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## GEORGE WHITEFIELD AND WELSH METHODISM

THE MINISTRY of George Whitefield of Gloucester, exercised for "half an age", was certainly one of the most fruitful of evangelical ministries since the days of the apostles. Wherever he turned in his astonishing career, he demonstrated the truth that "the foolishness of preaching" was the God-appointed means of bringing the salvation of Christ to the souls of men. "In labours more abundant" he worked himself to death, expending all the energies of his expansive soul in the ministry of reconciliation. England, Scotland, Wales, and America alike felt the power of his message and the impact of his personality, and in each of these countries lasting evangelical good made manifest the divine character of his work. From the time of his first sermon at Gloucester in June 1736, after which a complaint was made to the bishop that he had driven fifteen people mad, to the last sermon at Newbury, New England, in September 1770, evidences were multiplied ten-thousand-fold that George Whitefield, the erstwhile tapster, was a chosen vessel unto Christ to bear His Name before the Gentiles.

C. H. Spurgeon, in one of his sermons, himself claims that no man in England worked harder than he. In his own generation the same claim might have been made for George Whitefield. He and John Wesley were the hardest-worked men of the eighteenth century. The Journal of the latter is sufficient proof in the one case. The correspondence and ministerial record of the former is equally convincing. In a letter to a friend, dated 27th January 1739, Whitefield writes:

I sleep but little, very little. Had I a thousand hands I could employ them all. I scarce know what it is to have an idle moment. . . . Mr. Howel Harris and I are correspondents, blessed be God! May I follow him, as he does Jesus Christ. How he outstrips me! Fye upon me, fye upon me.

Howel Harris was one of Whitefield's earliest evangelical friends and collaborators, and it was through his instrumentality that Whitefield was introduced to Wales. It was not a far cry from Gloucester, his birth-place, and Bristol, an early Methodist centre, to Glamorganshire and Breconshire, and his preaching

career had not long started before he showed a particular interest in the Welsh revival with which the names of Howel Harris, Daniel Rowlands, and William Williams (Pantecelyn) are imperishably connected. It needs to be emphasised that Whitefield was not responsible for the Welsh awakening. It was a spontaneous movement, under God, as startling in its origins and as fruitful in its results as was the Methodist movement in England. Clearly enough it was a mighty movement of the Spirit of God, strangely and yet not strangely similar to the contemporary movement across the border. Movements by one and the selfsame Spirit, commenced simultaneously in countries but a few leagues apart, may be expected to show very similar characteristics.

Whitefield's special interest in Wales and its evangelisation is manifest even before his ordination by Bishop Benson of Gloucester in 1736. A year earlier he had written to John Wesley, his former Oxford friend, from Gloucester, telling him that he trusted God had opened a door for him to preach the Gospel at Swansea. It is impossible now to tell the precise providential circumstances which inspired such a hope. Nor was it quenched by exhausting labours in England and America. It was shortly after his return from his first visit to America, in December 1738, that he sent to Howel Harris a warmhearted letter, encouraging him to continue in his work of preaching the Gospel in South Wales—Harris preached thirty or forty times a week—and expressing a desire for an exchange of spiritual confidences. Three weeks later Harris responded with equal warmth, informing Whitefield that he had read his published Diary with delight, and giving him news of the Gospel's progress in several Welsh counties. Thereafter Whitefield seized the first opportunity to visit Wales. By this time he had become a field preacher, and as the work in Wales, virtually from its commencement, bore this same characteristic, it was of the greatest interest to the enthusiastic young evangelist.

