

Copyright © 2018 Joseph Michael Delph

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S PREACHING:
AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Joseph Michael Delph
May 2018

APPROVAL SHEET

GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S PREACHING:
AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Joseph Michael Delph

Read and Approved by:

Adam W. Greenway (Chair)

Timothy K. Beougher

James Parker III

Date _____

To Amber,
the one that is a persistent encourager in gospel living,
My most treasured gift,
And to
Hayley, Cooper, and Layna
Our spectacular blessings from God

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Background.....	3
Personal Interest.....	4
Methodology.....	8
Research Methodology.....	8
Definitions.....	9
Limitations.....	12
Outline of the Dissertation.....	12
2. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WHITEFIELD.....	15
General Biography.....	16
Influences and Culture.....	20
Becoming a believer.....	22
Growing into Ministry Calling.....	27
Influence of Charles and John Wesley.....	27
Influence of the Church and Friends.....	29
Early Preaching Ministry.....	33
Preaching in Great Britain.....	42
Impact on Christian Culture.....	45

Chapter	Page
3. THE ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD	48
Time Period and Background of The Enlightenment	50
Influence of John Locke	53
Influence of Isaac Newton	56
Influence of David Hume	57
Influence of Rene Descartes	59
Influence of Immanuel Kant.....	65
Cultural Movement Related to Truth	69
Individual-driven	70
Experience-Based	71
Problems with the Enlightenment.....	72
Awakenings.....	74
First Great Awakening.....	75
Influence of John Wesley	76
Influence of Jonathan Edwards.....	83
New Beginnings in America	89
Freedom-orientation Toward Philosophy	89
Call to Return to Biblical Truth.....	91
4. THE APOLOGETIC OF WHITEFIELD	94
Types of Apologetics	95
The Roots of the Church of England	98
Brief History of the Theology of the Church of England.....	99
Early Colonial Life	106
Calvinistic Theology.....	109

Chapter	Page
Presuppositional Apologetic Approach	115
Approach of Cornelius Van Til	119
Similarities to Approach of Whitefield.....	125
Cultural Changes	126
Enlightenment Difficulties.....	127
Presuppositional Apologetic Answers.....	130
5. CHALLENGING THE ENLIGHTENMENT IN WHITEFIELD’S SERMONS	131
Textual Style of Sermons	131
Notable Sermons Used to Engage Culture.....	132
Original Sin	132
Presuppositions	148
New Birth.....	155
Salvation	166
Truth	177
Reason.....	180
Conclusion	191
6. CONCLUSION	193
Summary of Analysis.....	193
Implications of Analysis	195
Insights for the Contemporary Church.....	197
Writing Evangelistically and Apologetically for Pastors.....	198
Evangelistic and Apologetic Sermons for Pastors	200
APPENDIX.....	202

	Page
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	218

PREFACE

This dissertation would not have been possible without the invaluable help and support of the following individuals. Professor Adam Greenway, Chair of my doctoral committee, has given significant insight toward the topic in connecting two disciplines of study, apologetics and evangelism. Professor Tim Beougher has provided the historical precision necessary to achieve accuracy. Professor James Parker's witty wisdom has also left an indelible mark in the area of apologetics and philosophy. Professor Bill Henard has helped significantly with the writing process in clarity and form.

The staff and members of Porter Memorial Baptist Church have also been an incredible source of encouragement. Sitting under the leadership of great men of God has marked my life with grace and love. There are also many members and volunteers that have shared their lives with my family during this time-consuming process. Your love for my family has touched our hearts deeply, and we can never thank you enough.

My parents have also been a constant source of motivation. There have been countless times in my life when they have been there for me. That has not changed no matter my age. My parents-in-law have also shown our family support and love in so many ways. For these things and so many more, we are so grateful. We love you all!

The seemingly inexhaustible patience of my wife, Amber, must be mentioned. She has supported me, challenged me, become patient with the process, and sacrificed much for this accomplishment to be realized. In our family, my wife is a solid rock in our family who blesses many others even with a hectic schedule. There is no adequate space in several books to describe how much she means to all of us. For that, and so much more, she will always hold my affections and admiration.

Last, and surely most necessarily, I am grateful for the finished work of Christ in the unfinished me. Jesus Christ, my Savior, has directed this incredible journey of my life. His amazing presence has guided me, instructed me, and shown me greater wisdom for living as a follower of Christ. My consistent prayer is that I glorify His name in all things.

Joseph Michael Delph

Lexington, Kentucky

May 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

George Whitefield is known as one of the most influential Christian leaders of the First Great Awakening on two continents. Mostly known for his preaching ability and large crowds that gathered outdoors to hear his sermons, Whitefield proclaimed the gospel to all who would listen despite significant efforts to quiet his voice. While the eighteenth century encapsulated great amounts of cultural change for both Europe and North America, Whitefield found himself at the center of the movement. In the introduction of *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father*, Thomas Kidd wrote, "By 1740 he (Whitefield) had become the most famous man in America. . . . Whitefield was probably the most famous man in Britain, too, or at least the most famous aside from King George II."¹ A statement such as this one lends to further inquiry as to how a man with such humble beginnings could rise to such fame on two continents. Fame, in this case, described Whitefield due to his ministry to all people wherever he went.

From a historical perspective, Whitefield has made an impression upon those desiring to learn about evangelism primarily. Thousands of people attended his outdoor services, which was an innovation of the time, resulting in mass conversions. While Whitefield cannot take sole credit for this type of movement, there were others that contributed significantly in evangelism during this time. Notable figures like John

¹Thomas Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 1-2.

Wesley, Charles Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and others have been highlighted within this research to illustrate their impact on evangelism.

Culturally, Whitefield has been known as a *Pedlar in Divinity*² as well as a *Divine Dramatist*³ by those who seemingly were in disbelief of how and why such large crowds of people gathered to hear him speak. In order for culture to move with such nimble efforts, there must have been a catalyst to move people in such dynamic patterns on two rapidly changing continents. For this reason, the personal philosophy and ministry of Whitefield is worthy of examination as well as his efforts in forging a new spirit of freedom in Christ.

Statement of the Problem

While few historians deny that Whitefield's renown as an evangelist, there is some room to consider how he engaged with the trending culture of the Enlightenment.⁴ Most works regarding Whitefield focus on his evangelistic ministry and not his philosophy or cultural confrontation. When the culture surrounding Whitefield began to ask deeper questions concerning truth, the masses turned away from Scripture and the church in search of a more tangible means of knowing truth. The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the work of one individual who made a contribution in combating the Enlightenment.

The present research attempts to answer one central thesis question: what were the contributions of George Whitefield's ministry that challenged Enlightenment

²Frank Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity: George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1770* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

³Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

⁴For the purposes of this dissertation, the term "Enlightenment," unless otherwise noted, will refer only to the cultural movement where science and rationalism were considered to be the ideal pursuits and representations of truth. The culture of this particular time period was trending toward a distrust of the church, clergy, and Christianity in the area of truth and proclamation of the truth.

thinking? In attempting to answer this one question, this dissertation examines four secondary questions:

1. What is the relationship between the evangelistic preaching and writing of George Whitefield and the rise of the Enlightenment as America gained independence from England?
2. What were the effects of Whitefield's preaching in Eastern European/American culture?
3. To what extent should these findings influence cultural engagement with the gospel today?
4. What changes took place within Enlightenment rationalism that make sharing the gospel more difficult?

From the preliminary story of the life and ministry of George Whitefield, I recognized that a deeper analysis of the personal philosophy of Whitefield's theology and methodology has shown a strategy in engaging Enlightenment thought as it rose in popularity. Specifically, research and analysis revealed that his unorthodox preaching venues, relentless pace, distance covered, and personal writings provided ample evidence of his desire to point others back to God rather than reason as the only way to seek truth.

Background

The study of George Whitefield has some difficulties. The first is lapse in time from his public ministry to present day. Though some things are lost in that time period, there are many things to discover regarding his life and ministry. Finding authentic representations of his work is possible, but many gaps exist. Fortunately, studies in the eighteenth-century culture of America and Europe can provide clarity. His ministry was known for evangelistic zeal that drew large crowds that could not be held at any indoor venue. Spanning two continents in an era when travel was slow and cumbersome, Whitefield took great care in noting his emotional and physical states. Spiritually, he understood the mission and call to share the gospel with all people.

The fact that historians do not usually associate his ministry with philosophy or apologetics presents a second challenge in the study of Whitefield. While he is widely known for evangelistic preaching, he had an underlying philosophy deeply rooted in Scripture that allowed him to argue apologetically for strong faith in God through his sermons and journals. I have examined his works carefully in order to prove such. Historians may now view Whitefield as more than just a mere preacher as a result of this research.

A third challenge in the study of Whitefield is that no scholarly work has been done regarding his theology in relation to his apologetic. I have not discovered any scholarly work in this area regarding a foreshadowing of what became presuppositional apologetics.⁵ This branch of apologetics, or what is possibly a foreshadowing of it, is historically found within the Church of England ideology, but none that I have found have connected these two with the life and work of Whitefield. This dissertation demonstrates that these two aspects of his ministry work together within his preaching and writing in view of challenging the culture to move back toward God rather than relying on personal experience to determine truth for living.

Personal Interest

My personal interest in Whitefield developed out of my studies in a Master's program. Further exposure to his work through a doctoral seminar only fueled increased study and interest in his life and ministry. The way in which his evangelistic passion and

⁵Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr, *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 221. As defined by Boa and Bowman, presuppositional apologetics emphasizes the presentation of Christianity as revealed—as based on the authoritative revelation of God in Scripture and in Jesus Christ. Its most common forms find absolute and certain proof of Christianity in the absolute and certain character of the knowledge that God has and that he has revealed to humanity. Whitefield's apologetic will be compared to this particular apologetic as a foreshadowing of sorts in presuppositional thought with regard to the Enlightenment period that exalted reason above traditionally held presuppositions of that time. The chief problem with the Enlightenment thought is the incapability of accounting for rationality and morality. I will argue that Whitefield found answers for both in Scripture and sought to share the Gospel so others could find the things that the Enlightenment period attempted to erase: the grace of God, salvation, original sin, and ultimately Christ.

apologetic pushed against the culture have driven my thoughts in learning more about him, his time period, and the work of God in awakening such a vast amount of people on two continents.

Personal experience. My initial exposure to George Whitefield came in a Baptist History course in a Master's program. I found the story around Whitefield's work to be intriguing. Our nation had been moving toward independence during a tumultuous time. Politically, democracy and republic were the goals in moving from English rule. A church that was free from the control of a corrupt state government was also taking shape. Whitefield, among other leaders, sought to grow the Kingdom of God in number both at home in Europe and in the new world. Upon first glance, Whitefield was a small part of a bigger movement. That thought began to change with further study.

While I was in an American evangelism doctoral seminar entitled Methods and Influence of American Evangelists, Whitefield surfaced once again during our studies. Timothy K. Beougher gave all students the opportunity to write a paper on a specific evangelist that had impacted America. Having some familiarity with Whitefield, I asked to write about his efforts in evangelism. The subject matter was intriguing in many ways. The cultural climate of both Europe and early America was changing dramatically with the Enlightenment and the First Great Awakening. Whitefield's role in the scope of this change is undeniable in the political climate as religion shifted the focus of finding truth from reason alone back toward the revelation of God. Thousands of people attended outdoor preaching events where Whitefield proclaimed the gospel as a means of salvation, purpose, and direction for a life of service to God. Freedom of the press allowed his messages to be captured and reproduced for the masses. He also had prestigious people around him that aided in many ways. Benjamin Franklin helped him print mass quantities of sermons and journals as well as other pamphlets that challenged

people to think deeper about God. John and Charles Wesley were both influential to Whitefield for spiritual development as well as coming to America to share the gospel.

Academic exposure. My first research paper on George Whitefield, as noted above, covered a biographical sketch of his life and ministry. The challenge presented by the paper only left me craving more answers to the impact of his work. The primary sources used for this paper were his journal and two volumes of his sermons. The exposure to his life and work allowed me to dig deeper into his heart for ministry. Whitefield grew up during a time when self-indulgence became normal. After self-indulgence no longer satisfied and his own discipline failed him, Whitefield met Charles Wesley whom he considered a spiritual father. An invitation was given to Whitefield to join the Holy Club at Oxford, known as the Methodists later, with Charles, John (brother of Charles) and others seeking devout, methodical lives of service and ministry for God. He continued to further his education and position with the Church of England in order to minister much in the same way to others. As I dug deeper into his life, Whitefield seemingly cared little for himself as he cared deeply for those that did not know Jesus as Savior. His messages were always concise while delivering the truth of the Word of God so people in the crowd could grasp it easily. Whitefield was truly broken over his personal sin and the sin of other people. He wanted others to know the peace of God in salvation and direction for a lifetime of service to Him.

Personal affinity. From my initial exposure to George Whitefield's work, I found his thoughts and heart for others to know Jesus were similar to my personal experience in ministry. Whitefield desired all people in all lands to know the Lord. His methods were also revolutionary for their time in that the movement of God would not be contained by rules and traditions that were adopted by men of that time. I too share this

thought with him in that God is bigger than implied traditions, and He will use faithful servants to go to all areas to share His story.

My personal salvation experience was from an event that went against the traditional understandings of how someone comes to Christ. By God's grace, I saw a flyer at a convenient store at the end of my street. The flyer advertised a 3-on-3 basketball tournament at a church about one mile away. At that time, my life revolved around sports. I decided to go with two of my friends to compete. We advanced to the championship round with little effort. Just before the game, the Youth Pastor shared his account of how he came to Christ as a top-rated football player. His career ended his senior year in high school with a knee injury during his final game. A few weeks prior, he had received a full football scholarship offer to attend the University of Tennessee. Now that scholarship and his future dreams seemed to vanish. He noted that the impact of the injury was severe, but it was his Pastor that helped him see that life was not all about sports. The night of the injury, he asked Jesus to save him. After hearing his story, I knew that God was calling me to be saved. I confidently asked him afterward if we could talk more about Jesus. He graciously accommodated my request, shared the gospel with me, and I accepted. From that moment, I knew that Jesus saved me. While this event was anything but traditional in the scope of youth evangelism, I knew that the Holy Spirit was working in that old gymnasium.

