 23.

> He brings their wand'ring Spirits back,
> When they forsake his Ways,
> And leads them for his Mercy's sake,
> In Paths of Truth and Grace. (8)

Whitefield breaks Watts's text "Join All the Glorious Names" into two separate hymns because of his affinity for shorter texts. In one of these hymns, two of the stanzas include ideas of Christ's preservation and protection of his people throughout their life.

> Be thou our Counsellor,
> Our Pattern and our Guide!
> And thro' this desart [sic] Land
> Still keep us near thy Side!
> O let our Feet
> Ne'er run astray
> Nor rove nor seek
> The crooked Way!
>
> We'd hear our Shepherd's Voice
> Who's watchful Eyes doth keep,
> Poor wandering Souls among
> The thousands of his Sheep.

He feeds his Flock,
And calls their Names,
His Bosom bears
The tender Lambs. (18-19)

Whitefield's Calvinist beliefs reframes the final stanza of Charles Wesley's text "Head of the Church Triumphant." Since Whitefield believed in the final perseverance of believers, the "torrents of temptation" described below would have been understood as having no power over those who were true believers.

Thou dost conduct thy People
Thro' Torrents of Temptation,
Nor will we fear,
Whilst thou art near,
The Fire of Tribulation.
The World with Sin and Satan
In vain our March opposes;
By thee we shall
Break thro' them all,
And sing the Song of Moses. (127)

Finally, the third angle seen in the texts is persevering through hardship. In contrast with the idea of being brought back after periods of temptation or sin, these texts focus on God's preservation for those who are weary and burdened. William Hammond's text "Awake Our Souls, Away Our Fears" is an example of this difference in emphasis.

True 'tis a strait and thorny Road,
And mortal Spirits tire and faint;
But we forget the mighty God,
That feeds the strength of ev'ry Saint.

From thee the overflowing Spring,
Believers drink a fresh Supply,
While such as trust their native Strength,
Shall melt away, and droop and die. (70).

Another example of this type of perseverance comes from Watts's text "Lord of the Worlds Above." The progression from earthly hardships to heaven underscores the finality of the believer's endurance.

> They go from Strength to Strength,
> Thro' this dark Vale of Tears;
> 'Till each arrives at length,
> 'Till each in Heaven appears.
> O glorious Seat!
> Our God and King,
> Us thither bring
> To kiss thy Feet! (16)

With all these hymns that highlight the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, it appears that Whitefield was using his editorial decisions to highlight the differences he had with aspects of John Wesley's theology. However, Whitefield included one text in his hymnal that stands out as a puzzling choice. Titling this hymn "For New Year's Day," Whitefield chose a Wesley text that contained the recurring idea, "Yet doth he us in Mercy spare / Another, and another Year." This hymn, "The Lord of Earth and Sky," flirts with themes of perseverance with language that God "spares us yet another Year." Rather than indicating that God spares people until guiding them into eternal life, this hymn ends with the following idea.

> Then dig about our Root,
> Break up our fallow Ground,
> And let our gracious Fruit
> To thy great Praise abound:
> O let us all thy Praise declare,
> And fruit unto Perfection bear.

If Whitefield balked at the Wesleys' view that believers could fall from a state of salvation, he certainly denied their doctrine of perfection. Since Whitefield could not have possibly interpreted this line as indicating earthly perfection, the only other suitable

interpretation that is consistent with his theology is that he would have taken this line to mean the perfection of a believer in a glorified state in heaven. In the context of a Calvinist hymn book, this Wesleyan New Year's text would have, in fact, been sung to reinforce a strong Whitefieldian concept of the perseverance of the saints!

The doctrine of sin. Thirty-three of the hymns Whitefield chose to include have sin as a dominating and explicit theme, with many more hymns referencing the topic. A survey of these texts indicates an interesting pattern; sin is predominately mentioned in the context of nature and the human condition. In other words, the doctrine of original sin receives far more attention than specific human sins, effects, or social consequences of sinful actions. In addition to the majority of texts centered on human nature, there are occasional references to sin as sickness, unbelief, emptiness, dirtiness, weakness, or lowliness.

Sin as human nature, or the doctrine of original sin, is explained thoroughly in the entirety of the hymn "How Sad Our State by Nature Is," which Whitefield placed under the title "Faith in Christ." Three of these stanzas are shown below.

> How sad our State by Nature is,
> Our Sin how deep it stains!
> And Satan binds our captive Souls
> Fast in his slavish Chains.
>
> Stretch out thy Arm, victorious King,
> Our reigning Sins subdue;
> Drive the old Dragon from his Seat,
> With his infernal Crew,
>
> Poor, guilty, weak, and helpless Worms,
> Into thy Hands we fall;
> Be thou our Strength and Righteousness
> Our Jesus and our all! (50)

In two hymns by Watts which are given the title “Humiliation,” sinful human nature is again the focus.

> Lord we are vile, conceiv’d in Sin,
> And born unholy and unclean;
> Sprung from the Man whose guilty Fall,
> Corrupts the Race and taunts us all.
>
> Soon as we draw our Infant-Breath
> The Seeds of Sin grow up for Death;
> Thy Law demands a perfect Heart,
> But we’re defiled in every Part. (99-100)

This is seen in Watts’s second text:

> Lord we would spread our sore Distress
> And Guilt before thine Eyes;
> Against thy Laws, against thy Grace,
> How high our Crimes arise!
>
> Shouldst thou condemn our Souls to Hell,
> And crush our Flesh to Dust,
> Heav’n would approve thy Vengeance well,
> And Earth must own it just. (100)

Lines within the hymn “Give Thanks to God Most High” emphasize sin within a corporate framework, putting less emphasis on the individual with phrases such as “He saw the Nations lie / All perishing in Sin / And pity’d the sad State / The ruin’d World was in” (61). This stanza is followed by another that offers a similarly collective focus on salvation. Likewise, universal aspects of sin nature are expressed in Watts’s hymn, “O Lord, Our Lord, How Wond’rous Great.”

> Lord, what is Man, or all his Race,
> Who dwells so far below,
> That thou should’st visit him with Grace,
> And love his Nature so? (50)

A large number of texts also emphasize Adam’s connection to the human condition. Whitefield offered explicit titles for some of these texts such as “First and

Second Adam." The text by Watts under this title is "Deep in the Dust, Before the Throne," and it deals extensively with this Pauline idea for four stanzas, one of which is as follows.

> Deep in the Dust, before thy Throne
> Our Guilt and our Disgrace we own;
> Great God, we own th' unhappy Name,
> Whence spring our Nature and our Shame. (57)

Adam's responsibility is emphasized again in "Attend While God's Eternal Son," and the hymn writer contrasts the ideas of "old" and "new" with each other.

> Nature and Sin are past [sic] away
> And the old Adam dies;
> My Hands a new Foundation lay,
> See a new World arise.
>
> Mighty Redeemer set us free,
> From our old State of Sin,
> O make our Soul alive to thee,
> Create new Pow'rs within. (66)

Although a focus on sinful human nature dominates the texts, there are occasional references to sin in other ways. Healing metaphors are used at times, such as in the stanza of Watts's text "How Heavy is the Night."

> Unholy and impure
> Are all our Thoughts and Ways;
> His Hands infected Nature cure
> With sanctifying Grace. (21)

The first stanza of the following text by Robert Seagrave also exhibits this metaphor for sin as a sickness.

> Hither ye poor, ye sick, ye blind,
> A sin disorder'd trembling Throng;
> To you the Gospel calls, to you
> Messiah's Blessings all belong. (4)

Whitefield includes another hymn by Seagrave that presents the Old Testament narrative of Israel and the bronze serpent described in Numbers 21. The text then connects this story to sinful people's need of God as the Great Physician. After describing Israel's actions and the making of the serpent, Seagrave writes the following lines.

> But Oh what healing to the Heart,
> Does Jesu's greater Cross impart,
> To those who seek a Cure!
> Israel of old and we no less,
> The same indulgent Grace confess
> While Life and Breath endure.
>
> Hail, great Emmanuel, balmy Name!
> Thy Praise the ransom'd will proclaim,
> Thee we Physician call,
> We own no other Cure but thine,
> Thou the Deliverer divine,
> Our Health, our Life, our all.

In addition to sin as sickness, a number of hymns reference the human disposition toward unbelief. One of Watts's texts on the agony of the crucifixion includes the lines, "'Twere you, our Sins, our cruel Sins / His chief Tormenters were / Each of our Crimes became a Nail / And Unbelief the Spear" (85). A hymn mentioned earlier, "How Sad Our State by Nature Is," creates a strong antithesis with the lines, "We would believe thy Promise, Lord / O help our Unbelief!" (50). One of Charles Wesley's more well-known texts, "Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies" touches on this same idea with the following stanza.

> Visit ev'ry Soul of thine,
> Pierce the Gloom of Sin and Grief;
> Fill with Radiancy divine,
> Scatter all our Unbelief:
> More and more thyself display,
> Shining to the perfect Day. (11)

Emptiness and dirtiness are other analogies used for sin in a few of the texts Whitefield chose to include. The text “See My Soul with Wonder See” contains the lines “Circumcise our filthy Hearts / Purify our inward Parts” (28). Watts’s hymn “Let Every Mortal Ear Attend” references human failure with language of both hunger and vacancy.