This first visit to Wales proved to be very important for the future development of the Methodist movement in Wales, and for the career of Harris himself. It occupied four days of March 1739. Whitefield had been in Bristol. With William Seward, who was killed the following year while assisting Howel Harris in preaching, he crossed the Severn by ferry from New Passage—the two men sang hymns during the crossing—and

reached Cardiff, where he preached in the Town Hall to about four hundred hearers. Among them was Harris, and at this point there commenced a singularly happy friendship, based upon complete agreement in doctrine and Christian experience, which was only terminated by the death of Whitefield thirty-one years later. In a *Life of Howel Harris* it is recorded that the first question Whitefield asked Harris was, "Do you know that your sins are forgiven?" "The question rather surprised me," says Harris, "having never heard it asked before." "A divine and strong sympathy seemed to be between us," wrote Whitefield in his Journal, "and I was resolved to promote his interest with all my might. Accordingly, we took an account of the several Societies, and agreed on such measures as seemed most conducive to promote the common interest of our Lord. . . . After much comfortable and encouraging discourse with each other, we knelt down and prayed . . . This done, we ate a little supper, and then, after singing a hymn, we went to bed, praising and blessing God for bringing us face to face. I doubt not but Satan envied our happiness." Such was early Methodist fellowship!

The day following, preaching was resumed, notwithstanding the commotion created by scoffers who trailed a dead fox and made pretence of hunting it round the building where the preaching was going on. The next day Newport was visited and a thousand people, some from as far as Pontypool, gathered to hear the Gospel. It specially rejoiced the preachers' hearts that great numbers of those present were not merely hearers, but also doers of the Word. Whitefield was much impressed by the preaching of Harris. It may indeed be claimed that it was the fearlessness of the Welshman in preaching the Word and rebuking sin that inspired the English evangelist to endure, and even welcome, the perils of field preaching.

At the beginning of April Whitefield was back in Wales, and again large numbers attended his ministry. He met Howel Harris at Usk and preached to a large company from a table set under a large tree. Setting out to Pontypool, he was accompanied by a company of about forty people on horseback, and again when he left Pontypool for Abergavenny and Comin-hoy. In his Diary he compares himself to Joshua "going from city to city and subduing the devoted nations". During this tour he was confirmed in the belief that open-air preaching was acceptable to God. He writes in his Journal under the date 4th

April 1738: "I always find that I have most power when I speak in the open air, a proof this to me that God is pleased with this way of preaching." Welshmen, too, impressed him favourably. He found them less bigoted than Englishmen, and through the ministrations of Harris and others he found a people "prepared for the Lord". This second Welsh tour included visits to Caerleon, Trelegg, and Chepstow, and ended at Gloucester. It had lasted less than a week.

Whitefield felt so strongly attracted to Harris that he invited him to accompany him to London. The visit lasted for about six weeks (25th April—2nd June 1739) and gave Harris his first introduction to English Methodism. He was also introduced to Lady Huntingdon and to John and Charles Wesley, with all of whom he maintained friendly relations. The visit had important results for the work in Wales. It led to the strengthening of the ties between English and Welsh Methodism, and incidentally it led to the creation of a firm friendship between Harris and several leading Moravians, including Count Zinzendorf, Peter Bohler, Benjamin la Trobe, John Nyberg, and John Gambold. The friendship remained green as long as Harris lived, and occasionally he was visited at Trefecca, his native village and evangelistic centre, by these and other Moravian representatives whose doctrines and practices he regarded with much favour.

It was to the Fetter Lane Methodist Society that Harris was particularly introduced by Whitefield, and as the time of his visit fell at a formative period in the history of that Society, he doubtless gained much insight into the strength and weakness of English Methodism, though, truth to tell, the progress of the societies already established in Wales seems to have been at least as praiseworthy as that of London gatherings, and Harris probably contributed from his large fund of practical knowledge, as much as he received from his English friends. An interesting account of his stay in the metropolis may be found in *The Trefecca Letters* by M. H. Jones (the "Davies Lecture" for 1922).