The brokenness in the ministry of Whitefield was equally striking. Clearly from his journal entries, Whitefield poured his heart out for people living in sin. I think all ministers carry this burden in some form. For me, the weight of sin is easily seen in my personal prayer life. I pray for lost sinners to personally know Christ as Savior. I pray for them by name as the Lord directs my steps within my responsibilities. I see the same things from Whitefield's journal as he traveled and preached the gospel.

Methodology

As much as possible, this research examined Whitefield's theology, ministry, and philosophy through a study of primary sources. Preliminary research in the personal journals and sermons of Whitefield showed promise for answering the research questions posed in this dissertation. I also sought other primary source material from Whitefield that has been discovered such as letters and other pamphlets that were helpful in meeting the goals of this research.

Research Methodology

I progressed through five major steps in conducting research for this dissertation. First, I examined the primary sources from Whitefield. I read the following sources in their entirety, *George Whitefield's Journals* and *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (both volumes).

In the second step of my research, I gathered historical information pertaining to Whitefield's context. The world was experiencing rapid change in many areas. A careful study of the historical context revealed a clearer overall picture of life during this time. Philosophy, politics, and awakenings were also studied with a concentration on the Enlightenment period.

In the third step, I surveyed secondary sources of literature produced by his contemporaries and others who have written about his life. Several historians have provided biographies that have treated the details of his life with precision. Others have sought to produce an image of Whitefield that is not consistent with the historical account. These sources were carefully sifted through to keep the research as close to the original account as possible.

In the fourth step of my research, I considered the apologetic impact of the philosophy of Whitefield's ministry. He used a particular apologetic stemming from a presupposition of the authority of the Word of God during a time when truth, from a

religious persuasion especially, had become suspect. The apologetic of Whitefield called for people to return to the truth found in the Bible rather than mere rational thought alone.

In the last step, I analyzed the life and ministry of Whitefield in light of relevant primary material, and I also analyzed the historical, philosophical, and religious ideology of his time period. My primary analysis was based on history, but this analysis was closely connected to the philosophical movements of the time period. My goal was to identify the historical/philosophical movements of the time highlighting the methodology of Whitefield in ministry to engage individuals with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I then drew a conclusion regarding the connection of his presupposition and the effectiveness of applying his practices within the contemporary church context.

Definitions

Several terms needed to be defined for the course of this research. This list of terms informed the research and guides the reader to better understandings through clear terminology.

Enlightenment. For the purposes of this dissertation, this term will be used to refer to a particular historical time period and a philosophical movement within society. There is a high likelihood that this term will require more clarification as the research progresses, but a general understanding that this time period was marked by a mindset where personal experience validated truth rather than historical traditions inherited by the church or state. The movement is also known as a European intellectual movement of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. It was heavily influenced by seventeenth century philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Newton, and its prominent exponents include Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Adam Smith.

Rationalism. For the purposes of this dissertation, this term will be used to refer to an ontological notion rather than an epistemological notion. David Naugle described rationalism as, “The belief that human reason is the final standard of truth and is more reliable than sense experience as a way to truth.”⁶ Freedom during this time was not just a state of being free to govern, but this time period was also marked by freedom of religion. Further, rationalism carried great influence during the Enlightenment as an alternative in rejecting the position of the church and state regarding the discovery of truth.

Awakening(s). For the purposes of this dissertation, this term will be used to refer to the position of being without Christ, a response to follow Christ, vitality and excitement toward faith in Christ, the pursuit of deeper faith and knowledge of Scripture,⁷ and on a large scale in number of people and geographical land covered by the movement. More specifically, The First Great Awakening will encompass a time period of intense spiritual awakening on two continents impacted by the preaching and writing ministry of Whitefield. Differing from revival, awakenings encompass a wider societal impact metaphysically to reveal the content of sin thus requiring new birth in view of the Gospel.⁸

Evangelism. For the purposes of this dissertation, this term will be used to refer to sharing the Gospel with those that do not believe. Further delineation of this thought will flow from the idea of Lordship salvation in that salvation requires belief,

⁶David K. Naugle Jr., *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 374.

⁷Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield* (n.p.: Counted Faithful, 2014), locs. 370, 461, and 648. Ebook.

⁸While there is a geographic distinction between revival and an awakening, this research will examine the Great Awakening due to its place in history and geographical coverage as an awakening both evangelistically and apologetically. See Timothy K. Beougher, notes on “Spiritual Awakenings,” Ph.D. Colloquium Summer 2015, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

commitment, trust, and obedience referring to the biblical account of this view.⁹ The International Congress on World Evangelization (1974) also provided a helpful definition that will be utilized according to the Lausanne Covenant. It reads as follows:

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church, and responsible service in the world.¹⁰

Further emphasis will also be given as to the philosophical notions within Christianity for followers of Jesus to be committed to and participate in evangelism efforts.

Worldview. For the purposes of this dissertation, this term will be used to refer to the historical account of weltanschauung referring to the contemplation of the world along with a view of life. As Naugle noted,

One's worldview, or world-and-life view, consists of one's most basic beliefs and framework of understanding. Basic beliefs can be expressed by several terms—*ideas, assumptions, convictions, presuppositions, and premises*. Directly or indirectly, basic beliefs influence every dimension of human life; they guide thought, stimulate imagination, influence intuition, direct moral choices, and determine the value and priority given to each of these faculties.¹¹

This concept will be explored as it relates to Protestant Evangelicalism in early colonial life as well as contemporary society. Other notations of this word and definition will

⁹See also Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), s.v. "Evangelism." The proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bring about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. . . . Evangelism is based on the initiative of God himself. Because God acted, believers have a message to share with others.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Naugle, *Worldview*, xi, Emphasis original.

directly reflect the Enlightenment period as well as Enlightenment rationalism as a philosophy.

Engage. For the purposes of this dissertation, this term will be used to refer to Christians being directly involved in the process of evangelism as well as apologetics in contemporary society. The time periods of the Enlightenment and current contemporary society will be analyzed with this term in mind to offer insights and explanations for why Christians should engage and how engagement happened with evangelism and apologetics within early colonial life.

Limitations

This research will be limited as to the time period in which the Enlightenment took place as well as the time period of Whitefield. Since there are very few academic works that are guided in this vein of thought, there will be limits to the literature available. The research will also be limited to ontology in the field of philosophy guided specifically to the thought process of Enlightenment rationalism in view of Christianity and presuppositional apologetics.

Outline of the Dissertation

The first chapter introduces the research question. An introduction to the dissertation, the research problem, and relevant background information are also included to describe the importance of the thesis. My own personal interests in the topic follow. This chapter also demonstrates the importance of the preaching and writing ministry of Whitefield in relation to call to return to Biblical truth versus the cultural shift of the time toward Enlightenment Rationalism. This chapter concludes by introducing George Whitefield as a significant contributor in refocusing the people of two countries back to the idea of following God in the midst of rapid change.

The second chapter surveys the biographical information of Whitefield. Details of his early life, culture of that time, influences, and how he came to know Christ are

given attention. Primary information from Whitefield was relied upon heavily along with several biographical sources in order to provide a clear understanding of his life moving toward the beginning of his ministry. This chapter also includes the influence of John and Charles Wesley and information regarding his early preaching ministry in the Church of England. Finally, this chapter concludes with details describing the impact of his early preaching on the Christian culture of the time.

The third chapter overviews the Enlightenment period chronologically and philosophically. Much of this chapter is dedicated to describing the cultural movement related to the nature and foundation of truth. Philosophers of that time period such as Immanuel Kant, David Hume, John Locke, and Rene Descartes are highlighted for their specific contributions to the Enlightenment movement. Since Awakenings are both within this time period and also a separate delineation of thought, critical information and influences are included regarding a call to return to God as a foundation of truth. This chapter concludes with a survey of the new beginnings in America as freedom became increasingly important philosophically and theologically.

The fourth chapter examines the apologetic of Whitefield. Historical roots of the Church of England introduced Calvinistic Theology in relation to his presuppositional approach to defending and sharing the Christian faith. A major future proponent of a similar presuppositional approach, Cornelius Van Til, is also highlighted in reference to presuppositional apologetics. Further similarities between Whitefield and Van Til are overviewed to illustrate the importance of the presupposition of the authority of the Word of God during the Enlightenment period. Finally, the cultural challenges of presuppositional apologetics are examined in view of the Enlightenment. Answers to the presuppositions from this time period are explored from the perspective of Christianity.

The fifth chapter delves deeper into primary source material. Whitefield's sermons are examined to show how his presupposition and apologetic functioned within his preaching. A description of his preaching style is important in light of his audience.

Relevant sermons are included to reveal his heart for lost or disconnected people. This study also revealed his ultimate desire for change within the culture and change within people on two continents. Ultimately, his desire is made clear that biblical truth be reclaimed by the people in relation to all life rather than pushed aside in the name of so-called freedom.

The final chapter provided my conclusion. A summary of the analysis is explained in order to view implications of this dissertation for the contemporary church. Further insights are also described and listed for ministry leaders today concerning the presuppositional thought of the authority of God's Word. Insights for pastors are detailed for writing and preaching both evangelistically as well as apologetically with this presupposition.

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WHITEFIELD

The early life of George Whitefield is filled with interesting details that shaped his life in ministry. While his life had significant challenges, the larger points of interest are within the shifts in his personal philosophy and relationship with God. Personal philosophy grew in importance as culture shifted away from corporate or governmental philosophy of sorts. This idea is evident when considering his life from start to finish. J. C. Ryle summarized Whitefield's ministry life as follows:

The facts of Whitefield's history . . . are almost entirely of one complexion. One year was just like another; and to attempt to follow him would be only going repeatedly over the same ground. From 1739 to the year of his death, 1770, a period of 31 years, his life was one uniform employment. He was eminently a man of one thing, and always about his Master's business. From Sunday mornings to Saturday nights, from 1 January to 31 December, excepting when laid aside by illness, he was almost incessantly preaching Christ and going about the world entreating men to repent and come to Christ and be saved.¹

Singularity of thought was shaped by experiences and wonder for the Almighty God. With a strict longing to obey God, Whitefield stopped at nothing in attempting to please the Lord with his behavior only to realize a revolutionary truth dating back to the Reformation. Details of how this process took place are imperative in seeking to understand his heart for the Lord and his ministry.

This chapter outlines the life of Whitefield with relevant details about his life and early ministry. These details relate to the overall picture of his life and how God guided his heart toward faithful service. Though his family was well-known in

¹J. C. Ryle, *Select Sermons of George Whitefield: With an Account of His Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958), 21-22.

Gloucester, he eventually became one of the most popular people in both Europe and America.

General Biography

The Whitefield family history provides many details regarding the person behind one of the greatest spiritual awakenings known in human history. There are many factors that shaped this family and its trajectory. First, the educational pedigree of the Whitefield family is abounding. Arnold Dallimore recalled, “Seven of the Whitefield men attended Oxford and two of the Whitefield women married Oxford men.”² This fact is indicative of a lengthy period of attendance at a great center of learning accustomed to ecclesiastical endeavors.³ Education was clearly of great importance to the Whitefield family.

Second, his family was also accustomed to holding offices of high visibility. Whitefield’s paternal grandfather, Andrew Whitefield, was known for a life of business in Bristol and public office.⁴ He retired early leading historians to believe that his children, among them Thomas father of George, lived in enjoyment of the comforts provided by wealth.⁵ Thomas continued the entrepreneurial spirit by becoming a wine merchant in Bristol.⁶ Ambition seemed to flow from Thomas as he later acquired the Bell Inn at Gloucester after marrying Elizabeth Edwards.⁷ Dallimore wrote that she was

²Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1970), 1:38.

³Ibid.

⁴Robert Philip, *The Life and Times of George Whitefield* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2007), 1.

⁵Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:40.

⁶Bruce Fish and Becky Durost Fish, *George Whitefield: Pioneering Evangelist* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Books, 2000), 12.

⁷Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:40.

“related to two prestigious families that held offices of alderman and mayor.”⁸ Her father, Richard Edwards, manufactured cutlery while maintaining the office of a burgess.⁹ Elizabeth’s family is to be considered solid middle-class citizens.¹⁰

The location of The Bell Inn is also a pivotal detail. Dallimore noted that the establishment was “the city’s largest and finest hostelry.”¹¹ Located at the heart of Gloucester, it was the center of social activity housing one of only two auditoriums for the city to engage in staged public entertainment.¹² The financial success of the Inn can be found within the records of the Church of St. Mary de Crypt. A poor tax had been levied against members of this parish. Records indicate that Thomas Whitefield’s tax payments were large denoting a lucrative time of business.¹³ Thomas and Elizabeth had six children. Their youngest son, George, was born on December 16, 1714, in Gloucester.¹⁴ Shortly into his young life, George and the family endured great hardship.

Personal calamity occurred early in George’s life, including the lose of his father when George was just two years old.¹⁵ His mother remarried six years later to Capel Longden.¹⁶ Seemingly, the union was a good decision in the beginning. Longden came from a solid family, and he was a parishioner at the same church as the Whitefield family. Unfortunately, the marriage resulted in more conflict. Longden took control of

⁸Fish and Fish, *George Whitefield*, 12.

⁹Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:40.

¹⁰Fish and Fish, *George Whitefield*, 12.

¹¹Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:43.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Fish and Fish, *George Whitefield*, 12.

¹⁴Steven J. Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2014), 5.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁶Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America’s Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 12.

the Bell Inn and destroyed the business. Elizabeth left Longden after six years of marriage.¹⁷ With a traumatic childhood and a lack of a father figure, Whitefield became more determined to become a success. A solid work ethic followed in order to provide for his mother, but there were still personal battles. In his formative years, it is clear that he had a knowledge of sin, but he still lacked a relationship with God in salvation.¹⁸

Whitefield wrote,

I can truly say I was forward from my mother's womb. I was so brutish as to hate instruction, and used purposely to shun all opportunities of receiving it. . . . Lying, filthy talking, and foolish jesting I was much addicted to, [even when very young]. Sometimes I used to curse if not swear. Stealing from my mother I thought no theft at all, and used to make no scruple to taking money out of her pocket before she was up. . . . Numbers of Sabbaths have I broken, and generally used to behave myself very irreverently in God's sanctuary.¹⁹

Knowledge of sin and shortcomings was simple for Whitefield to see, but the weight of sin in view of eternity bore the reality of a life without God. He continued,

If the Almighty had not prevented me by His grace, and wrought most powerfully upon my soul, quickening me by His free Spirit when dead in trespasses and sins, I had now either been sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death, or condemned, as the due reward of my crimes, to be for ever lifting up my eyes in torments.²⁰

It is likely that his mother was aware of both the trouble and the struggle within him during this tumultuous time.