> Ho! All ye hungry starving Souls,
> That feed upon the Wind,
> And vainly strive with earthly Toys
> To fill an empty Mind. (5)

Additionally, a handful of texts dwell on the weakness and lowliness of humanity as a way of describing sin. Anna Dober’s hymn “Holy Lamb, Who Thee Receive” references the “wav’ring Mind” and suggests our nature to be like “dust and ashes” (74). Strong language about human negligence toward spiritual things is seen in “Our Drowsy Pow’rs, Why Sleep Ye So?” which Whitefield titled “Complaining of Spiritual Sloth.”

> Our drowsy Pow’rs, why sleep ye so?
> Awake each sluggish Soul;
> Nothing has half our Work to do,
> Yet nothing’s half so dull.
>
> The little Ants, for one poor Grain,
> Labour, and tug, and strive;
> Yet we, who have a Heav’n t’obtain,
> How negligent we live! (74-75)

In a similar vein, Watts often used the word “wretches” to describe humanity in his poetry. In most of these instances, the expression of lowliness is contrasted with the need to be brought upward, such as “And are we Wretches still alive / And do we yet rebel / ‘Tis boundless, ‘tis amazing Love / That bears us up from hell” and “While God forsakes his shining Throne / To raise us Wretches higher” (91, 87).

The Holy Spirit. Whitefield's ministry was characterized by a clear recognition of the Holy Spirit in the world and an expectation that the Spirit would inhabit all who were born again, create individual and collective revival, and stir up believer's affections for God. Given this emphasis, one would expect the collection to show a range of hymns to and about the third person of the Trinity. In a way, this expectation is filled less by the quantity of hymns about the Holy Spirit and more by the strategic location of hymns on this topic.

In every edition of Whitefield's hymn book, the opening hymn was dedicated entirely to themes of the Holy Spirit. For the first six editions, this opening hymn was "Now May the Spirit's Holy Fire" by Robert Seagrave. This hymn was titled "At the Opening of Worship" and combined elements of spirit-filled worship with expressions of fellowship and gathering. Two stanzas of this hymn, shown below, express these ideas.

> Now may the Spirit's Holy Fire,
> Descending from above,
> His waiting Family inspire
> With Joy and Peace and Love.
>
> Thee we the Comforter confess,
> Unless thou'rt present here;
> Our Songs of Praise are vain Address
> We utter heartless Pray'r. (1)

With the additions that Whitefield made in the sixth edition, this opening hymn was still retained as the first numbered item, but it was preceded by a ninth-century Latin text translated by John Cosin in 1627. This text contained similar language but added references to the gifts of the Spirit and describes the added doxology as an "endless Song." A noticeable characteristic of this hymn is the italicized indication that it should

be sung antiphonally. This hymn would have been the only dialogue hymn other than those in the second section of the hymn book.

> Come Holy Ghost, our Souls inspire,
> *And lighten with celestial Fire,*
> Thou the anointing Spirit art,
> *Who dost thy sev'nfold Gifts impart.*
> Thy blessed Unction from above,
> *Is Comfort, Life, and Fire of Love:*
> Enable with perpetual Light,
> *The Dullness of our blinded Sight.*
> Anoint and chear [sic] our soiled Face
> *With the Abundance of thy Grace.*
> Keep far our Foes, give Peace at Home:
> *Where thou art Guide, no Ill can come.*
> Teach us to know the Father, Son
> *And Thee of both to be but one;*
> That through the Ages all along,
> *This, this may be our endless Song;*
> Praise God from whom all Blessings flow
> Praise him all Creatures here below;
> Praise him above ye heav'nly Host,
> Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Whitefield titled five hymns in his collection "To the Trinity" and an additional three "To the Holy Ghost." These three texts use similar language in reference to the Holy Spirit. All three hymns mention the Spirit in terms of a sanctifying process, and two of the three mention the joy, love, comfort, and protection brought by the Spirit. Two of the hymns also note the Spirit's role in illuminating Scripture, and two of them use all three analogies of a fire, a dove, and a fountain to describe the Spirit. Only one of the three hymns points out the Spirit's role in creation. An unusual analogy to the Spirit as "uncreated heat" appears in the first hymn, but it is paired in a rhyme scheme with "Paraclete," making the oddness of the analogy more understandable.

Beyond these more noticeable references to the Holy Spirit, a few texts contain a line in passing about the role of the Spirit in the believer's life. All of these occasional

references can be categorized as either describing the Spirit as the bearer of salvation or as the inciter of holy affections. For example, a text by William Hammond references the Spirit in part of a stanza, "Send some Message from thy Word / That may Joy and Peace afford / Let thy Spirit now impart / Full Salvation to each Heart" (3). In a text about adoption into the family of God, "Behold What Wondrous Grace," Watts describes the Spirit's role in dwelling with the saved.

> O Lord if in thy Love
> We share a filial Part,
> Send down thy Spirit, like a Dove
> To rest upon each Heart. (55)

Dwelling in the presence of God and being inspired to devotional fervor is seen in a variety of texts. One of these is "Descend from Heaven, Immortal Dove," a Trinitarian hymn by Watts. The opening stanza illustrates the Spirit's role in transporting the believer into the presence of Christ on the Throne.

> Descend from Heav'n, immortal Dove,
> Stoop down and take us on thy Wings,
> And mount, and bear us far above,
> The Reach of these inferior Things. (63)

Two other hymns by Watts call on the Spirit to animate the affections. "Zion's a Garden Wall'd Around" has the following penultimate stanza.

> Awake, O heav'nly Wind, and come,
> Blow on this Garden of Perfume;
> Spirit divine, descend, and breathe,
> A gracious Gale on Plants beneath. (p. 73-74)

Similarly, the well-known text "Come, Holy Spirit, Heav'nly Dove" was given the title "Fervency of Devotion Desired" and emphasizes the language of heartfelt zeal.

> Come, holy Spirit, heavn'ly Dove,
> With all thy quick'ning Pow'rs,

Kindle a Flame of sacred Love
In these cold Hearts of ours. (78)

Justification by faith. Although Noll has pointed out that the theme of the atonement, which includes language of the cross, sacrifice, and the process by which Christ bore the punishment for sinful humanity, is the overwhelming theme of Whitefield's collection of hymns, a small number of hymns on justification makes an important statement. Language of justification in the context of this hymn book is associated with legal or transactional terms, analogies to bondage and chains, and phrases such as "by grace" and "by faith" which typically followed ideas of justification in Whitefield's sermons. As a Calvinist, Whitefield saw a necessary and logical connection between themes of election, sin, atonement, justification, and perseverance of the saints. As a result, the small but important presence of each of these themes in his hymn collection shows that Whitefield was making a purposeful editorial choice to supply his congregations and gatherings with similar ideas to those about which he preached.

One of the most explicit examples of legal language in found in the hymn "See My Soul with Wonder" by an unidentified writer.

He fulfill'd all Righteousness,
Standing in our legal Place
From the Cradle to the Cross,
All he did he did for us,
He did all our Woes retrieve,
He expir'd that we might live:
By his stripes our Wounds are heal'd,
By his Blood our Peace is seal'd. (27-28)

Equally explicit themes of justification are noted in two stanzas of the hymn by Joseph Stennett, "Tis Finished the Redeemer Said."

Finish'd the Righteousness of Grace,
Finish'd for Sinners pard'ning Peace;
Their mighty Debt is paid:
Accusing Law, cancel'd by Blood
And Wrath of an offended God,
In sweet Oblivion laid.

Who now shall urge a second Claim?
The Law no longer can condemn,
Faith a Release can shew:
Justice itself, a Friend appears,
The Prison-House a Whisper hears,
Loose him and let him go. (54)

Whitefield titled the hymn "Happy Is He Who 'Ere Believes" with the title "Christ's Righteousness Imputed to Believers" to underscore the theme of justification. Below are two stanzas of this doctrine-saturated text by another unknown writer.

Did the Sin of Adam slay
And ruin all his Race?
Jesus takes our Sins away,
By suffering in our Place
He perform'd what God requir'd.
And answer'd all the Law demands;
In his Righteousness attir'd,
The true Believer stands.

What a Mystery of Love
In God's Designs appears!
Jesus coming from above,
Our Sin and Torment bears:
God imputes Man's Sins to him;
Imputes to Man his Righteousness;
Guilty he doth Christ esteem,
And guiltless us confess. (76)

In addition to the language of legality and transaction seen in the previous examples, many of the texts use analogies to slavery, bondage, and chains to communicate the theme of justification. Watts's text "Buried in Shadows of the Night" is a prime example.

Jesus beholds where Satan reigns,
Binding his Slaves in heavy Chains
He sets the Pris'ner free, and breaks
The iron Bondage from our Necks. (20)

In the next hymn in the collection, "How Heavy Is the Night," Watts again writes of this idea.

The Pow'rs of Hell agree
To hold our Souls in vain;
He sets the Sons of Bondage free,
And breaks the cursed Chain. (21)

A final indication of the doctrine of justification in *Hymns for Social Worship* is in the appearance of the prepositional phrases "by faith" and "by grace." William Hammond's text about the birth of Christ includes this language in the lines from a middle stanza, "All who feel the weight of Sin / All who languish to be clean / All who for Redemption groan / May be sav'd by Faith alone" ("What Good News the Angels Bring," 26). Likewise, the text "Blessed Are the Sons of God" by Joseph Humphreys uses the word "justified" in the first line of the third stanza.