The year 1739 is remarkable in Methodist history for the commencement of the doctrinal controversy which rent Methodism asunder and separated Whitefield from the Wesleys, not entirely but for many practical purposes. Whitefield's biographers have searched carefully for the genesis of his Calvinism. Tyerman believes it to have been imbibed from a reading of the

sermons of the famous Scottish preacher, Ralph Erskine, and strengthened by the influence of the New England theologian, Jonathan Edwards. But it seems likely that, apart from these influences, there was a tendency towards Calvinistic doctrine as a result of his spiritual experiences at Gloucester and Oxford in early days. It is not possible here to enter into a detailed analysis of the situation, but it seems clear that it was not merely external influences which led to his definite doctrinal stand. It was certainly not the influence of the Countess of Huntingdon which produced Whitefield's Calvinism, for he was a Calvinist long before he knew her. It was Whitefield's Calvinism which strengthened the bond of friendship between the Countess and himself and caused her to appoint him as her principal chaplain in later years. As for Harris, the ripening friendship between him and Whitefield was matured on the same account. It seems probable that Harris, unskilled as he was in precise theology, and hampered by an education carried no further than matriculation, was brought under Whitefield's influence to give attention to systematic doctrine. The two—they were of the same age—grew in doctrinal grace together, and both emerged from their exercises as convinced, though by no means extreme, Calvinists. It happened that Harris became involved in trouble with the Monmouth magistrates shortly after his return from London. He was accused of conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace, but when the case was tried no evidence against him was produced and the bench dismissed the charge. Whitefield wrote to congratulate his friend on the successful issue of the trial and significantly added:

In about a twelvemonth I hope to make a second use of your field-pulpits. Our principles agree as face answers to face in water. Since I saw you, God has been pleased to enlighten me more in that comfortable doctrine of election, etc. At my return I hope to be more explicit than I have been. God forbid, my dear brother, that we should shun to declare the whole counsel of God! . . . What was there in you, and in me, that should move God to choose us before others? Was there any fitness foreseen in us except a fitness for damnation? I believe not. No, God chose us from eternity; He called us in time: and, I am persuaded, will keep us from falling finally, till time shall be no more. Consider the gospel in this view and it appears a consistent scheme.

The stress upon Calvinistic doctrine is again conspicuous in letters which the two leaders exchanged while Whitefield was in America. From Savannah, in February 1740, he wrote to Harris lamenting the viciousness and perversity of his own heart, and

added: "Methinks I hear you say, Glory be to free grace! All praise be given to electing love! Let all who love the Lord Jesus say Amen." Then, even more significantly, in a letter written from Boston about six months later, he wrote: "I hope your conversation was blessed to dear Mr. Wesley. O that the Lord may batter down his free-will and compel him to own His sovereignty and everlasting love!"

It may perhaps be claimed that a threefold cord bound the two men together—compatibility of temperament, similarity of outlook on practical evangelism, and doctrinal coincidence. Probably no other of Whitefield's contemporaries was so well fitted to be his Jonathan as the Welshman from Trefecca. "I know not that I differ from you in one thing," he had assured him in 1741. The knitting of heart to heart which resulted from their first meeting, as recorded in Whitefield's Journal, remained unravelled until the end.

Howel Harris, notwithstanding his fiery zeal and fierce enthusiasm, at times displays, rather unexpectedly perhaps, a desire to bring the separated leaders of English Methodism into harmony again. He had reason to think well of them all. He did not wish to accomplish a reconciliation by the sacrifice of essential doctrine, but he hoped that the Wesleys might be led to see that Arminianism was inconsistent both with Scripture and with Christian experience, and his occasional contacts with them left him half persuaded that the differences in doctrine between them and Whitefield had been exaggerated. He made the matter of their estrangement a special subject of prayer. Thereafter he reported to Whitefield, then on a Gospel tour in Scotland, that he had had conversation with John Wesley. He wrote thus, "I opened my heart to him and told him how the Lord taught me every truth—that I had no free will until six years and a half ago. [Presumably Harris means that his will was in bondage until his conversion, which made his will free from the law of sin and death.] He allowed everything and said that we, through grace, shall not fall away. I saw room to hope that the Lord would bring us together in the truth. As to free-will he utterly denied it. He does not really mean what he says. . . . Brother Charles Wesley came to town last Saturday night and we providentially met. He owned he had no freewill until four years ago—that it was God who chose him first, and not he God, and that he is kept faithful by the faithfulness of God. He spoke