Elizabeth knew that the answer to helping George came in the form of greater opportunities than the Bell Inn provided. She felt education could open the door to those opportunities.²¹ He was enrolled in a school, Gloucester Free Grammar School, housed at St Mary de Crypt. This experience was the first that Whitefield meaningfully describes. Given that his church and school functioned out of the same building, it is logical to see

¹⁷Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 12.

¹⁸Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield*, 6.

¹⁹George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (London: Banner of Truth, 1965), 37.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 38.

²¹Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 12.

how his thoughts turned toward service within the church as he grew older. Whitefield's devotion grew stronger with his work ethic. Thomas Kidd noted that Whitefield saved money to purchase "Bishop Thomas Ken's *Manual of Prayers for the Scholars Belonging to Winchester College*, a popular devotion book that was, as Whitefield wrote, 'of great benefit to my soul.'"²² His brother read it to his mother during times of trouble.²³ Keeping Scripture close at hand and within his heart proved challenging as adolescence approached.

With the family business failing at the Bell Inn, his mother was forced to remove George from school around the age of fifteen. He then donned an apron and served as the drawer for customers of the Inn. Whitefield also entertained guests at the inn with dramatic flair and elocution.²⁴ Though his mother carefully guarded Whitefield from the worldly influences of the time, George was exposed to many kinds of sinful behavior. Whitefield also took time out of his day to slip into the Southgate Independent Chapel to hear Mr. Cole preach so he could return to work mimicking the preacher.²⁵ By the age of sixteen, Whitefield had established competency in reading the Greek New Testament along with Latin yet remained an unrepentant soul.²⁶

The struggle of the family continued as the Bell Inn fell into increasingly difficult financial hardships. Necessity mandated that Elizabeth leave the Inn operation to one of her other sons. George remained there for a short time only to leave after a

²²Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 12.

²³Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 39.

²⁴Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield*, 6.

²⁵Albert D. Belden, *George Whitefield, the Awakener: A Modern Study of the Evangelical Revival* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), 13.

²⁶Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield*, 6.

disagreement with his sister-in-law.²⁷ Whitefield then traveled to stay with another sibling, but that too was short-lived.

Whitefield made a return to Gloucester to be with his mother. After an impromptu encounter with a current Oxford student, Whitefield was persuaded to attend Oxford. Through some personal connections, Whitefield was able to secure admission into Pembroke College, Oxford University with the help of some financial support from friends after finalizing his studies at St. Mary de Crypt.²⁸

Influences and Culture

Being at the center of the cultural sphere of Gloucester, the Bell Inn became a place of entertainment. George quickly developed an interest in the theatre at a young age.²⁹ While at school in his younger years, this interest was deepened with more exposure to the craft of public speaking through plays. Though he was not the most studious, Whitefield possessed a retentive memory that continued to be valuable to his future.³⁰ Another noticeable talent emerged within Whitefield as he was exposed to other forms of learning and communication. He had a natural gift for elocution, which afforded him many opportunities to stand out. During the annual visit of the Mayor to the school, Whitefield was tasked with making a speech.³¹ Through this experience, he also developed a hunger for various parts in dramatic plays. Whitefield frequently missed school with delight in order to rehearse. Practicing for public address became more comfortable for him, but his life was going to change once again.

²⁷Edwin Noah Hardy, *George Whitefield: The Matchless Soul Winner* (New York: American Tract Society, 1938), 31.

²⁸Hardy, *George Whitefield*, 31.

²⁹Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 12.

³⁰Hardy, *George Whitefield*, 30.

³¹Belden, *George Whitefield, the Awakener*, 12.

Upon entering Pembroke College, Oxford University in 1732, Whitefield then eighteen years old, worked as a servitor to help with expenses.³² In this job, Whitefield waited on tables and quietly attended to the needs of students as assigned. This experience was a humbling for Whitefield, and it allowed him to focus attention on the needs of others.

The religious culture of the time had various options that flowed from Christianity. Deism was a view that became prominent during this time. Deism held to the idea that God created the earth and then stepped away leaving governance to humans however they saw fit.³³ As Deism moved into the seventeenth century, natural religion was the realized goal. All other religions were basically the same as long as emotion or fanatical behavior remained below the surface of outward appearance.

Enthusiasm was also a term used to describe the religious culture, but it was used more as an insult to those connected with it. Deists were staunchly opposed to any form of enthusiasm in religious affairs. Fanatical behavior was likened to madness or disillusionment. In a society in which religion was a private matter, enthusiasm was looked down upon with disdain rather than appreciation.

Quietism also found roots during this time period. In effect, quietism leaned heavily on the inactivity of humanity in a passive state while reflecting on mystic experience.³⁴ While closely related to Deism, Quietism focuses on inward reflection

³²Hardy, *George Whitefield*, 37.

³³See Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), s.v. "Deism." Deism is sometimes used loosely to define a particular viewpoint with regard to the relationship between God and the world. It would reduce God's function in creation to that of first cause only. . . . In England at the beginning of the seventeenth century this general religious attitude turned more militant, particularly in the works of John Toland, Lord Shaftesbury, Matthew Tindal, Thomas Woolston, and Anthony Collins. The ideal of these deists was a sober natural religion without many of the basic tenants of Christianity. Deists were agreed in denouncing any kind of religious intolerance because, in their opinion, all religions are basically the same. The deists were particularly opposed to any manifestation of religious fanaticism and enthusiasm.

³⁴See Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), s.v. "Quietism." In a more specific way it refers to a manifestation of Roman Catholic mysticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This movement was inspired by the teachings of Miguel de Molinos, a Spanish priest who lived in Italy and published his views in a book

rather than outward expression. Religion, as it were, was to be a private matter that was addressed only quietly in public. In this form of religion, traditional forms of worship, like the sacraments, were done in reverence, but they lost significance as they did not bring the rest or peace of the Lord as desired by practitioners.

Moralism was popular during this time. The function of moralism was to live a good life per se. Humanity can base moral principles upon what is found in the Bible, and strict adherence to them is potentially possible. A disciplined life can accomplish this to some degree, but is discipline the only thing necessary to achieve moral behavior? In between the cultural milieu was the problem that Whitefield faced in learning about salvation. He finally settled on moralism as his final philosophical stance. In moralism, he had the potential to do good, but he struggled mightily against his flesh.

Becoming a Believer

Salvation for Whitefield was initially wrought in penance for sin in a futile attempt to earn a relationship from God. According to the church culture of that time, moral behavior along with service was a reasonable way for humanity to prove piety and devotion to God in return for justified salvation in theory. Whitefield attempted devotion of this kind, but it was to no avail in achieving peace with God.

Before entering studies at Oxford, Whitefield had read of a club meeting at the university, which he desired to join.³⁵ Whitefield was given the opportunity after his first year at Oxford to become a member of this club, the Holy Club as it was known, when he met Charles Wesley. The other name given to the group was given in ridicule as the

entitled *Spiritual Guide*. According to Molinos the goal of Christian experience is the perfect rest of the soul in God. Such a condition is possible when a person abandons himself completely to God and the will is totally passive. Mental prayer rather than any external activity is the means to the state of absolute rest with God.

³⁵Hardy, *George Whitefield*, 39.

“Methodists” for their methodical way of living life in relating every experience to their Christian walk.³⁶ Salvation was still a great struggle for him.

Whitefield explored quietism and asceticism as avenues of salvation within Christianity. Relying on human means for salvation only left Whitefield physically ill due to the stress of worrying over every aspect of life. Quietism only allowed more time to dwell on the inescapable fact that he was not regenerate in the theological sense. Asceticism proved that regardless of how many sinful behaviors he was able to cease, sin still ruled over him. While not being known as an intellectual figure, Whitefield was still a product of classical learning fervently reading wholesome books and attending church twice daily to aid in keeping temptations away.³⁷ His educational approach did lead him to the idea that “he just did not believe that the mind alone could carry a person to saving faith.”³⁸ So, intellectualism fell short also.

He also attempted moralism with great dedication. Receiving the Sacraments, fasting, public worship, private worship, and prayer were practiced with extreme consistency. These practices helped with temptation, but it did little else to resolve his crisis.³⁹ During his time of struggle, Whitefield met two of the most influential people at Oxford attempting to live out their Christian faith.

While working as a servitor, he encountered brothers Charles and John Wesley.⁴⁰ Charles broke traditional rules in speaking with Whitefield, a servitor at the time, and invited him to breakfast.⁴¹ The Wesley brothers regularly met with a small

³⁶Hardy, *George Whitefield*, 40.

³⁷Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 21.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 22.

³⁹Ryle, *Select Sermons of George Whitefield*, 15.

⁴⁰Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *The Revived Puritan: The Spirituality of George Whitefield* (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2000), 24.

⁴¹Fish and Fish, *George Whitefield*, 28.

group of men as an ardent community seeking to reflect the life of Christ in their context.⁴² The club was an organized body of believers who pragmatically lived the Christian faith sharing both successes and failures together in a methodical pattern, hence the less flattering name the “Methodists,” as previously noted.⁴³ Whitefield watched as the Holy Club was “pelted with stones by a hateful crowd” on their way to worship.⁴⁴ This action did not deter Whitefield as he was asked by the Wesley brothers to join “the Holy Club.”⁴⁵ He accepted the invitation on the account that he desired spiritual companionship. Whitefield “engaged in numerous religious exercises, such as fasting, praying regularly, acting public worship, and seeking to abstain from what were deemed worldly pleasures.”⁴⁶ As the preaching of the Church of England during this time illustrated, “The distinguished doctrines of the gospel—Christ crucified, the only ground of hope for fallen man—salvation through his atoning blood—the sanctification by his eternal Spirit, are old-fashioned things now seldom heard in our churches.”⁴⁷ His personal reading at this time consisted of Puritan and Pietist devotional literature, which occupied much of his time.⁴⁸ Though Whitefield was busy with many deeds that seemed deeply spiritual and service-oriented, he found no peace with God.

Finally, Charles Wesley, being much older than Whitefield, recommended a book to him that became another catalyst in establishing his faith. *The Life of God in the*

⁴²Haykin, *The Revived Puritan*, 24.

⁴³Fish and Fish, *George Whitefield*, 29.

⁴⁴Stephen Mansfield, *Forgotten Founding Father: The Heroic Legacy of George Whitefield* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing, 2001), 48.

⁴⁵Haykin, *The Revived Puritan*, 24.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 29. See A. Skevington Wood, “The Eighteenth Century Methodist Revival Reconsidered,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 53 (July 1981): 135.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

Soul of Man by Henry Scougal devastated Whitefield's presuppositions regarding the Christian faith. Scougal described Christianity as a "Union of the soul with God, a real participation in the Divine Nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us."⁴⁹ Rather than man attempting to be morally good, it is to be Christ living within man that is good. This idea was revolutionary for Whitefield. He was challenged directly with the idea that Christ had finished all the work necessary for salvation. Whitefield learned that salvation came with belief in the work of Christ in making his followers new creations. Whitefield recorded his struggle by questioning the authors intent by saying, "That some falsely place religion in going to church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the duties of the closet, and now and then reaching out their hands to give alms to their poor neighbours . . . if this be not true religion, what is?"⁵⁰ Kidd noted, "Religious duties were meaningless, Whitefield realized, in the absence of vital communion with God."⁵¹ With his eyes now opened to the truth of Christianity that had eluded him, Whitefield recommended Scougal's work to a friend in February 1735. He wrote to Gabriel Harris regarding what he had come to know. The letter stated,

And lest you should after all imagine, (which I trust you will not) that true religion does consist in anything, besides an entire renewal of our natures into the image of God; I have sent you a book entitled, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, written by a young, but an eminent christian, which will inform you, what true religion is, and by what means you may attain it. As likewise, how wretchedly most people err in their sentiments about it, who suppose it to be nothing else (as he tells us page 30) but a mere model of outward performances; without ever considering, that all our corrupt passions must be subdued, and a complex habit of virtues, such as meekness, lowliness, faith, hope, and the love of God and man, be implanted in their room, before we can have the least title to enter into the kingdom of God.⁵²

⁴⁹Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), accessed November 5, 2017, www.ccel.org, 40.

⁵⁰Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 47.

⁵¹Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 28.

⁵²George Whitefield, "Letter V" in *Letters of George Whitefield: For the period 1734-1742* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976), 4.

Whitefield had come to know that salvation was not found within the removal of sinful activity alone. He had seen that it was the work of Christ in the heart of human lives that provided salvation. Whitefield's understanding continued to grow in a short period.

With an unquenchable desire to be saved and finding no solace in previous attempts to repress sin and cultivate devotion, Whitefield saw the illuminated truth of salvation through faith in Christ alone seven weeks after Easter in 1735 while on the campus of Oxford at age twenty.⁵³ Whitefield recalled holding Scougal's book in hand, and praying out loud, "Lord, if I am not a Christian, if I am not a real one, God, for Jesus Christ's sake, show me what Christianity is, that I may not be damned at last."⁵⁴ The desire to experience Christ was stronger than the reasoning of just doing good. Whitefield's heart had been impacted tremendously.

Whitefield described his experience as "a ray of divine light was instantaneously darted in upon my soul, and from that moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a new creature."⁵⁵ Whitefield found "salvation through faith by God's grace alone and of the centrality of union with Christ."⁵⁶ Finally, happiness and security in salvation came to Whitefield. His health was greatly affected by his tireless search, and a return trip home was the remedy chosen to nurse him to health.

At home for nine months, Whitefield continued to endure temptation in steadfast faith. He felt alone spiritually and prayed for companionship and patiently waited.⁵⁷ God answered this prayer with many friends that he was able to impart what he

⁵³Fish and Fish, *George Whitefield*, 35.