They are justified by Grace,
They enjoy a solid Peace;
All their Sins are wash'd away,
They shall stand in God's great Day. (122)

The new birth. Although there is not much explicit language of the new birth in Whitefield's hymnal, the small number of hymns that allude to this theme should be highlighted, given Whitefield's personal emphasis of this theme in his sermons and ministry. Of the handful of hymns that dwell on this topic, only half are by Watts, who authored a much larger percentage of the texts on most of the other themes. This suggests that Whitefield might have gone out of his way to find and incorporate hymns on this

topic wherever he could find them. Robert Seagrave's text, "Rise My Soul, and Stretch Thy Wings," which was mentioned earlier, includes the line "So a Soul that's born of God / Pants to view his glorious Face" (111). Similarly, Joseph Humphreys writes directly about those who have experienced the new birth in "Blessed Are the Sons of God."

> They are light upon the Earth,
> Children of a heav'nly Birth;
> Born of God, they hate all Sin,
> God's pure Seed remains within. (123)

Charles Wesley's well-known Christmas hymn "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" juxtaposes Christ's birth with the new birth of believers in an interior stanza.

> Mild he lays his Glory by,
> Born that Men no more may die:
> Born to raise the Sons of Earth
> Born to give them second Birth. (25)

This reference happens again in the Christmas hymn "What Good News the Angels Bring" by William Hammond. After two stanzas heralding Christ's own birth, Hammond pens the line "They shall all be born again / And with him in Glory reign" (26).

Watts's references to the new birth occur in two hymns, "How Pleasant How Divinely Fair" and "Why Should the Children of a King." In the first of these texts, Watts opens with language of the new birth—"The new-born Soul both longs and faints / To meet the Assemblies of the Saints" and then continues to describe aspects of the "sweet … sacred rest" that characterizes union with Christ (16). In the second of these texts, Watts's primary use of the idea is in the context of assurance.

> Assure each Conscience of its Part
> In the Redeemer's Blood,
> And bear thy Witness in each Heart,
> That it is born of God. (23)

Although only a few hymns directly address the topic of the new birth, many others offer poetic accounts of the experiences that Whitefield and others described about the long and often battle-like process of the new birth. A stanza by Watts in "Buried in Shadows of the Night" parallels this language.

> Lost guilty Souls are drown'd in Tears,
> 'Till the atoning Blood appears;
> Then they awake from deep distress,
> And sing the Lord our Righteousness (20)

A variation of this is seen in Watts's text "Attend While God's Eternal Son," which achieves the concept of the new birth with language about God's renewing, molding, and transforming people into a new creation.

> Renew our Eyes and form our Ears,
> And mould [sic] our Hearts afresh;
> Give us new Passions, Joys and Fears,
> And turn the Stone to Flesh. (66)

The doctrine of election. The doctrine of election is present in only a handful of texts, but the straightforward nature of these references reveals that this was a theme that Whitefield purposefully placed in *Hymns for Social Worship.* Whitefield's inclusion of Watts's text "To Him That Chose Us First" is one of the most representative examples of this theme.

> To him that chose us first,
> Before the World began;
> To him that bore the Curse
> To save rebellious Man:
> To him that form'd
> Our Hearts a new,
> Is endless Praise
> And Glory due. (47)

Another explicit reference to election is in one of Cennick's dialogue hymns, "Ho Pilgrims, If Ye Pilgrims Be." The last line of the final stanza affirms the doctrine while also addressing the theme of the final perseverance of believers.

> Then joyful let us journey on,
> To certain Rest above;
> *Singing to him on yonder's Throne,*
> *Of free electing Love.* (124)

References to being "chosen" appear in two texts by Watts. "Zion's a Garden Wall'd Around" opens with themes of election.

> Zion's a Garden wall'd around,
> Chosen, and made peculiar ground;
> A little spot inclos'd by Grace
> Out of the World's wide Wilderness. (73)

Likewise, "Raise Your Triumphant Songs" expresses the same idea in the second stanza of the hymn.

> Sing how eternal Love,
> Its chief Beloved chose,
> And bid him raise our wretched Race
> From their Abyss of Woes. (89)

A more subtle depiction of this theme appears in Watts's text "Now to the Power of God Supream [sic]," to which Whitefield gave the title "Salvation by Grace in Christ." As the hymn progresses, allusions to salvation as God's work move to stanzas about God's purpose and counsels before creation began. In both the first and second stanzas, the language of grace is surrounded with the doctrines of election and justification, indicating a Calvinistic position on free grace.

> Not for our Duties or Deserts,
> But of his own abounding Grace,
> He works Salvation in our Hearts,
> And forms a People for his Praise.

‘Twas his own Purpose that begun,
To rescue Rebels doom’d to die,
He gave us Grace in Christ his Son,
Before he spread the starry Sky.

Jesus, the Lord, appears at last,
And makes his Father’s Counsels known,
Declares the great Transactions past,
And brings immortal Blessings down (63).

Free grace. Given Whitefield’s conflict with the Wesleys over the topic of free grace, one would expect to see texts about grace that are aligned with Whitefield’s views on this matter. A survey of the texts, however, indicates that the majority of the references to grace is in neutral texts that do not suggest a specific side in the argument. The short two-stanza hymn “Come Guilty Souls, and Flee Away” by Joseph Humphreys is the only text in the collection to state the phrase “free grace.”

Come guilty Souls, and flee away,
Like Doves to Jesu’s Wounds,
This is the welcome Gospel-Day
Wherein Free Grace abounds.

God lov’d the World, and gave his Son
To drink the Cup of Wrath;
And Jesus says, he’ll cast out none
That come to him by Faith. (64)

Interestingly, the only hymn with a reference to this controverted phrase also includes subtle hints of both the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in the second stanza. These doctrines are implied in the final two lines with the reference “he’ll cast out none” and the language of coming “by faith,” which often was associated with the phrase “justified by faith” as noted in the section on justification.

Themes Associated with Whitefield's Writing

In addition to the previous doctrinal themes found in this hymn book, there is a remarkable parallel between the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* and the themes that surface in Whitefield's writings. Of the 181 texts in the book, fifty-nine of these include lines that foreshadow or reference heavenly worship, forty-one mention aspects of hardship, trial, or death in this life, and a noticeable number deal with witness to or contrast with the world. In addition, aspects of public worship and spiritual discipline are accentuated in various ways throughout many texts. Whether Whitefield's way of thinking about music and hymnody originated from the influence that these and many other evangelical hymn texts had on his life, or if he chose these texts because of the way that they resonated with his personal emphases, the thematic correlation exists.

Foreshadowing worship in heaven. Eschatological motivations for worship pervade the texts that Whitefield chose. This theme most often appeared in the final stanzas of hymns, and nearly always used language of choirs, singing, and musical adoration. For Whitefield and many other eighteenth-century evangelical leaders, the connection between gathering in worship and the worshipping scene described in Revelation was one of continual emphasis. In many ways, these hymn texts about heavenly worship suggest that the more earthly worship was characterized by visible zeal and piety, the closer it would resemble the afterlife. One goal of worship, then, was to practice and train for this act of worship in heaven. The role of singing in this equation was to lift the affections to this place of heaven-imitating worship. Many texts could be used to illustrate this idea, one of which is the final stanza of "Hither Ye Poor, Ye Sick, Ye Blind."

Awake each Heart, arise each Soul,
And join the blissful Choirs above;
May nothing tune our future Song
But heav'nly Wisdom heav'nly Love! (4).

Parallels between earthly worship and heavenly worship are seen in "This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made."

Hosanna in the highest Strains,
The Church on Earth can raise!
The highest Heav'ns in which he reigns,
Shall give him nobler Praise. (14)

The exact relationship between worship on earth and in heaven is presented in a variety of ways. A line at the end of "Come My Brethren, Isr'el's Race" relates a sense of inadequacy about our human efforts to worship: "Lord we fail in Hymns below / Teach! teach us heav'nly Lays" (39). In less negative terms, the text "Sure Thy Name Is Wonderful" ends with the line "Be thou all our Theme below / Be thou all our Heav'n above," suggesting that the theme of praising Christ remains the same in both earth and heaven (41). A stanza about "growing strength" toward "nobler worship" in "How Pleasant How Divinely Fair" suggests that heavenly worship is actually at the end of a trajectory of worship that is begun on earth.

Oh may we walk with growing Strength,
'Till we all meet in Heav'n at Length;
'Till all before Christ's Face appear,
And join in nobler Worship there! (17)

Language about growth from earthly worship to heaven worship is also suggested by the placement of two adjacent stanzas in Watts's text "Hosanna to the Prince of Light." In this example, the description of earthly worship is followed immediately by a portrayal of angelic worship.

Raise your Devotion, mortal Tongues,
To reach his blessed Abode;
Sweet be the Accents of our Songs,
To our incarnate God.

Bright Angels strike their loudest Strings,
Your sweetest Voices raise;
Let Heav'n and all created Things,
Sound our Emmanuel's Praise. (35)

Other descriptions of this relationship include angels "assisting" in the worship on earth. "Plung'd in a Gulph of Dark Despair" includes the following stanza.

Angels assist our mighty Joys,
Strike all your Harps of Gold;
But when you raise your highest Notes,
His Love can ne'er be told. (83)

In "The Lord the Sovereign King," heavenly beings are seen as both protecting and joining in earthly worship.