tenderly of you and seemed to be quite loving and teachable." At a later date Harris wrote: "I found, on talking together deliberately, calmly, and lovingly, that the doctrinal difference between them was not so great as it seemed to be and that they [i.e. the Wesleys] entirely agreed in the essential point of building the soul wholly on Christ, and giving God in Christ all the glory of salvation. But the time of uniting is not yet come." Such were Harris's attempts to bridge the doctrinal gulf between his friends.

It was to Wales that Whitefield turned in 1741, at the age of twenty-seven, to find a wife. In the previous year, whilst in America, he had, without falling in love, felt that his work would be furthered by a suitable partner in life, one who might assist particularly in the control of the Orphanage which he had opened near Savannah, in Georgia (Harris had contributed a guinea to the cost of this). Accordingly, he made proposals of marriage to Elizabeth Delamotte, the daughter of a Middlesex magistrate. Apparently she was disinclined to yield to his entreaties, and when he received word through a friend that she was, spiritually speaking, in a "seeking state only", and not "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost", he seems to have repented of his intentions. In any case, it is evident from his letters that affection played little, if any, part in the proposal. It is clear, too, that the Delamotte family, as well as Miss Elizabeth herself, did not favour the project and the scarcely-disappointed suitor turned his thoughts elsewhere. Wales, in fact, supplied a lady with the necessary qualifications for union with an always-on-the-move evangelist. She was Mrs. Elizabeth James (née Burnell), some ten years older than Whitefield, a widow lady of Abergavenny who possessed a reputation for "candour and humanity", and who linked soundness of faith and doctrine with a degree of practical ability above the ordinary. A letter written by her husband three years after their marriage narrates her cool self-possession and energy in a time of acute distress. They were sailing to Georgia when Britain and France were at war. A hostile ship appeared and an action seemed imminent. The preacher confesses himself "a natural coward" on the occasion but tells how his wife displayed the courage of an Amazon by preparing cartridges and giving the crew every assistance in making ready for the fray. On another occasion, during a preaching tour, when stones began to fly, the usually intrepid preacher began to fear for his life. His wife, who was standing

by his side, undauntedly pulled at his gown, saying: "George, play the man for your God." Let preachers' wives receive their due! Here, clearly, was one of no ordinary calibre. The *Trevecca Letters* further record some measure of organising ability in Mrs. James. She was a woman who helped in the preaching of Gospel, not as a prophethess, but as one who accompanied some of the minor preachers on their tours and supplied Harris with accounts of their ministry and of the Societies visited. A series of letters still preserved at Trefecca shows how, when Harris was once absent from his "diocese" of Wales, it was Mrs. James who was left in charge of the Societies and their exhorters. In her, evidently, Whitefield had discovered a woman eminently fitted for his ministerial hand. Despite statements included by William Jay in his life of Whitefield's friend, Cornelius Winter, there seems no doubt at all that the marriage was a happy one. It could scarcely lead to an even course of normal domestic felicity, for Whitefield's manner of life did not permit of the normal "intercourse at hearth or board with our beloved ones", but for almost twenty-seven years they enjoyed a fellowship broken only by the exacting preaching tours in which Mrs. Whitefield could not always take part. There was one child of the marriage, a son (apparently named John) who died at the age of four months. In a letter of tender pathos and faith (dated 9th February 1744) the sorrowing father describes the hopes he had fondly built around the child, and his disappointment when sudden death removed them. The interesting detail occurs in the letter that "the child was even born in a room which the master of the house had prepared as a prison for his wife, on account of her coming to hear me. With joy would she often look upon the bars and staples and chains, which were fixed in order to keep her in".