⁵⁴George Whitefield, "All Men's Place," in *Eighteen Sermons by the Late Rev. George Whitefield* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1771), 360.

⁵⁵Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 47.

⁵⁶Jared C. Hood, "'I Never Read Calvin': George Whitefield, a Calvinist Untimely Born," *Churchman* 125, no. 1 (Spring 2011):14.

⁵⁷Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 59.

had learned. They accepted the message of Christ in salvation. Together, they formed a small society which was quickly persecuted.

Upon discovering the free grace of God being more powerful than good works alone, he lost friendships. He wrote of one friend in particular that confessed he disliked Whitefield, as did the rest of his friends, due to his acceptance of justification by faith alone. This group of friends preferred “the mystic divinity” of God rather than the truth of the Word of God.⁵⁸ Situations similar to this instance gave Whitefield more motivation to help others understand the real Gospel. No longer a prisoner to works-based salvation, Whitefield returned to Oxford with greater resolve.

Growing into Ministry Calling

Whitefield entered into Oxford an attempted pious moralist only to find true significance in the free grace of God. This experience truly prepared his heart for the work of God. There were several notable influences in his life from friends and other resources, all of which were uncommon to Whitefield. Although he was more of a loner, they were welcomed humbly and held with deep respect by him.

Influence of Charles and John Wesley

Beginning with his entrance into the Holy Club, the Wesley brothers were significant to Whitefield in his true understanding of following Christ. It was noted that this club was not famous, not evangelical, not the beginning of the revival, and did not bring members the satisfaction they sought.⁵⁹ Largely due to John Wesley, he directed the group toward scholarship as Christian virtue. Method and industry were the means of rescuing other students from frivolously wasting their time with other endeavors.⁶⁰ Rigid

⁵⁸Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 62.

⁵⁹Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:71-72.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 70.

discipline and planning every hour seemed to suit Whitefield as his quest for self-mastery continued to be fueled.⁶¹ Through the scholarly influence and deep regard for discipline came the answer all members of the club sought after, or so it seemed.

From the influence of the Wesley brothers sprang further hunger and thirst for pure faith in Christ found within a book. Remembering the gift of Scougal's book, Whitefield regarded his feelings when reading the work as "like a poor man that is afraid to look into his account-books, lest he should find himself bankrupt."⁶² Charles Wesley, the youngest brother, is credited by Whitefield as being an instructor in the faith.⁶³ He was twenty-six years of age at this time, a Master of Arts, and Tutor at Christ Church.⁶⁴ Charles also introduced him to others who were growing in their faith. Through these connections, Whitefield began to join them keeping the sacraments, fasting, and a regular schedule of rest and service.⁶⁵ He desired a direct "experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified."⁶⁶ Whitefield knew all about Christ, but it was through the help of both Wesley brothers in different ways that he came to know and walk with Christ as his Savior. John Wesley, at this time, was thirty years of age, a Master of Arts, lecturer in Greek, a Fellow of Lincoln College, and an ordained priest.⁶⁷ John was a close friend in ministry. John and Whitefield later parted ways over a doctrinal dispute that left John on a more Arminian direction. Whitefield was heartbroken as the two were preachers that loved the Bible and cared deeply for one another.

⁶¹Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:70.

⁶²Whitefield, "All Men's Place," 360.

⁶³Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 47.

⁶⁴Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:69.

⁶⁵Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 47.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁷Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:69.

Influence of the Church and Friends

As his knowledge grew, aspects such as free grace continued to trouble Whitefield prior to his salvation. In reading *Contemplations on the New Testament* by Joseph Hall, the late Lord Bishop of Norwich, the cost of grace brought new understanding. John Pollock noted the reaction of Whitefield,

What unworthiness can bar us? He turned another page. Hall addresses the Saviour hanging on his Cross. ‘Thou barest our sins: thy Father saw us in thee, and would punish us in thee, thee for us.’ Dimly it began to dawn for George. His mind groped after a fact too amazing to grasp: that ‘*Thou barest our sins . . . Thou didst’t take flesh for our redemption.*’ Man’s puny efforts to redeem himself, whether by praying in a storm in Christ Church Walk or schooling his passions or dispensing charity, were incapable of doing what Jesus Christ had already done.⁶⁸

Shortly following this conviction of free grace and Whitefield’s acceptance of salvation in new birth, he met Gabriel Harris. A bookseller by vocation, Harris took Whitefield in as a house guest. Whitefield and Harris also exchanged many letters from 1734-1742 decreasing over that span. It was not long into his stay that Whitefield expressed his new understanding of the new birth.

At dinner, Whitefield began to expound between bites upon the idea of the new birth for Mrs. Harris. Pollock continued, “It was not, he explained, the reward of a long struggle but the unmerited gift of a gracious God; the life of self-discipline and devotion was the consequence and proof of new birth, never its cause.”⁶⁹ After this conversation ended without Mrs. Harris’s converting, Pollock moved the story ahead five years to find Whitefield visiting once again. Mrs. Harris begged him to explain the new birth to help her believe.⁷⁰ The New Birth was an inescapable truth of the gospel that Whitefield

⁶⁸John Pollock, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1972), 18.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

seldom went without mentioning no matter the context of his life. A future chapter will discuss the new birth in detail.

Whitefield also consulted other ministers in order to deepen his knowledge. Mr. Cole, a dissenting minister whom Whitefield mocked, revealed that the new birth was more commonly understood than Whitefield previously thought. Pollock wrote,

Indeed, by autumn he had reached a conclusion which he hardly dare admit: that dissenters like Cole and plain lay people like himself knew more about the new birth, about ‘the knowledge of God’s free grace and the necessity of being justified in His sight by *faith only*,’ than the Reverend John Wesley, who certainly would not approve his consorting with dissenters.⁷¹

Clearly, the new birth was becoming a spiritual staple within the faith development of Whitefield.

Ecclesiastically, Whitefield cared for the Church of England. Strong ties continued throughout his training, but his theological preparation provided tension between them. In *George Whitefield’s Journals*, the itinerant recorded an event involving himself, John Wesley, and two clergymen from the Church of England that illustrated this tension.

Monday, Jan. 29. . . . sat up till near one in the morning with my honored brother and fellow-labourer, John Wesley, in conference with two clergymen of the Church of England, and some other strong opposers of the doctrine of the New Birth. God enabled me, with great simplicity, to declare what He had done for my soul, which made them look upon me as a madman. . . . I am fully convinced there is a fundamental difference between us and them. They only an outward Christ, we further believe that He must be inwardly formed in our hearts also.⁷²

Dallimore then noted that Whitefield’s deep doctrinal convictions were significantly different from the majority of clergy of the Church of England.⁷³ The men of the church

⁷¹Pollock, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening*, 24.

⁷²Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 203-4.

⁷³Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:227.

were highly revered by Whitefield, but his allegiance remained with the truth.⁷⁴ Carl Chambers added, “Whitefield was clearly more concerned for the souls of the individuals who heard him than he was in doctrinal side-sweeps, unless necessary for the full and faithful teaching of his message.”⁷⁵ Another doctrinal difference existed also.

The Church of England stood at odds with free justification. Whitefield noted his thoughts in the sermon “Of Justification by Christ:”

I may add, by others also who actually are friends to the present ecclesiastical establishment, that the ministers of the Church of England preach themselves and not Christ our Lord. That they entertain their people with lectures of mere mortality, without declaring to them the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ. . . . That so by hearing us continually sounding forth the word of truth and declaring with all boldness and assurance of faith, ‘that here is no other name given under heaven, whereby they can be saved but that of Jesus Christ,’ they may be ashamed of this their same confident boasting against us. . . . That induces me to discourse a little on that that great and fundamental article of faith, namely, our being freely justified from all our sin by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.⁷⁶

Whitefield began to preach more clearly on justification by faith alone. The effort of man to reach salvation on personal merit or moral upkeep is directly challenged by Scripture. Romans 4, the most direct passage on faith and justification, rewinds back to Abraham in the Old Testament depicting justification as a direct connection to belief in God. As noted previously, the culture of the church had become deistic and morally motivated rather than belief and faith. Significant differences such as this led Whitefield to preach the truth of Scripture in a role of an evangelist. The Reformed and Reformational thought of justification by faith alone was continuing to shine through from the life experience of Whitefield and now his preaching.

⁷⁴Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:227.

⁷⁵Carl Chambers, “The Sermons of George Whitefield,” *Churchman* 126, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 83.

⁷⁶George Whitefield, “Of Justification by Christ,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 239.

Another source of theological preparation for Whitefield was the *Articles of the Church* or the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. The historical information regarding this work will be detailed in a later chapter. Much like the sermon quote above, the articles of faith also informed Whitefield's doctrine as long as it aligned with Scripture. Jared Hood noted,

Whitefield refers to the 'Articles of the Church' incessantly in his letters, journals, and sermons. It is the single most cited reference, after the Scriptures. It indicates not only the source of his theology, but implicitly the timing of his Reformed awakening, for it was immediately after his conversion that he immersed himself in the Scriptures and the Articles.⁷⁷

The Church of England embraced the articles as primary doctrinal statements regarding truths of the Christian faith. As Whitefield grew in Christ, this tool within the Church of England guided him even further.

Specifically, Article IX outlines the beliefs of the Church of England concerning original sin. The doctrine of original sin is both a presuppositional statement as well as a theological understanding in which Whitefield relied heavily upon. The article states,

Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it 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 righteous, 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.⁷⁸

Whitefield implemented this theology in his own life by grasping that original sin applied in his life first. After believing that he could not earn his way into good standing with the Lord in salvation, he began to understand the pervasiveness of sin. This aspect spurred Whitefield on in sharing the Gospel with the world as sin in the lives of others became more visible. Original sin gave rise to the solution in new birth in Christ. Clearly, this

⁷⁷Hood, "I never read Calvin," 15.

⁷⁸James T. Dennison Jr., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: 1552-1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 2:757.

evidence is seen from his personal testimony as well as his preaching efforts which will be analyzed in a future chapter.

A second article also influenced Whitefield's preparation. Justifying faith was a struggle for Whitefield until his salvation. Though the Church of England wrestled with the doctrine of justification by faith alone, Whitefield trusted in its authority from Scripture. Article XI details the justification of man stating,

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deserving: wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.⁷⁹

Coupled with his personal knowledge of his own salvation, the Scripture and the articles began to illustrate justification by faith in his own life. No amount of personal piety could ever earn salvation. He had labored in vain to earn peace with God. Justification was a part of his personal spiritual development, and this doctrine guided his preaching efforts as well.

Early Preaching Ministry

Between the timing of his exit from Oxford to his ordination, Whitefield began his walk with Christ in joyous fashion. He had already had an idea of the religious rituals that flowed from the church. The missing component of his faith had truly been revealed to him with justification by faith rather than his works. For the first time, he understood the joy of following Christ as the tenants of the Christian faith had revealed. He wrote, "Having now obtained mercy from God, and received the Spirit of Adoption in my heart, my friends were surprised to see me look and behave so cheerfully, after the many reports

⁷⁹Dennison, *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: 1552-1566*, 2:758. The *Thirty-Nine Articles* remained a staple of theological guidance for Whitefield. This work will be listed in the appendix.

they had heard concerning me.”⁸⁰ A new life was now before him, and Whitefield thoroughly enjoyed it. He continued,

My mind being now more open and enlarged, I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books, and praying over, if possible, every line and word. This proved meat indeed, and drink indeed, to my soul. I received fresh life, light, and power from above. I got more true knowledge from reading the Book of God in one month, than I could *ever* have acquired from *all* the writings of men.⁸¹

Reading the Scriptures began to bring joy that he had sought after for so long. There was also the matter of prayer that had once felt like an empty gesture. Now, prayer provided a much sweeter experience. Whitefield wrote,

Oh, what sweet communion had I daily vouchsafed with God in prayer, after my coming again to Gloucester! How often have I been carried out beyond myself when sweetly mediating in the fields! How assuredly have I felt that Christ dwelt in me and I in Him! And how did I daily walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost and was edified and refreshed in the multitude of peace!⁸²

With all this joy and newfound peace in his life, sharing it with others was only natural. As seen in this example, Whitefield began sharing the gospel soon after his salvation in his home town. He noted, “Not long after, God made me an instrumental to awaken several young persons, who soon formed themselves into a little Society, and had quickly the honor of being despised at Gloucester, as we had been before them at Oxford.”⁸³ Gathering groups of believers and forming societies was a regular method of discipling. Whitefield and the Wesley brothers used this method to further the devotion of new converts and deepen the faith of new found saints. John and Charles Wesley were more consistent in organizing societies overall. This particular society in Gloucester was a part of a historic event. Dallimore described it as, “The first Methodist Society in the permanent sense of the word, and it remained a unit of Whitefield’s work throughout his

⁸⁰Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 59.

⁸¹Ibid., 60. Emphasis original.

⁸²Ibid., 61.

⁸³Ibid., 60.

lifetime.”⁸⁴ While having less patience for the routine of church attendance, Whitefield desired for the people to experience discipline and accountability in their faith.⁸⁵ He continued trying to help as many people as possible come to a real relationship with God and not empty ritualistic service.

While continuing to minister in Gloucester, many began to notice. The Bishop, Dr. Benson, inquired about Whitefield and sent a request to meet him. Whitefield reluctantly obliged. Whitefield described the meeting,

At his coming again into the room, the bishop told me he had heard of my character, liked my behaviour at church, and enquired of my age. “Notwithstanding,” said he, “I have declared I would not ordain anyone under three-and twenty, yet I shall think it my duty to ordain you whenever you come for Holy Orders.”⁸⁶

Even though Whitefield, at twenty-one years of age, had once thought fondly of the ministry,⁸⁷ he had developed a burdensome idea of the responsibilities contained in ministry and his self-imposed insufficiency for the work.⁸⁸ After his conversation with the Bishop, he thought differently stating, “That if I held out any longer, I should fight against God.”⁸⁹ He applied for Holy Orders (Ordination) and then began a period of self-examination. With the guidance of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* and Paul’s Epistle of Timothy, he strictly inspected his heart and prepared for further questioning. The Bishop received his preparation work and was pleased.⁹⁰ The ordination was scheduled for

⁸⁴Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:83.