Let bright Hosts who wait
The Orders of their King,
And guard the Churches when they pray,
Join in the Praise they sing (48).

Many texts in this collection highlight worship as a joint effort between heaven and earth. In "How Can We Adore," the second stanza discusses the different praises that each setting brings.

The Heav'ns and Earth,
And Water and Air,
To thee own their Birth,
Subsist by thy Care;
While Angels are singing,
Thy Praises above,
We Mortals are bringing
Our Tribute of Love. (43)

The third stanza of "Hail Holy Holy Holy Lord" also uses this language of joining.

All that the Name of Creature owns,
To thee in Hymns aspire;
May we as Angels on our Thrones
For ever join the Choir! (45)

An interesting reference to angelic unity in worship as a model for human unity appears in “Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs.”

Come, let us join our cheerful Songs,
With Angels round the Throne,
Ten thousand thousand are their Tongues,
But all their Joys are one. (39-40)

Although most of the texts that foreshadow heavenly worship indicate that earthly worship is limited or subordinate in comparison, Whitefield included the hymn “Thy Favours, Lord, Surprize [sic] Our Soul” and titled it “God’s Condescension to Our Worship.” In this text, Watts writes of God’s enjoyment and acceptance of worship.

Still might he fill his starry Throne,
And please his Ears with Gabriel’s Songs;
But th’ heav’nly Majesty comes down,
And bows to hearken to our Tongues. (77)

Themes of heavenly worship are especially present in the second section of Whitefield’s hymn book, and at times, they are the main topic for more than one stanza. In John Cennick’s two-stanza hymn “Thou Dear Redeemer, Dying Lamb” the second stanza prefigures future worship that is “more sweet” and “more loud.”

Our Jesus shall be still our Theme,
While in this World we stay,
We’ll sing our Jesu’s lovely Name,
When all Things else decay:
When we appear in yonder Cloud,
With all his favour’d Throng,
Then will we sing more sweet, more loud,
And Christ shall be our Song. (114)

Finally, three full stanzas of Cennick's dialogue hymn "Let Us the Sheep by Jesus Nam'd" address themes of heavenly worship with much of the same language that characterizes other texts on this topic.

> The Host of Spirits now with thee
> Eternal Anthems sing;
> *To imitate them here, lo! We*
> *Our halleluiahs bring.*
>
> Had we our Tongues like them inspir'd,
> Like theirs our Songs should rise;
> *Like them we never should be tir'd,*
> *But love the Sacrifice.*
>
> 'Till we the Veil of Flesh lay down,
> Accept our weaker Lays;
> And when, O Lord, we reach thy Throne,
> We'll join in nobler Praise. (119)

Hardship and trial. Whitefield's frequent reliance on hymns during his own difficult life situations and his practice of quoting hymns to friends during their hardships suggests that this theme might have been similarly present in the hymn texts. As expected, many references to comfort, support, and deliverance do exist. One hymn that deals nearly exclusively with trials and hardship is Watts's text "With Joy We Meditate the Grace." As the stanzas progress, the theme that Christ assists his people during hardship becomes more clear.

> With Joy we meditate the Grace
> Of our High Priest above;
> His Heart is made of Tenderness,
> His Bowels melt with Love
>
> Touch'd with a Sympathy within,
> He knows our feeble Frame;
> He knows what sore Temptations mean,
> For he hath felt the same.

He in the Days of feeble Flesh,
Pour'd out his Cries and Tears,
And in his measure feels afresh,
What ev'ry Member bears.

He'll never quench the smoaky [sic] Flax
But raise it to a flame;
The bruised Reed he never breaks,
Nor scorns the meanest Name.

Then let our humble Faith address,
His Mercy, and his Power;
We shall obtain delivering Grace
In the distressing hour (29).

Cennick's hymn "Come My Soul Before the Lamb" also addresses trials and deliverance for the entirety of the text. Three of the six stanzas on this theme are shown below.

Why should Sorrow bow thee down,
Trials or Temptations
Is not Christ upon the Throne,
Still thy Strong Salvation?

Cast thy Burdens on the Lord
Leave them with thy Saviour;
He (whose Hands for thee were bor'd)
Can and will deliver.

Leave thy earthly Cares behind,
Mind alone thy Saviour;
Count thou all beside but Wind,
Trample on it ever. (69)

Comfort during hardships is often described as a gift of God that is given to believers. One example of this appears in "Lord What a Heav'n of Saving Grace."

Send Comforts, Lord, from thy right Hand,
While we pass thro' this barren Land;
And in thy Temple let us see
A Glimpse of Love, a Glimpse of thee. (55)

The third and final stanzas of "Lord We Come Before Thee Now" make a similar appeal.

Comfort those who weep and mourn,
Let the Time of Joy return;
Those that are cast down lift up,
Make them strong in Faith and Hope:
Grant that those who seek may find
Thee a God sincere and kind;
Heal the sick, the Captive free,
Let us all rejoice in thee. (3)

Another group of texts focuses on the comfort that comes through knowing that God hears people's needs in their prayers. Three examples of this come from middle stanzas of texts by Watts, "Away from Ev'ry Mortal Care," "O Lord How Many Are Our Foes,' and "Up to the Lord, That Reigns on High." The first of these includes the following stanza.

While here our various Wants we mourn,
United Groans ascend on high;
And Prayer bears a quick return
Of Blessings in Variety. (94)

In the second of these texts, language of morning and evening surrounds the plea.

Tir'd with the Burdens of the Day,
To thee we rais'd an Ev'ning Cry
Thou heard'st when we began to pray,
And thine Almighty Help was nigh. (9)

The third Watts text uses poignant language to describe human sorrow.

Our Sorrow and our Tears we pour
Into the Bosom of our God;
He hears us in the mourning Hour,
And helps us bear the heavy Load. (77)

Themes of hardship and trial blend with another one of Whitefield's categories in Joseph Humphreys' text "Blessed Are the Sons of God." In this hymn, Christian suffering is seen as a form of contrast with the world.

Tho' they suffer much on Earth
Strangers quite to this World's Mirth,

> Yet they have an inward Joy,
> Pleasure which can never cloy. (123)

Witness to and contrast with the world. The relationship of the believer to the surrounding world was typically characterized by language of contrast with the world or witness to the world in Whitefield's writings. Hymns and singing often acted as an outward sign of this contrast. Interestingly, the same language that appears in Whitefield's writing appears in the poetry of the authors in *Hymns for Social Worship.* More often than not, these hymns contained references to "the world" with negative language. The middle stanza of "Come My Brethren, Isr'el's Race" offers the clearest picture of this theme.

> Others sing their Time away,
> Who Jesus never knew;
> Ought not we to pass our Day
> In Joy and Singing too?
> Others, have they Cause to bless?
> The Children of the King have more;
> They have Christ, their Righteousness!
> Their Glory, Peace, and Pow'r. (39)

Language of oppression from the world stands out in the Wesley text, "Meet and Right It Is to Sing."

> Though th' injurious World exclaim,
> Sing we still in Jesu's Name;
> Saviour, thee we ever bless,
> Thee our Lord and God confess. (52)

The opening stanza of Watts's text "Let Them Neglect Thy Glory, Lord" has a bold comment toward unbelievers and another emphasis on singing as witness.

> Let them neglect thy Glory, Lord,
> Who never knew thy Grace;
> But our loud Song shall still record
> The Wonders of thy Praise. (80)

An equally explicit description of the contrast between secular and spiritual wisdom appears in all three of the interior stanzas of “O Saviour, Thou Thy Mysteries.”

> O Saviour, thou thy Mysteries
> Hast often cover’d from the Wise,
> And Babes thy Glory shew’d;
> Thy Wisdom far surpasses all
> What studious Mortals Wisdom call,
> Thou holy Lamb of God.
>
> The nat’ral Man can’t right conceive
> The glorious Things which we believe,
> How thou did’st us redeem;
> The Things thy Spirit teaches us,
> The Merit of thy Blood and Cross,
> Are Foolishness to him.
>
> They this World’s Wisdom seek and gain,
> That Wisdom which thou callest vain,
> But Oh! are Strangers still,
> To that which makes our Spirits wise,
> And sets before our waiting Eyes,
> What is our Saviour’s Will. (126)

Three consecutive dialogue hymns by Cennick in the second section of Whitefield’s hymn book contain expressions of pilgrimage, and all three address the topic of leaving the world in pursuit of heavenly gain. The opening stanza of the first of these hymns begins with a reference to the witnessing act of singing.

> Tell us, O Women, we wou’d know
> Wither so fast ye move;
> *We call’d to leave the World below,*
> *Are seeking one above.* (120)

The final stanza of the next dialogue hymn, “Children of Israel, See What Shade,” concludes by contrasting the believer’s act of singing with the actions of the unbeliever.

> While others praise an unknown God,
> We each will sing of thee;
> *Jesus has wash’d me in his Blood,*
> *And lov’d and dy’d for me.* (120)

The three interior stanzas of Cennick's "Ho Pilgrims, If Ye Pilgrims Be" discuss leaving behind "worldly" recognition and instead adopting a Christian identity.