Possibly Whitefield returned to Wales the more frequently in view of his marriage connections. Certainly his interest in the spiritual welfare of Wales showed no diminution. Tyerman prints an important letter dated 28th December 1741, addressed by him to a company of Welsh evangelists. It shows a further stage in the development of Whitefield's influence upon Welsh Methodists. He particularly enjoined upon the evangelists monthly meetings, "if not all together, yet in little bodies, as you lie nearest to each other. I am about to settle a monthly meeting in Bristol and London, where correspondents' letters are to be read, and prayer made accordingly. If you had monthly meetings,

each exhorter or labourer might communicate his success; an abstract might be sent to England, and we, in return, would send you an abstract of our affairs. Unity would thus be promoted, love increased, and our hands strengthened". In keeping with this extension of interest, almost a year later he entered into a correspondence with the Bishop of Bangor on behalf of a Methodist exhorter who had been indicted for holding a conventicle. He urged upon the bishop the consideration that such indictments might lead Methodists to declare themselves non-conformists, which neither Whitefield nor the bishop would desire.

Clearly enough, the next obvious step was the consolidation of Methodism in Wales by a visible bond of union. In Whitefield's view the actual awakening was already in some measure over by the autumn of 1742, and the time seemed to have come, he told Harris, when the "living stones" of the revival should be built together. This would have the advantage of ending the lamentable divisions which were already threatening to disfigure the movement and make it contemptible. The definite step was taken on 5th January 1743. On that day of days the first of Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Association meetings was held at Watford (or Waterford), near Caerphilly, Glamorganshire. Four clergymen were present, including George Whitefield, who was chosen Moderator (a name apparently adopted from Scottish Presbyterianism with which Whitefield had been favourably impressed), Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho, the notable evangelist of West Wales, William Williams of Pantecelyn, famous as a hymnwriter, and John Powell. In addition, there were three lay-preachers—Howel Harris, and two other Calvinistic stalwarts, Joseph Humphreys and John Cennick. We cannot here pursue in detail the decisions reached by the seven. No doctrinal matters were debated, for in doctrine they were in complete harmony. The Welsh movement was already aggressively Calvinistic. Arminian doctrine was allowed no place. The topics dealt with concerned the organisation of the Societies and the duties to be assigned to superintendents, exhorters, and others. Harris was to be the workers' overseer. It was not until a year later that Wesley called his first Methodist conference in London. The order of events almost suggests that as Whitefield led the way (after Harris) in field preaching, so too he pointed the way in organisation. The difference between the two men seems to

have been that, whereas Whitefield's interest in organisation shortly waned, and he decided that his forte was never-ceasing evangelism, Wesley's interest in it never flagged but remained unabated until the far-off end.

A second conference at Watford three months later, when Whitefield was again present, clinched the decisions already taken. "I am chosen," he wrote, "if in England, to be always moderator . . . Dear Brother Harris, in my absence, is to be moderator. The brethren have put the Societies in Wales upon my heart." He took the opportunity to preach two notable sermons to the assembled brethren—it is easier to picture him in occupation of the field pulpit than filling the moderator's chair—and subsequently set out on another Gospel tour during which he travelled as far as Haverfordwest. Carmarthen he describes, in a letter to a friend, as "one of the greatest and most polite places in Wales". It honoured him with an audience of about eight thousand at eight o'clock in the morning on his return journey, and two days later again with ten thousand, twice in the day. The tour ended, so far as Wales was concerned, at Trefecca, where Harris lived. Whitefield's description of his reception there merits full quotation as illustrative of the enthusiasm which marked the period. He wrote:

I met a whole troop of Jesus' witnesses. At five in the evening I preached. After I had done, Howell Davies preached and prayed. About eight we opened the Association with great solemnity. Our Saviour was much with me, teaching and helping me to fill my place in a particular manner. About midnight we adjourned, but several of the brethren sat up all night and ushered in the morning with prayer and praise. About eight we met again, and were greatly delighted at the simple accounts the superintendents brought in of their respective Societies. We continued doing business till two in the afternoon, and broke up with much solemnity and holy joy. We had great union with one another. Indeed, Jesus has done great things for Wales.