⁸⁵Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 39.

⁸⁶Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 66-67.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 38.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 65.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 67.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 69.

Sunday, June 20, 1736.⁹¹ At the moment of his ordination, Whitefield described what he was feeling,

When the bishop laid his hands upon my head, my heart was melted down, and I offered up my whole spirit, soul and body, to the service of God's sanctuary. I read the Gospel, at the bishop's command, with power, and afterwards sealed the good confession I had made before many witnesses, by partaking of the Holy Sacrament of our Lord's most blessed Body and Blood.⁹²

After his ordination, he began to minister immediately. Dallimore described his schedule as, "That afternoon he ministers to the prisoners and in the evening read prayers at church service. On the Monday he 'christened an infant,' on subsequent days read prayers two or three times and on Thursday performed a marriage."⁹³ He was also asked to preach at a familiar place which added emotional pressure to an already anxious young man in ministry.

Whitefield preached his first public sermon on June 27, 1736 in Gloucester at the church where he was baptized and took his first communion, St. Mary de Crypt. According to Kidd, the crowd did not receive a polite, appreciative sermon. Some left feeling as if Whitefield had gone too far, and they complained to the bishop.⁹⁴ This sermon, entitled "The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society," reflected the rhetoric of experiences at Oxford with the Methodists.⁹⁵ Whitefield preached, "Two are better than one"⁹⁶ expounding upon the idea of Christian community. This sermon will be further detailed in another chapter. Shortly following this sermon, Whitefield returned to

⁹¹Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:95.

⁹²Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 69.

⁹³Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:95-96.

⁹⁴Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 38.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 39.

⁹⁶George Whitefield, "The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 152.

Oxford intending on building the Methodist movement there.⁹⁷ He understood the disdain for the club, which did not deter him. Soon after his return, Whitefield received his bachelor's degree from Oxford and planned on pursuing an MA. This program was not rigorous as most requirements were unmonitored.⁹⁸ Whitefield found many other things to do while working toward this goal.

For Whitefield, preaching and ministering now found a new context with more free time. The timeline for the advance of his efforts moves quickly much like his hectic schedule the remainder of his life. Mark Noll noted, "Six weeks later, on August 8 (1736), Whitefield journeyed to London at the request of a friend, Thomas Broughton, for two months in a series of temporary assignments."⁹⁹ He preached at the Tower of London Chapel for Broughton during this time, and large crowds of people filled the room each Sunday.¹⁰⁰ Whitefield recalled, "I was enabled to preach with power."¹⁰¹ He added, "I continued for the space of two months, reading prayers twice a week, catechizing and preaching once, besides visiting soldiers in the infirmary and barracks daily."¹⁰² One month into his service, he received a letter from John Wesley that changed the course of ministry for him.

Both Wesleys were already in Georgia participating in mission work. Georgia, founded in 1732 as the thirteenth mainland American colony, had many desirable traits.¹⁰³ It was to be "a model Christian society at a time when some of the other colonies

⁹⁷Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 40.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 86.

¹⁰⁰Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 41.

¹⁰¹Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 77.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 41.

seemed to have lost their original, pious character.”¹⁰⁴ James Oglethorpe, the chief organizer, helped the new colony attain closer Christian virtue by excluding slavery.¹⁰⁵ There were seventy-one men set to govern Georgia from England as Trustees. Only Oglethorpe set foot in the colony to help shape its future in obedience to English rule.¹⁰⁶ He sought to found the colony “around humanitarian motivations” like outlawing slavery and “limiting the size of land grants in order to build a haven for yeomen farmers.”¹⁰⁷ Oglethorpe reached out to John Wesley to come to Georgia in order to propagate the gospel in a new country.¹⁰⁸ New directions in the new world were attractive to missionaries seeking to bring the Gospel to the people. Wesley was still struggling with his own salvation at this time, and he thought Georgia to be the fresh start he needed in understanding a pure, child-like faith.¹⁰⁹

His brother, Charles, was employed by Oglethorpe as a personal secretary. Amid some scandalous accusations of a romantic relationship between the two of them made by two unstable women, their friendship became strained.¹¹⁰ Upon realizing that coming to Georgia to be a mistake, he returned to Europe. With an agenda, Charles returned to London to secure proper passage for Whitefield to America.¹¹¹ Before the arrival of Charles, Whitefield received a letter from John Wesley about the state of ministry in Georgia. John communicated that the people needed the Gospel in the new

¹⁰⁴Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 42.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Andrew C. Lannen, “Liberty and Slavery in Colonial America: The Case of Georgia, 1732-1770,” *Historian* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 34.

¹⁰⁷Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones, eds., *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 226.

¹⁰⁸Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 41.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 43.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 87.

world. The prospects of ministry in a new place excited the English itinerant but securing the funds for travel proved to be difficult. The efforts of Charles ultimately succeeded in swaying Whitefield toward America for ministry, but the departure of Whitefield was delayed for another year due to lack of funds.¹¹²

By 1737, Whitefield became one of the most sought-after preachers in Great Britain. Writing sermons became a normal function of his work due to increasing use of the printing press for spreading his influence on a mass scale. Harry Stout, who refers to Whitefield as the “Grand Itinerant,”¹¹³ wrote, “Whitefield discovered the press at the start of his preaching career in London during the summer of 1737 as he awaited travel orders to the newly founded Georgia colony.”¹¹⁴ The strategy Whitefield continued to foster became known as the “preach and print” method. This technique was used to continually prepare hearers for the spoken word in advance before the arrival of Whitefield.¹¹⁵ Publishers struggled to keep up with the demand of the public as the phenomenon of Whitefield grew larger. Advertisements appeared for the sermons of the young preacher within the *Weekly Miscellany*, the publishing agent of the Church of England. Knowing that publishing was another avenue to continue saturating people with the message of God’s Word, Whitefield hurried to print all sermons he had before leaving for America.¹¹⁶ Whitefield later learned that the press could reach and build an audience just as well as the spoken word.¹¹⁷ The printing press gained further ground in printing

¹¹²Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 87.

¹¹³Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), xiii.

¹¹⁴Harry S. Stout, “Religion, Communications, and the Career of George Whitefield,” in *Communication and Change in American Religious History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 111.

¹¹⁵Frank Lambert, “The Great Awakening as Artifact: George Whitefield and the Construction of Intercolonial Revival, 1739-1745,” *Church History* 60, no. 2 (June 1, 1991): 234.

¹¹⁶Stout, “Religion, Communications, and the Career of George Whitefield,” 111.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 113.

newspapers for the masses to better inform all people of current events. Whitefield generated enough news to include religion as an ongoing section within newspapers.¹¹⁸ A connection with a prominent businessman, William Seward, assisted in the introduction of Whitefield to the world via newspaper advertisements as a cause.¹¹⁹ Seward, a former securities dealer, employed the same tactics and techniques used in his previous profession.¹²⁰ Personally, Seward gave over ten thousand pounds sterling toward spreading the Gospel during his partnership with Whitefield.¹²¹ Events in religion did not accomplish this level of exposure before his time.

Another connection, Benjamin Franklin, continued the publicity for Whitefield in the colonial newspapers in America by printing advertisements for Whitefield six months prior his arrival in 1738.¹²² This friendship developed further as the evolution of communication continued between Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin. Both men viewed their friendship as mutually beneficial while having varying visionary perspectives. Whitefield desired that Franklin come to know spiritual rebirth as a Christian.¹²³ Franklin, however, never accepted the message of salvation from Whitefield. Franklin knew Whitefield to be a good man.¹²⁴ In the formative years of the Great Awakening (1739-1741), Franklin published 110 titles that matched the number of printed titles seven years

¹¹⁸Stout, "Religion, Communications, and the Career of George Whitefield," 112.

¹¹⁹Frank Lambert, "'Pedlar in Divinity': George Whitefield and the Great Awakening, 1737-1745," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 3 (December 1990): 816.

¹²⁰Frank Lambert, "Subscribing for Profits and Piety: The Friendship of Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (July 1993): 531.

¹²¹*Ibid.*

¹²²*Ibid.*, 532.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 542.

¹²⁴James I. Packer, "The Spirit with the Word: The Reformational Revivalism of George Whitefield," in *Bible, the Reformation and the Church* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 176.

prior.¹²⁵ Naturally, profitability was important to both Franklin and Whitefield as time passed. Frank Lambert added, “Together they transformed Whitefield into the best-known figure in mid-eighteenth-century America by presenting him to a mass audience first as news and then as commodity.”¹²⁶ Publishing was not just a means of reproducing sermons, journals, and pamphlets as propaganda. Whitefield used publishing primarily to reach a greater audience in America.¹²⁷ Print media was only one way Whitefield influenced the new world. Preaching was by far his greatest contribution to the cause of evangelism.

In December of 1737, Whitefield finally left England for Georgia sailing as military chaplain.¹²⁸ After a brief stop at Gibraltar, he arrived in Savannah in May 1738. Along the way, Whitefield ministered in various ways between a few boats in preaching, visiting the sick, a burial, and an infant baptism.¹²⁹ Georgia was only five years old,¹³⁰ and it was here that Whitefield sought to build an orphanage. Before he could do so, he needed to return to England to secure funding.¹³¹

Upon his return to England in November 1738, Whitefield sought his priestly orders and permission to return to Georgia to establish an orphanage in Savannah.¹³²

¹²⁵Lambert, “Pedlar in Divinity,” 821.

¹²⁶Lambert, “Subscribing for Profits and Piety,” 530.

¹²⁷Lambert, “Pedlar in Divinity,” 823.

¹²⁸Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:151.

¹²⁹Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 97-152.

¹³⁰Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:201.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 208.

¹³²Marion D. Aldridge, “George Whitefield: The Necessary Interdependence of Preaching Style and Sermon Content to Effect Revival,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23, no. 1 (March 1, 1980): 56.

Many preaching opportunities were available to him by December and February.¹³³ By mid-month, Whitefield began to be denied pulpit time in many churches.¹³⁴

On February 17, 1739, his first sermon was preached outdoors in an effort to attract coal miners who did not hear the gospel in any other setting.¹³⁵ In the fields of Kingswood, Whitefield expounded on the Scripture displaying the gospel with clarity.¹³⁶ Though Howel Harris, an influential person for Whitefield, had already preached in the open air 1735,¹³⁷ the concept of taking the gospel to people in the open air for the purpose of conversion was novel. From the white tear tracks down the soot-caked cheeks of miners, Whitefield knew that the Holy Spirit was moving. Whitefield began planning the trademark method of evangelism he used throughout his time in ministry to reach more people than any church building could hold. “Open-air” preaching, preaching outdoors, or field preaching allowed more people to hear the significant message Whitefield had in awakening society.¹³⁸

Preaching in Great Britain

The necessity of field preaching was now a reality for Whitefield upon his return from his first trip to Georgia. He attempted to return to the pulpits of churches to continue preaching and sharing how to personally know Christ. Many church leaders felt Whitefield’s style of preaching only brought more problems into congregations. The Church of England had effectively shut its doors to the itinerant leaving no other option

¹³³Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 193-212.

¹³⁴Ibid., 212-15.

¹³⁵Aldridge, “George Whitefield,” 56.

¹³⁶Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield*, 12.

¹³⁷Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 37.

¹³⁸Aldridge, “George Whitefield,” 59.

than open air preaching to reach people.¹³⁹ He was then presented with a choice. Ian Maddock wrote, “If ‘pleasing God’ meant field-preaching (open air preaching), then ‘pleasing man’ meant conforming to the ecclesiastical authorities who declared both his field-preaching to be irregular and often opposed the theological content of his sermons.”¹⁴⁰ Whitefield chose God over the opinions of people. Further examination of his preaching will take place in another chapter, but Whitefield had reason for growing disagreements with the Church of England.

The ecclesiastical state of England was also in turmoil. The Church of England had begun to decline in the eighteenth century.¹⁴¹ While reasons regarding the decline are not attributed to one factor, the church was closely linked to the state government of England. Parliament, the crown of Britain, and the empire were all collectively connected to the church.¹⁴² Noll explained, “For this entire period the Church of England was the legally constituted and tax-supported established church in England and Wales, Ireland and the West Indies.”¹⁴³ The British government funneled money into the church in efforts to keep the two entities united. Just as other officials appointed official positions in government, the church also operated in this manner. Bishops were politically appointed rather than spiritually qualified for their offices.¹⁴⁴ Issues began to plague the English church as discoveries were made with regard to church membership also.

Whitefield noticed a rising controversy within the church body. Under the current system of the church, a person could be baptized as an infant, participate in the

¹³⁹Maddock, *Men of One Book*, 36.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 41.

¹⁴¹Timothy Ray McKnight, “George Whitefield’s Theology and Methodology of Evangelism” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 26.

¹⁴²Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 39.

¹⁴³Ibid., 34.

¹⁴⁴McKnight, “George Whitefield’s Theology and Methodology of Evangelism,” 56.

sacraments, attend church, and still be unregenerate. Witzig also noted, “He believed that an unconverted ministry was the root cause of dissent from the Church of England.”¹⁴⁵ Tension continued to mount as the Church of England sought to expand into colonial America while keeping the existing systems of the church in place.

Dissent developed quickly over doctrine and leadership within the English church. In 1719, a meeting was called among denominational leaders regarding how to slow the advance of Arian views concerning the traditional Trinitarian confession.¹⁴⁶ Dissenters of the established Church of England now established connections as other groups formed with more like-minded interests in gospel proclamation and living. As dissenting from the Church of England strengthened other denominations, societies were continuing to form to promote piety among members through service and reform in English culture.¹⁴⁷ Though societies such as these were forming decades before the Great Awakening began (1739), they were largely helpful in promoting the movement of reform as a whole. Societies such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) both were responsible for raising financial support and awareness for gospel proclamation. The SPG was a sending entity for the Church of England for missionaries to the British North American colonies and other establish churches.¹⁴⁸ Whitefield used societies like these to further his efforts in reaching more people.

¹⁴⁵Witzig, “The Great Anti-Awakening,” 8.

¹⁴⁶Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 43. The controversy over the Trinity among Arian views dealt primarily with the view of Jesus as fully God. Arianism regarded Jesus as more than a man but less than God. Traditional trinitarian views were opposed to Arianism even though it grew rapidly among English Presbyterians and General Baptists in this period.