> No Peace (tho' we have sought) we find
> In any Country here;
> *'Twas therefore we left all behind*
> *Wealth, Name and Character.*
>
> We ne'er such Pleasure knew before,
> As now in him we know;
> *Peace (since our Saviour's Cross we bore)*
> *Like Rivers in us flow.*
>
> Let others then delight them here,
> Their Trifles we despise;
> *The heav'nly Kingdom we prefer,*
> *The Bliss of Paradise*. (123-124)

In the pulpit, Whitefield often made parallels between the opposition he faced during his ministry and the opposition that Christ received during his life. The hymn "Come My Father's Family," which is of unknown authorship, takes a similar approach in one of the middle stanzas.

> Jesus the despis'd and mean,
> Our Master let us own,
> He the Sacrifice for Sin,
> The Saviour he alone:
> Let us take and bear his Cross
> Despis'd Disciples let us be;
> Mock'd and slighted as he was
> For you, my Friend, and me. (112)

Public worship and spiritual discipline. In one sense, all of the hymns of praise and adoration in this collection relate to the topic of public worship and spiritual discipline. However, some of the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* explicitly mention the act of being present in church for worship or the exercise of personal devotion. The incipit and second line of one hymn in the collection references spiritual discipline—"Far

from our Thoughts vain World be gone / Let our religious hours alone" (2). In contrast to this act of private devotion, the hymn "Ye Seekers of God, Whose Diligent Care" mentions the act of worshipping publicly in the lines "'Tis Jesus commands, come all to his House / And lift up your Hands, and pay him your Vows" (65).

A number of hymns near the beginning of the collection are included under Whitefield's titles "Public Worship," "Morning Worship," "Evening Worship," "On the Lord's Day," "Longing for the House of God," and "The Church is God's House and Care." Most of these texts are general hymns of praise. The final stanza of the opening hymn describes public worship through the Isaiah 6 narrative.

> Touch with a living Coal, the Lip
> That shall proclaim thy Word,
> And bid each awful Hearer keep
> Attention to the Lord (1).

The placement of this text at the beginning of the collection suggests that this was probably close to Whitefield's own perspective on the roles of messenger and hearer within public worship. Another text that references the role of the hearer in the context of public worship is the second stanza of "Long We Have Sat Beneath the Sound."

> Oft we frequent the holy Place,
> Yet hear almost in vain;
> How small a Portion of thy Grace
> Do our false Hearts retain! (72)

Worship in both public and private settings is mentioned in the final stanza of "Away from Ev'ry Mortal Care" by Watts.

> Father, our Souls would still abide
> Within thy Temple, near thy Side;
> But if our Feet must hence depart,
> Still keep thy Dwelling in my Heart. (94)

The language of "duty" is brought up in Watts's text "Praise Ye the Lord, 'Tis Good to Raise" and could refer to either public or private acts of devotion.

> Praise ye the Lord, 'tis good to raise,
> Our Hearts and Voices in his Praise,
> His Nature and his Works invite,
> To make this Duty our Delight. (64)

The frequency of worship is briefly mentioned in the text "Come Let Us Adore." In this hymn, Cennick states, "We daily will sing / Thy Merits, thy Praise / Thou merciful Spring / Of Pity and Grace" (10). Another subtle reference to spiritual devotion is found in a hymn about the presence of the Holy Spirit. The third stanza of Watts's text "Come, Holy Spirit, Heav'nly Dove" describes the act of worship.

> In vain we tune our formal Songs;
> In vain we strive to rise;
> Hosannas languish on our Tongues,
> And our Devotion dies. (78)

Themes from Texts Added to the Supplement

The texts that were added between the sixth and sixteenth editions represent all of the changes to the hymnal that occurred before Whitefield's death. These added texts, which were displayed in a table in a previous chapter, were primarily authored by Charles Wesley. This suggests that authorship was the primary driving factor for Whitefield in adding hymns to his collection. However, Wesley penned so many texts in his lifetime that a brief thematic survey of those that Whitefield chose to include remains relevant.

An overview of the supplement indicates a large variety of topics from these hymns. Ranging from a hymn titled "The Christian Soldier" to a hymn "For Good Friday," the texts do not fall into a single category. Still, some trends can be traced in these added hymns. For instance, Whitefield added five funeral hymns, more than

doubling the number that was originally in the book. It is easy to assume that these additions were largely practical as Whitefield grew older and those in his congregations passed away.

The supplement also contains five hymns that focused on Christ's birth, including two stanzas of Wesley's text "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus." One added text contains overt themes of British nationalism, which Whitefield titled "For His Majesty King George and Royal Family." Whitefield also titled one hymn "Before Sermon" and another "After Sermon"—titles that did not appear in the first editions. This suggests that Whitefield's structure of worship shifted over time, and bracketing the sermon with specific songs became a pattern. Christ's role as high priest also receives considerable attention in these texts, and two hymns explicitly focus on judgment and end times.

Four texts in the supplement stand out because of their focus on topics that do not appear often, if at all, in the first edition. One of these is "Soldiers of Christ, Arise." Six stanzas of militaristic language against spiritual forces focus on themes of strength, encouragement, and conquering all the "Pow'rs of Darkness." Another unique text is "Saviour of the World, Attend," which is titled by Whitefield as "Longing for Latter-Day Glory." This hymn, also six stanzas in length, is an entreating plea about earthly suffering and prayer. The first stanza has an especially global quality.

> Saviour of the World, attend,
> Harken to thy People's Moan:
> Art thou not the Sinner's Friend?
> Art thou not their Friend alone?
> Then thine Ear incline;
> While they for Redemption cry,
> Think upon that Word of thine,
> "Your Redemption draweth nigh." (150)

Whitefield's desire for collective language comes out in his noticeable alteration to Watts's hymn "When I Survey the Wond'rous Cross." The first stanza of this hymn takes on a surprisingly ecumenical spirit with these changes and also creates a more distant, observant-like tone.

> When Saints survey the wond'rous Cross
> On which the Prince of Glory dy'd,
> Their richest Gain they count but Loss,
> And pour Contempt on all their Pride. (174)

A fourth text that stands out in the supplement is "Jesu Let Thy Pitying Eye," which Whitefield titled provocatively in all capital letters "THE BACKSLIDER." This text contains six stanzas full of language of repentance and has a recurring refrain for each of the stanzas that is sung antiphonally.

> Look, as when thy Grace beheld,
> The Harlot in Distress:
> Dry'd her Tears, her Pardon seal'd
> And bade her go in Peace:
> Foul, like her, and self-abhorred,
> I at thy Feet for Mercy groan:
> Turn and look upon me Lord,
> *Turn and look upon me Lord,*
> And break my Heart of Stone,
> *And break my Heart of Stone.* (180)

The overarching emphasis on praise, the atonement, and fellowship of believers continues through these hymn selections as they did in the first published version of the book. A large percentage of these added texts, though, center on holiness of life, personal devotion, religious affections, and strength for the believer. These particular emphases are likely a byproduct of Whitefield's decision to include more texts by Charles Wesley, for whom these were prominent themes.

Whitefield's Omitted Hymns

Since Noll has pointed out the noticeably absent topics in *Hymns for Social Worship,* this section takes a different approach to the topic of absent themes by asking the question, "Which hymns did Whitefield know about, but exclude from his hymn collection?" Through Whitefield's journaling and letter-writing, it is evident that he was aware of many hymn texts and used them for personal edification. Interestingly, there is very little overlap between the texts that Whitefield quoted in his writing and the ones he chose to include in *Hymns for Social Worship.* This dissimilarity highlights the fact that Whitefield felt personally connected to some texts that he chose not to include in his resource for congregational worship. A few interesting observations can be made by looking at the corpus of hymns that Whitefield quoted in his journals but did not include in his hymn collection. Table 6.2 below identifies incipits and authors of complete texts that are quoted in Whitefield's journals and usually placed at the end or very beginning of each publication.

Table 6.2. Full length hymns quoted in Whitefield's *Journals*

Incipit	Stanza length	Author (Notes)
When All Thy Mercies O My God	9	Addison
My God My Everlasting Hope	5	Watts (Psalm 71)
How Are Thy Servants Bless'd O Lord!	8	Addison
The Lord My Pasture Shall Prepare	4	Addison (Psalm 23)
Shall I for Fear of Feeble Man	8	Johann Winkler, tr. John Wesley
Brother in Christ and Well Beloved	9	Wesley (dedicated to Whitefield)
Captain of My Salvation, Hear	8	Wesley
Servant of God, Thy Summons Hear	9	Wesley (dedicated to Whitefield)
Eternal, Universal Lord	9	Unknown
When Christ Had Left His Flock Below	15	"Dr. More," alt. by the Wesleys
Commit Thou All Thy Griefs	16	Paul Gerhardt, tr. John Wesley
Ah My Dear Master! Can It Be	10	Wesley

None of these full-length hymns are also printed in *Hymns for Social Worship,* yet they are quoted in his journals in such a way that he clearly received personal comfort from these texts. Whitefield introduced these quotations with addresses to the reader that were personal and heartfelt, using language such as "At present I will trouble thee no more; but beg thee, whether serious or not, to endeavor to calm thy spirit, by reading or singing over the following lines, translated by that sweet singer of Israel, and my worthy and honoured friend Doctor Watts," and in another instance, "The concern I have for the Church, in general, and Savannah and the Orphan House in particular, lies much upon my heart; but I commit myself to God in a hymn composed by Gerhardt and translated by my friend, Mr. Wesley."[10]

In addition to full-text hymns that appear at the beginning or end of his journals, Whitefield often quoted one or two stanzas of hymn texts in passing. Like the full-text works noted above, it is surprising that only three of the hymns also appear in *Hymns for Social Worship.*[11] Table 6.3 shows the incipits of all the texts that Whitefield quoted in passing in the body of his journals, with the exception of seven single-verse texts from unidentifiable sources.[12]

It is apparent from this list that Whitefield internalized the metrical psalms by Tate and Brady and frequently quoted them in his writing. Whitefield's *Hymns for Social Worship* does not include any metrical psalms by Tate and Brady, and the few psalm

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[10] George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, foreword by Ian Murray (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 93, 433.