The following year Whitefield paid his third visit to America and remained there until 1748. In London John Cennick was left in charge of the Tabernacle, Whitefield's preaching place, but in 1745 he informed the brethren that he felt himself called to join the Moravians. This brought Harris into greater prominence. He took Cennick's place as Whitefield's *locum tenens* and carried on the work to the best of his very considerable ability. Probably no one could have done the work better than he. It was a period of dissension, however, and, to a certain extent, of decline. "First love" was giving place, as Harris himself

tells us, "to a spirit of levity, pride, foolish jesting, unwatchfulness, and carnal rejoicing". It is interesting and instructive to notice that this "took place immediately after extensive frames and transports which many seemed to enjoy at the hearing of the Word, and singing, etc.; but the real and serious spirit that began the work was at length almost extinguished". At the same time he noticed a tendency in the ministry to please men and to "appear wise and popular in the world". Against this state of affairs Harris strove mightily, and not without some success. Whitefield was kept informed of the progress of the work in detail and from time to time he and Mrs. Whitefield wrote letters to Harris encouraging him in his difficulties. On one occasion Whitefield addressed Harris as "My very dear, dear brother", while his wife uses the remarkable words: "My very dear Father and Friend," which more than suggests that it was through Harris's ministry that she had passed from death unto life.

It must have been a considerable comfort and help to Harris that at this time Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, attached herself to the London Tabernacle and joined regularly in its worship. A Calvinistic evangelical, she had been deeply interested in Whitefield's career since 1739, but refrained from active co-operation with him until his return from America in the summer of 1748. Meanwhile she proved herself extremely well disposed to Harris. She attended his ministry when in London, and shortly before Whitefield was due to return, decided that she would like to see for herself the state of the work in Wales. Proceeding to Bristol with her daughters, and accompanied by Lady Anne and Lady Frances Hastings, she was met there by Howel Harris, Daniel Rowlands, Griffith Jones, of Circulating School fame, and Howell Davies, another prominent Methodist clergyman. A tour of South Wales followed. The actual itinerary is not now to be traced, but *The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*—a mine of valuable information on religion in this period—informs us that the cavalcade appears to have travelled slowly, taking short stages each day. For fifteen days successively two of the ministers who accompanied the Countess preached in some town or village through which they passed, and large areas of the Welsh countryside thereby became conversant with the Gospel. The tour seems to have included Cardiganshire, possibly to include in its scope Daniel Rowlands' village of Llangeitho. It ended at Trefecca where a large Methodist

company assembled. Preaching took place four or five times daily to immense crowds. A sermon which deserves special mention was preached on this occasion by Griffith Jones of Llanddowror, on "What shall I cry?", and it is recorded that "it was accompanied by an extraordinary manifestation of the grace and power of God over the assembled multitude so that many were deeply convinced of their misery and guilt and cried aloud in the most awful manner". Twenty years later the Countess of Huntingdon made Trefecca her chief residence and scene of action.

The influence of the Countess proved valuable to Methodists in North-east Wales shortly after this. Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of Wynnstay, Denbighshire, had taken it upon himself as a magistrate to fine Methodists for assembling together, as he claimed, unlawfully. The fines imposed ranged from 5s. to £20. Harris was informed of this during a tour he made of North Wales in the autumn of 1748, and he passed on the news to George Whitefield. He in turn informed the Countess, who laid the matter before the appropriate Government Department, with the result that the persecuting baronet, to his intense chagrin, was required to return to the sufferers the fines he had imposed upon them. His sudden death while hunting in the following year robbed him of the sweets of revenge upon the Methodists, which he had promised himself. The Methodists on their part saw in his unexpected death (he fell from his horse) a clear "act of God", irreversible by any earthly court.