¹⁴⁷McKnight, “George Whitefield’s Theology and Methodology of Evangelism,” 52.

¹⁴⁸Lambert, “The Great Awakening as Artifact,” 230.

Impact on Christian Culture

The life of a minister was dreaded by Whitefield,¹⁴⁹ yet it filled him with such excitement seeing people come alive when the Bible was preached with conviction. His efforts in preaching seemed to be refreshing compared to lifeless, emotionless, and conviction-less preaching of unconverted ministers. The demand and frequency of Whitefield's preaching began to provide answers about God and salvation for the culture. Ho Kwong noted, "From his Oxford graduation in 1736 until his death at Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1770, Whitefield preached more than eighteen-thousand sermons, an average of five hundred a year, or ten a week."¹⁵⁰ Whitefield traveled seven preaching tours through the colonies from 1738-1770. It is estimated that eighty percent of the colonial population heard him preach.¹⁵¹ J. I. Packer added, "It is estimated that during his ministry he preached to combined audiences of over ten million, and that four-fifths of American colonists, from Georgia to New Hampshire, heard him at least once—something that could be said of no other person."¹⁵² A large reason for such large numbers of people was his personal emotion in preaching and heartfelt evangelism strategy.

First, Whitefield's delivery during the sermon was new and exciting. His interjection of passion and conviction in the delivery of his sermons brought refreshing insight.¹⁵³ The church culture had grown accustomed to emotionless preaching seemingly intended to do little more than inform parishioners. Leaders of the church were often unregenerate also. This fact only furthered the passionless sermons and non-energetic

¹⁴⁹Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 2010), 21.

¹⁵⁰Ho Kwon, "The Foundations of George Whitefield's Effective Oratory" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 2.

¹⁵¹Kevin A. Miller, "Did You Know?" *Christian History* 38, no. 2 (1993): 2.

¹⁵²Packer, "The Spirit with the Word," 167-68.

¹⁵³Melton, "George Whitefield: Pulpit Innovator," 40.

church. From his first sermon, it is clear that Whitefield placed a significant amount of feeling within his delivery for a reason. He was, in fact, a redeemed soul seeking for others to be redeemed through the preaching of the Bible.

Second, Whitefield's work in ministry drew believers together rather than divided them. In a review of Jerome Dean Mahaffey's book, *Preaching Politics*, Katherine Engel noted, "Whitefield helped to unify the culturally-disconnected American colonies through rhetorical strategies that created categories of 'us' and 'them.'"¹⁵⁴ While this does not seem like much on the surface, Americans and even some subgroups of the English searched for an identity as Christians. Categories that helped believers see that they were not alone in following God only strengthened a growing culture of obedience in Christ.

Third, his commitment to major doctrinal issues in his preaching changed lives in evangelism. Salvation, as he saw it, was completely God-centered, which was very different from his previous view of good deeds and chastising bad behaviors. Hood wrote, "Incidentally, Whitefield's commitment to it (doctrine) shows that his thought is not essentially person- but God-centered (which gives some perspective to the description of the evangelist as 'pedlar of divinity'). The story of salvation is fundamentally about God, for He is the author of it."¹⁵⁵ Further examination of his doctrine within preaching and evangelism will occur in another chapter.

Finally, his urgency in spreading the gospel as quickly as possible. Even with slower methods of travel, Whitefield was able to cover ground on two continents preaching, praying, and leading others closer to Christ. Urgency was also communicated within his preaching. Mahaffey described, "He was able to make repentance the

¹⁵⁴Katherine Carté Engel, "Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation," *Journal of Church & State* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 380–81.

¹⁵⁵Jared C. Hood, "The Methodical George Whitefield: A 'Most Excellent Systematic Divine'?" *Churchman* 126, no. 4 (December 1, 2012): 312.

appropriate response by constructing an occasion which would require it, persuading his hearers that the opportune moment had arrived, calling for their immediate response.”¹⁵⁶ These major accomplishments were timely in that the culture was without a foundation for grounding ultimate truth. Enlightenment rationalism as a means of finding ultimate truth contributed to a lifeless church unknowingly holding the answers people sought after.

¹⁵⁶Jerome Dean Mahaffey, “George Whitefield’s Homiletic Art: Neo-Sophism in the Great Awakening,” *Homiletic* 31, no. 1 (June 1, 2006): 15. Whitefield concludes sermons with challenging words of conclusion based upon the text. In “Walking with God,” the English itinerant said, “For does not the text in a particular manner to those who have the honour of being styled as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God? I observed at the beginning of this discourse, that Enoch in all probability was a public person and a flaming preacher. Though he be dead, does he not yet speak to us, to quicken our zeal and make us more active in the service of our glorious and ever-blessed Master? How did Enoch preach! How did Enoch walk with God, though he lived in a wicked and adulterous generation! Let us then follow him, as he followed Jesus Christ and ere long, where he is there shall we be also.” George Whitefield, “Walking with God,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 1:81.

Another example is Whitefield’s sermon “The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society.” Whitefield expounded, “But God forbid that any such evil should befall you, that there should ever be a Judas, a traitor, amongst such distinguished followers of our common Master. No, on the contrary, the excellency of your rule, that regularity of your meetings and more especially your pious zeal in assembling in such a public and solemn manner so frequently in the year, persuade me to think that you are willing, not barely to seem but to be in reality, Christians and hope to be found at the last day what you would be esteemed now—holy, sincere disciples of a crucified Redeemer. Oh, may you always continue thus minded! And make it your daily, constant endeavor, both by precept and example, to turn all your converse with, more especially those of your own societies, into the same more blessed spirit and temper. Thus will you adorn the gospel of our Lord Christ Jesus in all things. Thus will you anticipate the happiness of a future state and by attending on and improving the communion of saints on earth, be made meet to join the communion and fellowship of the spirits of just men made perfect, of the holy angels, nay, of the ever-blessed and eternal God in heaven.” Whitefield, “The Necessity and Benefits of Religions Society,” 1:166-67.

The final example though there are others is from “The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough.” Whitefield exhorts, “May the Ancient of Days come forth upon his white horse and may all opposition fall to the ground. As we have begun to bruise the serpent’s head, we must expect he will bruise our heel. The devil will not let his kingdom fall without raging horribly. He will not suffer the ministers of Christ to go on without bringing his power to stop them. But fear not, my dear brethren. David, though a stripling, against all our spiritual enemies. Show your faith by your works. Give the world the lie (that is, show the falsity of the world’s accusations). Press forward. Do not stop, do not linger in your journey but strive for the mark set before you. Fight the good fight of faith and God will give you spiritual mercies. I hope we shall all meet at the right hand of God. Strive, strive to enter in at the strait gate, that we may be born to Abraham’s bosom, where sin and sorry shall cease. No scoffer will be there but we shall see Jesus, who died for us and not only see him but live with him forever.” Whitefield, “The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough,” 1:185.

CHAPTER 3

THE ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD

The Enlightenment period was a fascinating time for both Europe and America. Traditional propositions concerning ultimate truth were questioned or eventually refused altogether by society. Traditions and authority were collapsing rapidly.¹ With traditional viewpoints and ecclesiastical authority failing to provide adequate answers, society was systematically stripped of unifying factors that provided a sense of stability. The culture had to find something else to grasp in order to prevent cultural chaos from ensuing. Nicholas Wolterstorff wrote,

The answer that the Enlightenment gave to these anxious questions was Reason. We are to be guided by Reason. Reason is something that each of us possesses intrinsically. It is not something extrinsic to us. Thus, to follow the voice of Reason is not to submit to some new external authority. It is to follow *one's own* voice. It is to submit to the very essence of oneself. And that, of course, is not really to submit to anything. It is to be free.²

The pull away from tradition and authority felt freeing to a degree. People began to trust in their own individual sensibility rather than trusted sources from the past built for the masses. Rather than full anarchy, culture now examined truth claims with greater curiosity for authentic representations of purity and verifiable fact. Reason became the authority and eventually its own tradition. Society began to accept freedom from oppressive ideas on a larger scale with increased speed. With so many ideas raised during this time, many voices were to be heard with growing means of communication frequency.

¹Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith And Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 5. Emphasis original.

²Ibid., Emphasis original.

Another area affected by the Enlightenment was philosophy. Epistemology or, as Roger Audi described, “The theory of knowledge and justification,”³ is where the bulk of the arguments over truth began. W. Andrew Hoffercker stated,

Traditional treatments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used the singular “Enlightenment” as an inclusive term to describe philosophical and cultural developments in Europe and America. Summaries of this age emphasize the following: new epistemological methods in philosophy produced an “age of reason” in which autonomous methods of rationalism or empiricism replaced traditional alliances between philosophy and theology in the search for truth; rising confidence in Newtonian science provided powerful new perspectives on nature and the laws by which it operates; a new intellectually elite class, the *philosophes*, believed that reason mated with science could inaugurate an era of progress politically, economically, and socially; and new religions such as deism and Unitarianism challenged outmoded faiths of Protestantism and Catholicism.⁴

Challenging times such as these required clear answers. The church had significant hurdles ahead in influencing the culture back toward authenticity with God. A movement such as the Enlightenment could have been just the instance to press believers into a further reliance upon God and not reason alone.

This chapter will focus on the Enlightenment period specifically. The tentative span of time will be relevant along with many other cultural details such as shifting philosophy and theological implications. Historical figures will be very important to trace the movement of thought from the previous thought patterns from the Reformation period (the Bible being the primary authority for faith) to the Enlightenment period. Finally, Awakenings fold directly into the cultural movement of the Enlightenment period. The influence of John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards will provide key information regarding the new beginning on American soil.

³Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), xiii. Audi describes the theory of knowledge moving from perception, to belief, and finally to justification (1-4). All three are intricately woven together relying on one another in order to form epistemologically grounded ideas.

⁴W. Andrew Hoffercker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings: The Beginning of Modern Culture Wars,” in *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought*. Ed. W. Andrew Hoffercker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007), 240. Emphasis original.

Time Period and Background of the Enlightenment

The phase of the Enlightenment has several smaller occurrences that encompass the whole. Europe was the initial geographical location of the Enlightenment. Through several major contributors, the Enlightenment made several smaller movements. Rough dating for this period is late seventeenth century, dominating the eighteenth century, and much of the nineteenth century in Europe.⁵ James Byrne provided a more condensed time frame that better fits this research being from 1650-1800.⁶ With such a large span of time, it is understandable that many movements happened culturally. One of the first movements began with thought. Samuel Pearson added, “Fare more than most, this was an age of self-conscious transformation of modes of thought.”⁷ Rather than theology reigning as the supreme “science” of the time, science was now becoming equal to and even surpassing theology in determining truth for humanity. George Becker noted, “The 18th century was to witness a serious erosion in the status of theology and the divorce of science from its Christological assumptions.”⁸ All knowledge, in the form of ultimate truth, was now being encapsulated under the umbrella of reason.

The reason for such an erosion of theological understanding is contributed to first a lack of truly “Christian” overseers of the church, as was found in George Whitefield’s experience. The Church of England began a regular practice of ordaining

⁵See Norman L Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), s.v. “Enlightenment.” He describes this period has stressed both reason and independence and elicited a pronounced distrust of authority. Truth is to be obtained through reason, observation, and experiment. It came to be dominated by anisupernaturalism. Religious pluralism was the result. Out of this contest came deism, biblical criticism, and rejection of divine revelation. Natural religion was emphasized. Its more radical forms encouraged agnosticism, skepticism, and atheism. This radicalized form lives on in secular humanism.

⁶James M. Byrne, *Religion and the Enlightenment: From Descartes to Kant* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 5.

⁷Samuel C. Pearson, “Enlightenment Influence on Protestant Thought in Early National America,” *Encounter* 38, no. 3 (1977): 193.

⁸George Becker, “Pietism’s Confrontation with Enlightenment Rationalism: An Examination of the Relation between Ascetic Protestantism and Science,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 2 (June 1991): 142-43.

clergy based on a close relationship with the state. This relationship produced many clerics that were not true followers of Christ. A second reason for this erosion is attributed to, as Becker wrote,

A veritable ‘treason of clerks’ that had its origins in the ‘honest conviction that churches must, after all, move with the times’ and make concessions to modernity, science, and good taste. . . . The rational study of nature became increasingly defined as the foremost avenue to knowledge of God. For a growing number of theologians, the primary religious focus was on God the Creator, the First Cause that had set the universe in motion. Correspondingly, references to Biblical tradition — original sin, Christ, divine grace, and salvation — were relegated to secondary importance.⁹

Incidentally, the references to biblical tradition were the precise convictions on which Whitefield concentrated the most in his preaching and evangelism. The culture had changed. An overview of historical philosophy revealed how and why society shifted in this direction.

Great Britain exhibited a rise in science and rational religion transitioning toward Deism.¹⁰ Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an early figure in the movement. He felt a deep necessity for all people to study God’s Word along with science. Bacon emphasized removing idols would aid in finding a single method in which all arguments could be settled about fact or truth.¹¹ Bacon advocated a return to the inductive method of thinking utilizing the senses in response to natural thought (reason). James Livingston called it,

The age which brought together the humanistic spirit of the Renaissance and the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and thereby ushered in what we call ‘the modern world.’ It was this period of roughly a century and a half that witnessed a general change in man’s world-view of the most wide-ranging and deepest significance.¹²

⁹Becker, “Pietism’s Confrontation with Enlightenment Rationalism,” 143.

¹⁰Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings,” 242.

¹¹Ibid., 242-43.

¹²James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 1.

Bacon encouraged people to look deeper into the idea of new discoveries scientifically in order to find genuine faith rather than continue with false ideas. While his ideas seemed to be a recall to the traditional understanding of ultimate truth, Bacon began elevating the reason above traditional views of ultimate truth by the revelation of Scripture.