[11] These hymns are "Meet and Right it is to Sing," "How Sad Our State by Nature Is," and "Why Should the Children of a King."

[12] The first line of these interior stanzas are: "So poor, so frail an instrument," "Renew thy likeness, Lord in me," "I would not Lord alone," My bondage of corruption break," "They rage all night on slaughter bent," "They can brave th'eternal laws," "'Tis he sustains my feeble powers."

texts that are included are exclusively Watts's paraphrases. It is also interesting to note that Whitefield frequently cited texts by Joseph Addison but did not include any texts by him in *Hymns for Social Worship.*

Table 6.3. Psalm and hymn stanzas mentioned in Whitefield's *Journals*

Incipit	Stanzas quoted	Author (Notes)
As Pants the Hart for Cooling Streams	2	Tate and Brady (Psalm 17)
God Is Our Refuge in Distress	1	Tate and Brady (Psalm 46)
When All Thy Mercies O My God (referenced twice)	2	Addison
How Sweet Must Their Advantage Be	2	Sternhold and Hopkins? (Psalm 133)
The Lord Himself, the Mighty Lord	1	Tate and Brady (Psalm 23)
Awake My Soul and With the Sun	1	Thomas Ken
Through All the Changing Scenes of Life	2	Tate and Brady
My Soul with Grateful Thoughts of Love	1	Tate and Brady
Meet and Right It Is to Sing	1	Wesley
Thou Lord by Strictest Search Hast Known	1	Tate and Brady (Psalm 139)
Lo God is Here! My Soul Adore	1	Gerhardt Tersteegen, tr. John Wesley
O Thou to Whose All -Searching Sight	1	Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, tr. John Wesley
How Sad Our State by Nature Is (referenced twice)	1	Watts
Shall I For Fear of Feeble Man (referenced twice)	1	Johann Winkler, tr. John Wesley
Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose	1	Wesley
Why Should the Children of a King	1	Watts
The Lord My Pasture Shall Prepare	1	Addison
With Restless and Ungoverned Rage	4	Tate and Brady
My Soul Inspired with Sacred Love	4	Wesley
Sin Is Still Spreading O'er My Heart	2	Wesley
Come Savior Jesus, from Above	1	Antoinette Bourignon, tr. John Wesley
Stoop Down, My Thoughts That Use to Rise	1	Watts
O Render Thanks to God Above	1	Tate and Brady

Between these two lists, it is evident that Whitefield tended to cite hymns in his journals that focused especially on two themes: doing the Lord's will through one's earthly calling, and preservation and endurance in earthly struggles. These two themes were important to Whitefield, but he chose to exclude these particular texts in his hymn book. Although a number of speculations for Whitefield's decisions are possible, one hypothesis is that Whitefield made a thematic distinction between hymns he used for his own personal edification and those he purposefully collected for group worship settings.

The Range of Poetic Devices in Hymns for Social Worship

One of Noll's observations about *Hymns for Social Worship* is the range of metrical variety in the texts Whitefield included.[13] Although Watts's "conservative … verse form" keeps three-fifths of the texts in common, short, or long meter, Whitefield also chose to include texts by Moravian writers who wrote in more diverse meters and Charles Wesley, whose "versifying genius was … considerable."[14] From the inclusion of modified trochaic texts and "highly unusual stanzaic form" by unknown authors to texts in "risqué anapestic foot" that were written just a few years before Whitefield's collection was published, Noll concluded that an unusually large percentage of the hymns did not have "a conventional metre for hymn singing" but were "more readily associated with thrilling drama, comedy, or limericks."[15]

[13] Noll, "Evangelical Spirituality," 6.

[14] Ibid., 7.

[15] Ibid., 8-9.

Noll observes that "the form of Whitefield's hymns—by mixing much that was traditional with much that was not—bespoke the shape of his ministry."[16] He also hints that Whitefield's dramatic proclivities led him to prefer and select texts with similarly extravagant flavors. If Whitefield's theatrical nature affected his approach toward selecting hymns, it becomes a matter of interest to see if his personality is also revealed in the poetic devices of the hymns that he chose.

While Noll underlines the relationship between Whitefield's theatrical preaching and his hymn selections, Scotty Gray highlights the connection between Whitefield's preaching rhetoric and eighteenth-century musical and poetic ideas. Gray comments:

> The relationship between sound and sense has been a consideration from antiquity, and there have been theories about the effect of certain spoken and musical sounds on human thoughts and feelings. Great speakers and religious leaders have drawn upon qualities that came to be known as rhetoric and oratory and often borrowed attributes of musical language to give forceful expression to their thoughts.… In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was widely held, possibly by analogy with the aims of rhetoric, that the aims of music were to arouse affections or passions.… The nineteenth-century rise of Methodism saw the great evangelical preachers like John Wesley and George Whitefield and many considered the emotional appeal of their sermons was due in part to sounds themselves. Qualities of music were seen to affect the oratorical style of many politicians as well as preachers.[17]

Concrete conclusions about the precise relationship between Whitefield's theatrical background, his preaching rhetoric, and his editorial choice of hymns are difficult to make, but the relationship exists and these parallels deserve acknowledgement. Was Whitefield's preaching influenced by the rhetoric of poetry and

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[16] Ibid., 10.

[17] Scotty Gray, *Hermeneutics of Hymnody: A Comprehensive and Integrated Approach to Understanding Hymns* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 2015), 161-163. Gray's comment references the nineteenth century in context of his larger discussion of broad trends and movements, although John Wesley and George Whitefield were both eighteenth-century figures.

hymnody? Was his selection of hymns impacted by his innate desire for powerful spoken rhetoric?

A brief survey of some of the most vivid and captivating poetic devices found in Whitefield's hymn book does not prove that Whitefield chose these hymns for their compelling poetry alone, but it does emphasize the parallel between Whitefield's own rhetoric and his choice of texts. Gray has mentioned that "fine hymns are not only expressions of our theology, but are often determinants of it," which emphasizes that the religious rhetoric in the hymns that individuals sing can also affect their spoken religious rhetoric.[18] Gray continues on to comment on the interaction between theology and hymn rhetoric: "Through hymns these basic doctrines and their many subtle aspects are often powerfully impressed on the minds and hearts of people not only because of their profound importance to human existence but also through the beauty of language, rhyme, rhythm, melody, repetition … in a text."[19]

As described in chapter three, Whitefield's rhetoric was especially full of antithesis and contrast, captivating illustrations, reiterated metaphor sustained to a climax, and various forms of repetition—especially with questions—used for the purpose of escalating intensity. These rhetorical qualities in speech translate to poetic devices in hymns. Gray has suggested that a "comprehensive and integrated hermeneutics of hymnody is sensitive to how anaphora, antanaclasis, mesodiplosis, alliteration, synecdoche, echphonesis, omission, irony, anadiplosis, and chiasmus combine in the

[18] Gray, 69.

[19] Ibid., 63.

hymn to give wings of beauty and flow to the biblical and theological concepts."[20] Of these many poetic devices, this section will use examples from *Hymns for Social Worship* to illustrate poetic devices in four categories: contrast, repetition, illustration, and climax.[21]

Contrasting Devices

Antithesis and paradox are two poetic devices that are frequently used in hymn-writing to suggest contrasting ideas. One of the clearest examples of antithesis is in the hymn "See My Soul with Wonder See." In this stanza, four pairs of contrasting words occur in the first part of this stanza, juxtaposing elements of Christ's death with their effect and meaning for believers.

> Jesu's Pain procures our Ease,
> Jesu's Death is our Release
> Jesu's Cross obtains our Crown,
> Jesu's Sepulchre our Throne.
> Lord conform us to thy Death,
> Bid our Sins yield up their Breath;
> By thy Resurrection's Pow'r.
> Make our Souls to Glory soar. (28)

Many sharp contrasts appear throughout three full stanzas of "Of Him Who Did Salvation Bring." This text includes antitheses between ideas such as guilt/forgiveness, need/relief, force/love, beneath/above, and closed/shown. Not only does this text exemplify contrasting language, it also includes an example of anaphora in the first stanza with the word "arise."

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[20] Ibid., 73.

[21] Definitions and categories for these hymnodic devices come from Austin Lovelace, *The Anatomy of Hymnody* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1965), 91-102 and William J. Reynolds, David W. Music, and Milburn Price, *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*, 5th ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 2010), xiv-xvi.

Of him who did Salvation bring,
Lord may we ever think and sing!
Arise ye guilty, he'll forgive
Arise ye needy, he'll relieve.

Eternal Lord, Almighty King,
All Heav'n doth with thy Triumphs ring;
Thou conquer'st all beneath, above,
Device with Force, Men with Love.