A decided change came over the affairs of the Calvinistic Methodists about this time. Whitefield, already beginning to feel the physical and nervous strains and stresses of his amazing career, seems to have reached the conclusion that it was impossible for him to share in the work of organising the Societies and at the same time to carry on the work of an evangelist. Both works were dear to his heart, but the choice was imperative. "I intend," he told a friend, "to keep myself free from Societies." It was arranged, therefore, that Harris should take the oversight of the Tabernacle and of the English Societies and preachers, which virtually meant that he became the recognised leader of English Calvinistic Methodists. The arrangement, however, did not long endure. Disputes between Welsh Methodist leaders, in which Harris was himself deeply involved, led to his return to Wales. From 1751 until 1763 Welsh Methodists were

in two camps, and Harris resigned his public work. He established a remarkable Methodist community at Trefecca, and ministered there semi-privately until his death in 1773, three years after Whitefield.

Whitefield returned to Wales from time to time after the arrangement of 1749. In May of that year he reached his wife's house at Abergavenny and enjoyed a rare season of "sweet, very sweet retirement, so sweet that I should be glad never to be heard of again. But this must not be. A necessity is laid upon me; and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel of Christ". Three years later he was back again, not this time for rest, but for a tour of three hundred miles which occupied a fortnight and included twenty sermons. Again, the following year, during a tour of Cheshire, an area he rarely touched, he crossed the Welsh border to preach at Wrexham, a visit which he records as alarming the town. "Some of the baser sort," he wrote, "made a great noise, and threw stones, but none touched me, and, I trust, our Lord got Himself the victory." Another tour of South Wales in 1758 was remarkably successful. By this time, however, the preacher's health was sadly impaired. His letters record his inability to sit up in company all the time, yet he was "strengthened to travel without food, and to preach to thousands every day. The great congregation at Haverfordwest", runs a letter, "consisted of near fifteen thousand". At this time he travelled by open one-horse chaise, not on horseback, but Welsh roads all but demolished it. A friend thereupon presented him with a closed chaise which pleased him much. Wales was again visited in the summer of 1760, and then, following upon a sixth visit to America, in 1767. From Haverfordwest, on Sunday, 31st May 1767, he wrote as follows:

I am just come from my field-throne. Thousands and thousands attended by eight in the morning. Life and light seemed to fly all around. On Tuesday, God willing, I am to preach at Woodstock (Pembrokeshire); on Friday, at Pembroke; here again next Sunday; and then for England. Rooms are not so lofty or large, prospects not so pleasant, bedsteads not so easy, in these parts, as in some places in or near London. . . . Who knows but preaching may be our grand catholicon again? This is the good, Methodistical, thirty-year-old medicine.

Probably Whitefield's last visit to Wales was in connection with a project for the opening of a ministerial college at Trefecca, supported, and indeed pioneered, by the Countess of Huntingdon. The Countess had been building chapels in sundry places in

England and then became impressed with the need for the training of ministerial recruits, both Welsh and English. A building which belonged to Howel Harris and situated near the abode of his family, was rented to her. By August 1768 all was in readiness for the opening ceremony, and Whitefield, by invitation of the Countess, arrived, though experiencing much physical weakness, to preach the inaugural discourse. He took as text, "In all places where I record my Name I will come unto thee and bless thee", and on the following day addressed the students from "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord". Ere he returned to London he preached again to a very large congregation gathered in the court before the college, from the words: "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

So far as records show, Whitefield never returned to Wales. He made a preaching tour in the region of Bath in the following spring, but later in that year he left for America, where he died on 30th September 1770. His links with Wales had been extremely pleasant to himself, and immensely beneficial to the cause of the Gospel. In Harris he had found his most congenial friend and helper. In the southern Welsh counties he had preached to audiences even more receptive of his message than audiences across the border. Wales may well regard George Whitefield as, next to her native evangelists, the Englishman who has done most to promote her spiritual good.

S. M. HOUGHTON.

*Rhyl.*