Later, Lord Herbert of Cherbury moved religious understanding to reason first as a priori knowledge instead of Scripture or the Holy Spirit.¹³ A priori knowledge is the knowledge of things before other knowledge or facts are applied.¹⁴ Closely related to presuppositions, this knowledge (reason) is the cornerstone of the Enlightenment movement. Lord Herbert's idea was transitional, in a sense, due to the previous trust in the authority of the church. The church was losing influence culturally primarily due to its positional alignment with the state in Europe as seen in George Whitefield's time. The alignment began to turn negative as the state leaned heavily into the church for financial profit rather than theological direction. Herbert attempted to deal specifically with skepticism in *On the Religion of the Gentiles* (posthumously published, 1663). He specified these five things:

1. There is a supreme Power (whom one may call God).
2. This sovereign power must be worshiped.
3. Virtue combined with piety constitutes the principal or best part of divine worship, as has always been believed.
4. All vices and crimes are hateful and should be expiated by repentance.
5. There are rewards and punishments after this life.¹⁵

¹³Hoffecker, "Enlightenments and Awakenings," 243.

¹⁴See Gordon R. Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 340. *A priori* knowledge is knowledge of universal principles whose validity is logically independent of particular things observed by the senses. Sometimes used in a derogatory way to mean prior to critical evaluation—uncritical. In contrast to *a posteriori* knowledge whose validity depends on experience of things observed by the senses.

¹⁵Avery Robert Cardinal Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 176.

Though these five things sound orthodox at first glance, the door was opening wider for nonbelievers to enter the church in membership. Those ascribing to these tenants were able to assume to title of church member. Revelation, as it was, did not communicate additional propositional truth according to Herbert. Livingston described, “The ideal of the Enlightenment is, then, duty of not entertaining any belief that is not warranted by rational evidence, which means by the assent of autonomous reason rather than biblical or ecclesiastical authority. Autonomy, therefore, is that faculty which reason and the will possess of being their own lawgiver.”¹⁶ Reason used in this case was not the reasoning of Descartes, though he was a major influence. Another thinker was ready to push the boundary even further.

Influence of John Locke

John Locke was also an English Enlightenment thinker that attempted to unify science and rationalism with prevailing Christian thinking.¹⁷ Locke (1632-1704) began with the position that humanity has a mind endowed with sense, perception, and reason as a clear proof of the existence of God. He held the idea that “our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing Being; which whether any one will please to call God, it matters not.”¹⁸ His reasoning begins with an understanding of the divine, eternal God.

Locke is also credited with founding modern empiricism. He postulated reason and experience above the role of revelation within humanity. Hoffecker noted, “For Locke, reason was not just a tool to prepare for faith (Aquinas) or to explain the faith

¹⁶Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 7.

¹⁷Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings,” 244.

¹⁸John Locke, “Of Our Knowledge of the Existence of God,” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J. F. Dove, 1828), 451.

(Augustine); it was the standard for judging revelation and the judge of truth claims.”¹⁹

Locke detailed the difference in reason and faith in his work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690),

Reason, as contradistinguished from faith, I take to be the discovery of the certainty or probability of such propositions or truths, which the mind arrives at by deductions made from such ideas which it has got by the use of its natural faculties, viz. by sensation or reflection. Faith, on the other side, is the assent to any proposition, not thus made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication. This way of discovering truth to men we call revelation.²⁰

In his understanding, faith is delivered in a supernatural way via revelation whereas reason is delivered by deduction. The Enlightenment, as Locke defined it, could serve both reason and faith as masters while seeking ultimate truth. Accordingly, Hoffecker continued,

Locke distinguished three propositions: those that are according to reason (e.g., the existence of God), whose truth we can verify by examining ideas arising from sensation and reflection; those that are above reason (e.g. the resurrection), whose truth we accept but are beyond reason’s grasp; and those that are contrary to reason (e.g. the existence of more than one God), because they are inconsistent with our ideas.²¹

Religion was becoming an individual belief rather than a forced societal expectation. He further emphasized this idea with matters of “self.”

“Self” according to Locke is rooted deeply in the conscious pursuit of pleasure versus pain. Again, in his work, *An Essay*, he revealed that self is a sensible, conscious thinking thing capable of happiness or misery and thus ultimately concerned for itself.²² Instead of “self” being a part of society and existing within predefined norms of behavior and activity, Locke raised a point of the autonomous “self” that now finds strength as an

¹⁹Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings,” 244.

²⁰John Locke, “Of Faith and Reason, and Their Distinct Provinces,” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J. F. Dove, 1828), 498.

²¹Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings,” 245.

²²John Locke, “Of Identity and Diversity,” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J. F. Dove, 1828), 225.

individual rather than weakness in isolation. Locke also spoke of pleasure and pain in the same likeness as reward and punishment in relation to accountability.²³ So, “self” is not only autonomous but also accountable to “self” for the experience of pain, pleasure, reward, or punishment. Each of these ideas are also held in view of the value of “good.”

Greater “good” is the expectation of all humanity according to Locke. He relates many greater good(s) to the acquisition of material things or the feelings during the pursuit of such things.²⁴ The expectation of “good” does not always result in volitional motivation. Understanding and desiring, seemingly, are not natural in determining the will.²⁵ Christopher Grenda commented, “He (Locke) argued that concepts of good merely reflect individual senses of pleasure and pain.”²⁶ The chief problem with his ideology is the absence of moral inclinations. Stephen Darwall wrote that Lockean agents “make value judgements in purely hedonistic terms, recognizing no goods as intrinsically higher or lower.”²⁷ Individual “self,” as Locke has defined it, has insufficient means of morals due to the heavy reliance upon reason and science versus Scripture for the Christian. Moral conviction, in the Lockean position, is directly proportional to the amount of good the individual wishes to experience, but there is no way to direct how humanity ought to live other than individual reason. Such liberty is granted not in the idea of freedom but in the idea of virtuous character formation for Locke.

²³Locke, “Of Identity and Diversity,” 225.

²⁴Christopher S. Grenda, “Thinking Historically about Diversity: Religion, the Enlightenment, and the Construction of Civic Culture in Early America,” *Journal of Church and State* 48, no. 3 (2006): 572.

²⁵Ibid., 570.

²⁶Ibid., 572.

²⁷Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and The Internal “Ought”*: 1640-1740 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 201-2.

The pursuit of a virtuous life centers around the power of the mind in altering the perception of pleasure. Locke dictated the mind could be taught to take pleasure in virtue.²⁸ Locke described further in *An Essay*, “But the forbearance of a too hasty compliance with our desires, the moderation and restraint of our passions, so that our understanding may be free to examine, and reason unbiased give its judgment, being that whereon a right direction of our conduct to true happiness depends.”²⁹ In order to experience such a lifestyle, the only means given by Locke to do so are by practice in living. Locke then deviated from the individual to the societal level as to construct cultural habits and practices as formation of individual character. As for the Christian religion, Locke never accused Christianity of failing the test of reason, rather he believed religion to be a private matter altogether.³⁰ Restraint and moderation begin to be interchangeable terms in spiritual life during this era.

Influence of Isaac Newton

Isaac Newton’s (1642-1727) work was an influential piece of Enlightenment culture. Newton guided a great change in thinking about the cosmos. Building from the work of Nicholas Copernicus, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler, he theorized in *Principia* (1687) three laws of motion that were accurate anywhere in the universe.³¹ Science was beginning to take leaps and bounds in providing information and knowledge to all people. Newton, unlike other physicists that followed him, maintained orthodox theological views on creation.

²⁸Grenda, “Thinking Historically about Diversity,” 574.

²⁹John Locke, “Of Power,” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J. F. Dove, 1828), 171.

³⁰Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakening,” 245.

³¹Ibid.

In his work, *Optics* (1730), Newton expounded upon his theistic views of creation. Being an ardent defender of an intelligent design, he quickly dismissed pantheism and panentheism by affirming God's actions within creation.³² New information now gave rise to new questions about the universe. Though Newton stayed the traditional course of valuing God in creation, others sought to strip God from creation in the advance of human reason. The valuing of God in creation was clearly part of his thinking, but it is also known that his personal theology was Latitudinarian and perhaps even Unitarian.³³

Influence of David Hume

David Hume (1711-1776) was a renowned figure within the Enlightenment that stood against Christianity. Rather than using reason to prove the Christian faith is possible and positive, he used reason to disprove Christianity on the merits of experience. He was raised in Scotland amid a strict Calvinistic environment.³⁴ After leaving his faith, Hume later wrote *The Natural History of Religion*. In this work, he attributes religion to, "sick men's dreams."³⁵ He was a man of no religious beliefs as he believed religion to be closer to superstition. His skepticism is easily seen in his work against the Christian apologetic concentration of the eighteenth century. Christian apologists of this time were concentrating on miracles as a proof for the existence of God. William Adams, George Campbell, and John Douglas were among those that answered for Christianity in the mid-eighteenth century regarding miracles.³⁶ Pearson wrote, "Hume's skepticism stood in

³²Hoffecker, "Enlightenments and Awakening," 246-47.

³³Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 178.

³⁴Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 52.

³⁵David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (Raleigh, NC: Generic NL Freebook Publisher), 38.

³⁶Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 187.

implicit judgment on any philosophical or theological system which claimed to have dealt satisfactorily with the great issues of the day and to have salvaged meaning and purpose.”³⁷ His philosophical stance is clear when he sought to undermine Newtonian science as providing meaning within the search for ultimate truth. While science was critical for the Enlightenment, it was seen as something to dismantle for Hume. In his thoughts, experience can trump science.

Hume attacked the idea of miracles using experience in his work “Of Miracles.” He concluded that miracles were unverifiable in the sense that the laws of nature must be violated in order for miracles to occur.³⁸ Human testimony to this magnitude is unalterable, but Hume considered human testimony also to be insufficient in establishing the proper criteria necessary to prove such an event.³⁹ He wrote,

It is acknowledged on all hands, says that learners prelate, that the authority, either of the Scripture or of tradition, is founded merely on the testimony of the Apostles, who were eyewitnesses to those miracles of our Saviour, by which he proved his divine mission. Our evidence, then for the truth of the Christian religion, is less than the evidence for the truth of our senses; because, even in the first authors of our religion, it was not greater; and it is evident it must diminish in passing from them to their disciples; nor can anyone rest such confidence in their testimony as in the immediate object of his senses.⁴⁰

Hume viewed the experience of the apostles in relation to the miraculous events of Christianity to be lacking in view of “the rules of just reasoning.”⁴¹ The operation of the senses and external evidence are removed from the operation of the Holy Spirit in his thoughts. He continued, “Though experience be our only guide in reasoning conquering matters of fact, it must be acknowledged, that this guide is not altogether infallible, but in

³⁷Pearson, “Enlightenment Influence on Protestant Thought in Early National America,” 200.

³⁸David Hume, “Of Miracles,” in *Hume On Miracles*, ed. Stanley Tweyman, Key Issues 11 (Dulles, VA: Thoemmes Press, 1996), 4.

³⁹Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 186.

⁴⁰Hume, “Of Miracles,” 1.

⁴¹Ibid.

some cases is apt to lead us into errors.”⁴² Hume did not place too much trust within reason leaving room for disagreement on any grounds he chose.

In another work, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), Hume asserts that experience is our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact.⁴³ He further sets the rules of his treatise as the evidence will not exceed the probability, most notably derived from experience and observation. The scientific method of observation is easily seen within the efforts of Hume. He took the positional equivalent to Locke in claiming that “people ordinarily knew about the world, themselves, and God resulted from habits of association.”⁴⁴ Then, Hume devised a calculated argument that would inevitably fall back to his favored conclusion. He wrote, “A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence.”⁴⁵ Hume noted the idea of probability within his thoughts in relation to miracles as a proportion of belief. If an event or experiences rises above what is probable, then the experience or testimony is suspect at best. Testing testimonial claims against the probability of human experience provided the proof or truthfulness of propositional claims.⁴⁶ Thinking was critical to another figure in the Enlightenment that attempted to propel reason forward in significance.

Influence of Rene Descartes

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) provided a radical new approach in the superiority of the human mind from lower animals in his *Discourse on the Method* (1637).⁴⁷ He began with a scientific approach that led to the idea of the existence of God

⁴²Hume, “Of Miracles,” 2.

⁴³Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 53.

⁴⁴Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings,” 249.

⁴⁵Hume, “Of Miracles,” 2.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁷Hoffecker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings,” 253.

and the human soul mainly relying on reason within his personal metaphysics.⁴⁸

Descartes wrote,

And besides these, I know of no other qualities that contribute to the perfection of the mind; for as to the reason or sense, inasmuch as it is that alone which constitutes us men, and distinguishes us from the brutes, I am disposed to believe that it is to be found complete in each individual; and on this point to adopt the common opinion of philosophers, who say that the difference of greater and less holds only among the accidents, and not among the form or natures of individuals of the same species.⁴⁹

Reason was the vehicle used in the search for ultimate truth for Descartes. The origin of reason is the human mind. Descartes also understood that the mind was capable of many things that reason could not always overcome. He regarded the mind as being an excellent feature of humanity that was also capable of great damage to humanity.

Descartes noted, “The greatest minds, as they are capable of the highest excellences, are open likewise to the greatest aberrations; and those who travel very slowly may yet make far greater progress, provided they keep always to the straight road, than this who, while they run, forsake it.”⁵⁰ He began to move from the idea of the role of reason in the human mind in determining morals.

Descartes highlights three moral maxims that had governed his life. Each one building on the idea of reason as the foundation of behavior. First, he recalls the most basic form as “to obey the laws and customs of my country.”⁵¹ Descartes noted that obedience to laws and customs did not take the form of extremes, but it was better represented in “the most moderate opinions.”⁵² Choosing not to engage his own judgement, Descartes reasoned that following this moral thought seemed to be the most

⁴⁸René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (Raleigh, NC: Generic NL Freebook Publisher), loc. 1, Ebook.

⁴⁹Ibid., loc. 2.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., loc. 14.

⁵²Ibid.

astute position. His second maxim was “to be as firm and resolute in my actions as I was able . . . no delay is permissible.”⁵³ Certainty proved to be highly valuable in his moral conviction. Finally, the third maxim “was to endeavor to conquer myself rather than fortune, and changing my desires rather than the order of the world.”⁵⁴ In his final idea, Descartes sought to govern himself only by his own rational thought. While the first two maxims are more aligned with safety, his final maxim is more self-oriented much like other Enlightenment thinkers. Overall, egocentric ideas were common in the Enlightenment as the autonomous self became more significant.