To shame our Sins, Christ blushed in Blood,
He clos'd his Eyes to shew us God,
Let all the World fall down and know,
That none but God such Love could show. (70-71)

Another form of contrast is the poetic device of paradox, where two ideas are linked together to create a mysterious and unusual union. One example of this appears in the hymn "Sure Thy Name Is Wonderful" with the words sacrificer/sacrifice.

Thou that Prophet art and King
Thou the Priest foretold to rise;
Thou the Sacrificer art,
Thou too art the Sacrifice. (41)

Repetitive Devices

Poetic devices that are based on repetition in the text are found throughout *Hymns for Social Worship.* A single hymn often contains more than one type of repetition, as seen in William Hammond's text "Awake and Sing the Song." In this example, alliteration between "sing" and "sin" appears in three of the four stanzas, and anaphora occurs in the second stanza on the word "sing." Additionally, a type of anadiplosis appears between the third and fourth stanzas with the words "song/sing."

Awake and sing the Song,
Of Moses and the Lamb,
Wake ev'ry Heart and ev'ry Tongue,
To praise the Saviour's Name.

Sing of his dying Love,
Sing of his rising Pow'r,
Sing how he intercedes above,
For those whose Sins he bore.

Sing 'till we feel our Hearts,
Ascending with our Tongues,
Sing 'till the love of Sin departs,
And Grace inspires our Songs.

Sing 'till we hear Christ say,
"Your Sins are all forgiv'n,"
Go on rejoicing ev'ry Day,
'Till we all meet in Heaven. (38)

Epizeuxis, or the immediate repetition of a word, is seen in line three of the particularly expressive text, "Infinite Grief, Amazing Woe." This one stanza also includes examples of synecdoche (head, hearts, and eyes) and personification (our sorrows bleed).

'Twere you that pull'd the Vengeance down,
Upon his guiltless Head:
Break, break our Hearts, oh burst these Eyes,
And let our Sorrows bleed. (p. 85)

Repetition of the word "see" through the poetic device of epanadiplosis appears in this first stanza of one hymn in Whitefield's collection.

See my Soul, with Wonder, see
The incarnate Deity;
Human Nature he assumes
He to ransom Sinners comes. (27)

Various forms of repetition occur throughout the final two stanzas of "Clap Your Hands, Ye People, All." Anaphora stands out on the words "praises" and "pow'r," but these stanzas are also connected by the return of the word "praise" again in the last line of the final stanza.

Shout the God enthroned above,
Trumpet forth his conqu'ring Love;

Praises to our Jesus sing,
Praises to our glorious King.

Pow'r is all to Jesus giv'n,
Pow'r o'er Hell, and Earth and Heav'n;
Jesus' pow'r to us impart
Then we'll praise with all our Heart. (34)

Illustrative Devices

Illustrative hymnic devices includes metaphor, simile, and hypotyposis, all of which were also rhetorical devices used in Whitefield's sermons. Metaphor, which suggests similarity between non-similar items, appears in many texts in this collection, including "Ye That Pass By Behold the Man." In this example, the eloquent description about the fracturing of rocks at Christ's death is compared to the breaking of human hearts.

The Rocks could feel thy pow'rful Death,
And tremble, and a-sunder part;
O rend with thy expiring Breath,
The harder Marble of our Heart! (30)

A simile that is taken from Psalm 103 occurs in this middle stanza of "My Soul Repeat His Praise."

Our Days are as the Grass
Or Like the Morning Flower;
If one sharp Blast sweep o'er the Field
It withers in an Hour. (7)

Simile and metaphor are the foundation of the text "Zion's a Garden Wall'd Around." One stanza of this text is as follows.

Like spicy Trees, Believers stand,
Planted by an Almighty Hand;
And all the Springs in Zion flow,
To make the Rich Plantation grow. (73)

Hypotyposis refers to poetry with visual language that is intended to bring the reader or singer into the role of eyewitness. As noticed in a previous section, this technique appears in many of Whitefield's sermons, and is also a prominent device in the texts of *Hymns for Social Worship.* One of these instances is in "Ye That Pass By Behold the Man."

> See there! His Temples crown'd with Thorns,
> His bleeding Hands extended wide,
> His streaming Feet transfixed and torn,
> The Fountain gushing from his Side. (30)

Although the crucifixion narrative was one of the most common events to be described with hypotyposis, the resurrection was another moment that was often represented with this language.

> Children of God, look up and see,
> Your Saviour cloath'd [sic] with Majesty,
> Triumphant o'er the Tomb:
> Give o'er your Griefs, cast off your Fears,
> In Heav'n your Mansions he prepares,
> And soon will take you home. (32)

Climax Devices

The poetic device of climax is the process of arranging ideas in order of intensity in sequential descriptions. While this is one of the more typical poetic devices to achieve a sense of heightened importance, other devices such as echphonesis, or the use of exclamation points, and rhetorical questioning can also produce this effect. Climax appears in the text "The Sun of Righteousness Appears" in which increasingly strong barriers to Christ's resurrection are listed followed by the gates of Hell and culminating in the description of Heaven.

In vain the Stone, the Watch, the Seal,
Forbid an early Rise;
To him who breaks the Gates of Hell
And opens Paradise. (33)

The list of "sin, curse, and pain" is a tautology, but the ensuing lines that mention angels and then "every creature" suggest that this stanza in "What Equal Honors Shall We Bring" is primarily shaped by climax.

Blessings for ever on the Lamb,
Who bore our Sin, and Curse, and Pain,
Let Angels sound his sacred Name,
And Every Creature say Amen! (32)

Exclamation points pepper the pages of *Hymns for Social Worship.* A noticeable example of echphonesis is found in "Sweet Is Thy Work, O God, Our King."

Our Hearts should triumph in thee, Lord,
And bless thy Works and bless thy Word:
Thy Works of Grace, how bright they shine!
How deep thy Counsels! How Divine! (15)

The text "Oh Thou in Whom the Gentiles Trust" contains a similarly lavish use of exclamation.

O Thou in Whom the Gentiles Trust!
Thou only holy, only just,
Oh tune our Souls to praise thy Name
Jesus! Unchangeable! The Same! (72)

Whitefield's published sermons contain paragraphs of successive exclamatory statement as well as consecutive rhetorical questions. Similarly, rhetorical questions appear throughout *Hymns for Social Worship.* The well-known text, altered by Whitefield, "Alas! And Did Our Saviour Bleed," contains rhetorical questions in the first and second stanzas.

Alas! And did our Saviour bleed?
And did our Sov'reign die?

Would he devote that Sacred Head
For such a worm as I?

Was it for Crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the Tree?
Amazing Pity! Grace unknown,
And Love beyond degree. (85)

Conclusion

Hymnody as a genre often contains these and other poetic devices, so the appearance of such elements in *Hymns for Social Worship* does not stand alone as evidence of Whitefield's motivations as an editor. Additionally, the majority of these texts are authored by Watts, Wesley, and other evangelical writers, for whom this poetic language and religious expression was common and expected in their writing. However, the frequency with which these poetic devices occur in this collection and the noticeable vibrancy of the poetic language suggest that Whitefield's inclination for dramatic rhetoric was a factor in his process of choosing hymns for *Hymns for Social Worship*. Whether consciously or intuitively, the dramatic nature and emotional impact of the text appealed to Whitefield, as is evident from the presence of strong and expressive poetic devices and Noll's observation of the unusual metrical variety in the collection.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

Restatement of Research Questions

This thesis examined the life, ministry, and values of George Whitefield in order to observe his editorial priorities in *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship.* The five guiding research questions, stated below, served as the basic structure for the study.

1. What theological values are found in Whitefield's sermons?
2. What can be said about George Whitefield's view of singing and hymnody from his personal writings?
3. How do the thematic emphases in Whitefield's sermons relate to the textual themes in *Hymns for Social Worship*?
4. How can a study of *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* contribute to a fuller understanding of Whitefield's evangelistic mission?
5. How can a study of *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* contribute to a fuller understanding of eighteenth-century hymnody?

Throughout this thesis, ideas surfaced about the relationship between Whitefield's preaching ministry and the creation of his hymnal. In the sections below, main points from each chapter will be summarized and related to each another to form answers to the questions raised.

Whitefield's Overarching Theology and Evangelical Mission

This study of the relationship between Whitefield's sermons and writings and the texts in *Hymns for Social Worship* offers insight into Whitefield's overarching theology and mission. More specifically, the sources emphasize both contrasting and complementary aspects of Whitefield's visionary ecumenism, his core beliefs, and his approach to controversy.

Whitefield's visionary ecumenism is demonstrated in the way he often addressed his listeners before his sermons as "persons of all denominations." His explicit comments about his appreciation for the diversity of churches with which he interacted and his refusal to promote a specific denomination over the others confirms that ecumenism was at the core of Whitefield's theology. These factors highlight the ecumenical spirit that also surrounds *Hymns for Social Worship.* Whether Whitefield consciously conceived a "denominationless" future and was trying to achieve that reality or he simply saw the negative effects of rigid sectarianism and was pushing back, his ministry was characterized by this value.

This study sought to highlight how the core beliefs in Whitefield's preaching corresponds to those in *Hymns for Social Worship.* The thematic parallels between these sources include doctrinal emphases on sin, the new birth, atonement, justification, perseverance of the saints, election, free grace, and the role of the Holy Spirit. For the most part, the emphases that characterized Whitefield's preaching ministry correspond to those of his editorial choices. The theme of salvific perseverance was especially evident in the hymns, and the small presence of explicit texts on justification and election indicates that Whitefield most likely sought out these texts purposefully.

Given all the heated discussion on the topic of free grace in Whitefield's sermons and writings, the absence of specific hymns that supported his position reveals his more foundational commitment to unity in public singing. Although Whitefield was unrestrained in his verbal and written battles on the topic, his willing inclusion of texts by Charles Wesley and his avoidance of the controversial topic in the hymn book shows the extent to which Whitefield valued singing in accord with other believers. In many ways,

Whitefield's preaching ministry was supplemented and enhanced by *Hymns for Social Worship.* The collection's themes reveal various layers of Whitefield's priorities and intentions about the sung theology at Moorfields Tabernacle.

Hymns for Social Worship came during a phase in which Whitefield was seeking out ways of resolving the controversies of his early ministry. Whitefield's patterns of conflict-resolution noted in chapter two reveal that his response to division was typically reconciliatory. By generally seeking the middle ground, Whitefield showed how much he cared that rigid walls did not form over minor theological differences in evangelical Christian communities. At the same time, Whitefield's preaching topics indicated that he also cared about doctrinal consequences, especially about those he believed were distorted.

Whitefield managed to express both his Calvinist distinctions and his irenic values in *Hymns for Social Worship.* Without sacrificing the convictions he believed were non-negotiable, Whitefield left room for disagreement and the distinctiveness of others. One principle that Whitefield did not accommodate, however, was unemotional or nominal faith. With his dramatic preaching and his metrically-diverse, poetically-intense hymn book, Whitefield attacked religious indifference as the greatest of crimes.

Whitefield's Views on Congregational Song

This thesis sought to provide concrete evidence for other scholars' allusions to Whitefield's views on hymnody and singing. Two of these references are Marini's statement that "hymnody proved to be central to the creation of [Whitefield's] communal identit[y]" and Noll's similar comment that "without pausing for documentation,"

hymnody was central to Whitefield's life.[1] Although Whitefield's regard for hymnody is indisputable, the survey in this thesis reveals additional ideas about Whitefield's views on congregational song.

Unlike his colleague Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield fully adopted hymnodic innovations, spending no time wavering between psalm singing traditions and the practice of singing new hymns. He was, however, wary of music that was associated with worldly activities or with Roman Catholic practices. A survey of Whitefield's references to hymns revealed a few primary emphases on the role of singing. In particular, Whitefield's letters underscored the comforting role of singing during hardship, and his sermons often emphasized the way the act of hymn singing marked a person as a Christian to the watching world. Whitefield's hymn book preface is just one of many places in which he described music as a way of preparing for and foreshadowing worship in heaven. From his sermons to the list of requirements for his orphanage, Whitefield stressed the way singing was an act of spiritual discipline. Finally, Whitefield's journals were full of references to singing as a fundamental element of public worship. These contexts provide additional angles toward understanding Whitefield's beliefs about music.

A final conclusion about Whitefield's beliefs about congregational song is noted by his repeated comments of "one common song" throughout his sermons, writings, and hymn collection. Whitefield cared about group spiritual formation; he was congregational

[1] Stephen A. Marini, "Whitefield's Music: Moorfields Tabernacle, The Divine Musical Miscellany (1754), and the Fashioning of Early Evangelical Sacred Song," *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 2, no. 1 (2016): 109; Mark A. Noll, "Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality," in *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*, ed. Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016), 24.

to the core. Whitefield also knew that collective singing had the power to unify, and his decision to alter singular pronouns to plural ones in his hymn book should be seen in light of this fact. His theological emphasis on the new birth translated into an emphasis on the visibility of true regeneration in worship practices. For Whitefield, the reborn person was a singing person.

Whitefield's Motivations as Artistic Preacher and Pastoral Editor

Maddock wrote that Whitefield's aim was "to convert, not to entertain."[2] This observation is directed toward Whitefield's preaching, but when applied to his intentions for *Hymns for Social Worship,* it becomes especially interesting. Whitefield's preaching style was characterized by intense dramatic qualities, and there is a noticeable parallel between Whitefield's preaching rhetoric and the rhetoric of poetry. One conclusion of this thesis is that Whitefield's artistic approach toward crafting sermons and presenting them in the pulpit resembles that of a hymnodist crafting poetry.

The conclusions of Downey, Piper, Stout, Mahaffey, and Old is that Whitefield had a "rhetoric of community" that was "culture shaping," and in many ways he was similar to a poet.[3] Whitefield's sermon-making, while deeply theological and pastoral, was also his work of art. Whitefield's nature was theatrical, artistic, dramatic, and charismatic; when motivated by religious zeal, he moved toward artistic expressions. As a result, Whitefield communicated theology in a way that parallels other art forms. The

[2] Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2012), 71.

[3] Jerome Mahaffey, *Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 103.See chapter three for a summary of the perspectives of each of these scholars.

act of singing congregationally communicates faith experientially, contextually, and aesthetically—Whitefield's artistic approach to preaching would have had a similar effect.

Whitefield and Evangelical Hymnody

Whitefield's ministry impacted a number of notable hymn writers. Charles Wesley, William Cowper, and Augustus Toplady are three poets who were mentioned in this study in conjunction with Whitefield's influence. Additionally, J.C. Ryle has pointed out that John Newton wrote a tribute to Whitefield, expressing, "That which finished Mr. Whitefield's character as a shining light, and is now his crown of rejoicing, was the singular success which the Lord was pleased to give him in winning souls … Perhaps there is hardly a place in all the extensive compass of his labours where some may not yet be found who thankfully acknowledge him as their spiritual father."[4] Additionally, Louis F. Benson references the general influence that Whitefield's hymn collection had on Anglican ministers, stating, "Its greatest permanent importance lay in its influence with the early Evangelical clergy of the Church of England, which made it the forerunner and even the model of the earlier group of hymnals in the Church of England."[5]

In addition to these instances of Whitefield's direct influence on hymn writers, Whitefield's collection was part of a broader set of influences in English hymnody. Stephen Marini writes of the role of hymns in revival settings, "Hymns have performed

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[4] John Newton in J.C. Ryle, "George Whitefield and His Ministry" in *Select Sermons of George Whitefield: With an Account of his Life and a Summary of his Doctrine,* by George Whitefield, ed. J.C. Ryle and Richard Elliot (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 29-30.

[5] Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 319.

vital functions in evangelical religious culture. The experience of singing is central to revivalism, the characteristic evangelical ritual mode, and hearing or meditating upon hymns often mediates the new birth, the movement's classic form of spiritual experience. For all evangelicals, hymn-singing has been a primary vehicle of transcendence, the very wind of the Spirit itself."[6] Marini suggest that hymns are a "popular hermeneutic of evangelicalism" which he later describes as "an everyday understanding of the faith registered by the gradual selection of sacred song texts across space, time, and confessional identity."[7]

By being at the forefront of a major revival movement, Whitefield was also at a prime place for being able to speak to poetic, aesthetic, and hymnodic values in both American and British cultures. It is clear from Whitefield's preaching ministry that he blurred the lines of denominational sectarianism. Marini describes the hymn scene just thirty years after Whitefield's death in the following way:

> By 1800, major hymn collections and supplements contained poetry of Watts and Wesley, Doddridge and Cennick, Stennett and Newton, Fawcett and Cowper. This hymnological accumulation of Calvinist and Arminian divinity continued unabated through Civil War and beyond. Eventually it produced a group of consensus hymns that circulated in virtually all evangelical denominations and articulated a common ground of belief and practice for early American popular religion.[8]

Much further research would need to be done to identify Whitefield's particular influence on movements in evangelical hymnody, but this thesis suggests that the values

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[6] Stephen A. Marini, "Hymnody as History: Early Evangelical Hymns and the Recovery of American Popular Religion" *Church History* 71, no. 2 (June 2002): 273.

[7] Ibid., 286.

[8] Ibid., 285-286.

that shaped the creation of *Hymns for Social Worship* could appear in later collections of hymns in England and America as well.

Areas for Further Research

This thesis emphasized the relationship between Whitefield's sermons and writings and *Hymns for Social Worship,* but much further exploration could be done on this collection's influence on eighteenth-century evangelical hymnody. More specifically, Whitefield's collection could be studied in relation to surrounding publications and later resources to observe whether Whitefield's values are evident in those resources as well. Tracking the reprints of Whitefield's editorial changes to pronouns could also highlight aspects of Whitefield's influence on hymnody.

Another place for further exploration is the question of popularity. Was popularity a factor in Whitefield's decision to include a text in *Hymns for Social Worship*? A comparative study of surrounding collections would shed light on this topic. This study also did not address the question of which specific stanzas Whitefield left out of hymns as he edited *Hymns for Social Worship* according to his preference for brevity. The content of omitted stanzas could reveal more information about Whitefield's editorial priorities.

Although the general tone of *Hymns for Social Worship* parallels the broader emphases in Whitefield's ministry as evidenced in this paper, further research could be done about whether Whitefield had assistance in selecting the hymn texts for the collection. It is possible that other people, especially the Countess of Huntingdon, played an active role in selecting the texts. The influence of those who might have helped Whitefield in creating this hymn book could be explored. Since published copies of

Whitefield's letters show only the initials of the addressee, the friends to whom he wrote about hymns are largely unidentifiable. Detailed research might also reveal more about who Whitefield entrusted with overseeing following editions of *Hymn for Social Worship.*

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