The role of passion for Descartes is also intriguing in relation to Enlightenment thinking. In his work, *The Passions of the Soul*, he attempted to give rational direction on how to deal with passion appropriately from a scientific perspective. The intriguing matter in dealing with emotions like passion is that some emotions function irrationally. Enlightenment thinkers generally sought to eliminate irrational thoughts and behavior. The major question arises as to what controls passions and should they be obeyed all the time as passions can be a direct reflection of our rational thoughts? Descartes wrote,

The passion of Desire is an agitation of the soul, caused by the spirits, which disposes it to will for the future the things it represents to itself to be suitable. Thus we desire not only the presence of absent good but also the preservation of the present, and in addition the absence of evil, both what we already have and what we believe we might receive in time to come.⁵⁵

The origin of passion is thoughts that come from an arousal of the spirits, whose effects are felt in the soul distinguished from sensations, dreams, and appetites.⁵⁶ The origin is the mind for all things according to Descartes. Passion is to be guided with the value

⁵³Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, loc. 15.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 66.

⁵⁶Shoshana Brassfield, “Never Let the Passions Be Your Guide: Descartes and the Role of the Passions,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (April 2012): 459.

judgment of what is ultimately good. Descartes practically advises humanity to master passions and want good things instead of allowing passions control the mind.⁵⁷ First, Descartes promoted the idea of self-perfection in that good judgements make humanity more perfect. Shoshana Brassfield stated that Descartes' thoughts are not clear on how humanity gains "the right kind of thought to inform about the goodness or badness of things."⁵⁸ The mind is where value judgments are made regarding good and bad. He also refers to the body as a "machine."⁵⁹ With scientific discovery and innovation on the rise, the human body is now the subject of study as a mechanized wonder. Emotion, however raw and irrational, can be controlled by the mind bending the will of humanity toward what is considered rationally good. Emotions like love, hate, joy, and desire are only there to help people avoid what is harmful in favor of what is good. In order to act on passions once the decision has been made as to being good or bad, the brain is still active in the process.

The brain produces images that allow the body to act with emotion or passion. Descartes believed this process occurs continuously within the mind or the little gland in the middle of the brain.⁶⁰ He described the action as follows:

They are principally caused by the spirits which are contained in the cavities of the brain, inasmuch as they take course towards the nerves which serve to enlarge or contract the orifices of the heart, or to drive in various ways to it the blood of which is in the other parts, or, in whatever other fashion it may be, to carry on the same passion, we may from this clearly understand why I have placed in my definition of them above, that they are caused by some particular movement of animal spirits.⁶¹

⁵⁷Brassfield, "Never Let the Passions Be Your Guide: Descartes and the Role of the Passions," 460-61.

⁵⁸Ibid., 462.

⁵⁹René Descartes, "The Passions of the Soul," in *Collected Works of Rene Descartes* (Hastings, East Sussex: Delphi Classics, 2017), loc. 865, Ebook.

⁶⁰Ibid., loc. 897.

⁶¹Ibid., locs. 901-2.

Humanity, according to Descartes, is now the sum of the interworking of animal spirits responding to various stimuli in the human experience. Emotion is a reaction oriented toward the surge or suppression of hormones within the body. The mind is to be in complete control as the spirits function in the brain. With that, Descartes also relates rationality as the means of controlling passion.

As rational beings, humans can overcome passions simply by reasoning whether joy or pain will be the result. This act seems to be beneficial only to the person actively reasoning for the selfish benefit. The personal aspect of Enlightenment thought seems self-centered and self-focused as a means of authority. Passion, in this regard, is no different when seeking to determine good or bad. The thought also continues in spontaneous decision making in relation to passionate feelings.

Descartes brings reason to the forefront of all human circumstances. He encouraged readers to put themselves in situations only fit for their judgment in guidance.⁶² Unfamiliar instances were not ideal in this system of thought. Descartes wrote, “We should make use of experience and reason in order to distinguish good from evil, and to recognize their just value, so that we may not take the one for the other, or rush into anything too violently.”⁶³ Unfortunately, not all situations in life can be predetermined within reality. Passion, as it appears, can be unpredictable as to when it may be influential in the human experience. As long as passion resides within reason, it can be obeyed. For Descartes humanity can train itself to want what reason and judgment provide in goodness.⁶⁴ Once practiced many times over, virtue is then pleasant and rewarding rather than arduous. Descartes also links passion and action together with reason somewhere in the middle.

⁶²Brassfield, “Never Let the Passions Be Your Guide,” 469.

⁶³Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, locs. 1,003-4.

⁶⁴Brassfield, “Never Let the Passions Be Your Guide,” 475.

Freedom, for Descartes, is also rooted deeply within his philosophical framework. Mainly in reference to the ability of reason to evade error or false beliefs, freedom is intentioned to be the ability to apply truth to all situations in the human experience where reason informs judgment. Andrea Christofidou identified two things from Descartes' writings related to truth and error: he labels error as assent to false beliefs and fault the assent to true beliefs arrived at by pure chance, and judgment can be misused even if by chance we stumble on the truth.⁶⁵ In this case, it appears that Descartes' function of truth relies heavily on experience with rational thought applied in the aftermath of any occurrence. Christofidou also pointed out that "for Descartes, the requirements or demands of reason present themselves to us not only in moral obligation (or in reason's practical employment), but also in epistemic obligation (in reason's theoretical employment)."⁶⁶ Descartes seems to have presuppositions directly related to rationality within metaphysical knowledge. Assent in the human experience is not only about freedom, but it also contains a quest for ultimate truth within rational thought or epistemology preceding ontology.

Ultimate truth within the Enlightenment was given over to rational thought generally. Descartes perceived truth as propositions that are without contradiction and compel assent.⁶⁷ While truth is highly sought after in the Enlightenment movement, goodness to Descartes was the result of apprehending truth. Goodness, as it was with Descartes, was the perfecting of rational thought and action using ultimate truth from experience. Descartes used the proposition of truth in a presupposing potential truth.

The will creates problems ontologically for Descartes in the human experience. To explain the will, the French philosopher must create an avenue for movement and

⁶⁵Andrea Christofidou, "Descartes on Freedom, Truth, and Goodness," *Nous* 43, no. 4 (December 2009): 635.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid. 636.

motivation. According to Enlightenment thought patterns, rationality was the key to finding ultimate truth, which defined goodness and allowed for true freedom in human life. As Descartes has demonstrated, morality for humanity is centralized and credited to rational thought, but this thought carries presuppositional ideas rather than rationality alone. Descartes assumes that humanity is capable of objective moral responsibility. His thoughts created tension within the Enlightenment worldview, but doubt or driving out all doubt to reach bedrock truth, drove Descartes to attempt to ground reason in scientific explanation of the human machine in a deterministic nature.

He also drew a parallel thought in the metaphysics of knowledge being skepticism and the metaphysics of freedom being helplessness. The dichotomy between skepticism and helplessness seems to be a typical thought during the Enlightenment. Thinkers like Descartes could only reveal an answer that was buried within the individual, and the individual is responsible to find the guiding principles of ultimate truth within cognitive functions. Finding clarity of thought in reason without doubt, seeking the ultimate good of perfect happiness individually, and creating destiny with proper thought appears to be the central goal for humanity according to Descartes.

Influence of Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was one of the notable philosophers in Germany later in this period. Kant grew up in a Lutheran Pietist family, but with the influence of David Hume, he became opposed to piety.⁶⁸ He reasoned that the Enlightenment was a time in which people could learn to think for themselves no matter their social status.⁶⁹ Much like the other philosophers listed in this section, adherents to the Enlightenment movement were filled with hope and expectation. Hope in the sense that there was more

⁶⁸Byrne, *Religion and the Enlightenment*, 203.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, x.

to life than mindlessly following the masses. Expectations were heightened due to the increase in knowledge in virtually all fields of study.⁷⁰ While others are credited for enriching the Enlightenment movement, Kant is known for synthesizing the problems of the Enlightenment.⁷¹

The notion to think as an individual was the basic tenant of Kant's philosophy. Byrne noted a summation of this ideas in Kant's essay, *Was its Aufklarung?* (What is Enlightenment?), with the phrase *Sapere aude!* ('dare to think').⁷² It was through his understanding of theology that this idea arose. Byrne expounded,

Theology's perceived purpose was the rational defense of the doctrinal gains made during the previous turbulent century, but its arguments frequently degenerated into logical hair-splitting. The clergy, educated in an abstract theology, seemed unable to meet the spiritual demands of their flock and, with a few isolated exceptions, there was little intellectual development coming from outside the churches which could provide a challenge or stimulate a more crucial and inventive theology.⁷³

The church continued to miss the cultural mark. The clergy, equipped or not, did not have an answer to the Enlightenment theology until a later time. The Church of England was unprepared for a defense of biblical truth during this movement. Given the Protestant Reformation two hundred years prior, skepticism was still considerably high culturally towards established religion.

In following the tradition of the Enlightenment, Kant reached the same conclusions as other thinkers previously. Byrne described,

His brilliant insight, which was to be the foundation for his nature, 'critical' philosophy, was that before speculative reason could be employed to analyze many of the traditional questions posed by philosophy—the existence of God, the possibility and limits of human freedom, the grounds of knowledge, the basis of morality, etc.—reason had to turn on itself and provide an analysis of the range of

⁷⁰Byrne, *Religion and the Enlightenment*, xi.

⁷¹Ibid., 4.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., 204.

its own power. Reason, in other words cannot be taken for granted, and the limits of its power must be clearly delineated.⁷⁴

He is following the roots of his predecessors in that reason, or knowledge, is a priori in determining truth. This idea is credited largely to Hume from his rationalist epistemology seen most clearly in *A Treatise of Human Nature*. In it, Hume helped lay a foundation for Kant. Hume wrote that facts are those propositions that can be verified by sensory data on display in reality. The problem with his foundational approach was his further conclusion. Hume used causality to finalize the discussion on reason and knowledge, but Hume's conclusion factors in probable judgments based upon the gathering of impressions through experience. When the process is reversed, it seems that finding a root cause in any effect only leads to probability.⁷⁵ Kant felt reason could be grounded another way. He chose to remove experience, from Hume, and insist that reason is found within the mind in cognition. As another theologian put it, "Kant has made reason God."⁷⁶ Kant continued with a paradoxical thought of autonomy by reason alone.

Traditionally, God had been the author of all universal law to govern creation. In Kant's version of autonomy, man was now the central figure of creation, not God. In essence, Kant elevated reason and man above God. Humanity now has the power to create truth in relation to a rational will steeped in Newtonian physics.⁷⁷ Kant used Newtonian principles to describe nature as a machine geared to operate naturally without a governing presence or higher power, thus all things have predetermined outcomes. Inherently, there is a great contradiction within Kant's thought process. Nancy Pearcey described,

⁷⁴Byrne, *Religion and the Enlightenment*, 207.

⁷⁵Ibid., 209.

⁷⁶Colin Gunton, *Enlightenment and Alienation: An Essay Towards a Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 61.

⁷⁷Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 105.

Even Kant admitted that this was a paradox (an “antinomy”) that he never succeeded in resolving. The trick he said, is somehow to think of ourselves in both ways at once: On one hand, we operate within a physical world completely determined by natural laws; and at the same time, we participate in a conceptual world where we conceive of ourselves as free moral agents. In that purely conceptual world, Kant also placed God, the soul, and immortality.⁷⁸

The trappings of his thoughts were never rectified. Kant was never able to reconcile the two completely due to the freedom aspect of moral behavior. If humanity can be moral beings, especially self-determining moral beings, then humanity is free to act and choose rather than exist in a system of predetermined outcomes. Kant noticed a problem with Newtonian ideas in that accuracy and truthfulness demanded desertion of historical and traditional assertions.⁷⁹ Howard Radest continued, “Yes, this freed us from the tyrannies of priests and kings, but it left no place for beauty, love, and passion.”⁸⁰ Freedom, as Kant describes, is nothing more than an illusion. Pearcey described Kant, in frustration, admitted that we should act “as if” we were free regardless of science, implying that we should be tricking ourselves.⁸¹ Metaphysical realities cannot be ignored.

Scientifically, the Enlightenment period marked reason as the ultimate pursuit of truth. The problem associated with reason and scientific proof for all truth is perhaps more depersonalizing than first thought. Naugle wrote,

Perhaps the edifice of knowledge is constructed only when human knowers willfully set aside all pernicious prejudices and presuppositions, jettison all encumbering narratives and traditions, and purge themselves of the subjective influences that arise from various allegiances and their historical and social locations. Perhaps a purely objective way of knowing submits all propositions to the bar of dispassionate reason, demands that all claims to truth pass empirical muster, apportions all epistemic judgments according to the evidence, and requires that all possible knowledge conform to the highest possible scientific standards. This, of course, is the modernist model of rationality, the distinctive product of the Enlightenment.⁸²

⁷⁸Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 105.

⁷⁹Howard Radest, *The Devil and Secular Humanism: The Children of the Enlightenment* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 33.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 105-6.

⁸²David K. Naugle Jr., *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007),

Being a central thought of the Enlightenment movement, humans must depersonalize their current situation in order to find necessary ultimate truth. The Enlightenment essentially demanded that presuppositions be thrown out and people were to be blank slates seeking rational truth. This thought divorced the human from any experience or presupposition only to replace it completely. Perhaps this idea was the foreshadowing of presuppositional apologetics. If presuppositions can be thrown out, then they can also be a position to argue. The positional presupposition of the authority of God's Word became a battle ground later for presuppositional apologetics. Positionally, religion changed with the culture also.

There were also religious movements connected to the Enlightenment. The move away from traditional religious practices was directed toward the pursuit of verifiable truth with rational thought as the origin. Livingston added, "Theological truth was arrived at not through religious experience but, rather, by logical deduction from certain first principles."⁸³ Rational consistency became the test for ultimate truth. Livingston continues, "The question became not whether Christianity was to be judged by rational standards, but, rather what was to constitute a rational standard by which religion should be tested."⁸⁴ The scientific method is seen clearly applied to all areas of life. Even religion was being examined with the same degree of scrutiny as other areas of knowledge.

Cultural Movement Related to Truth

Finding ultimate truth that was verifiable was a consistent theme within the Enlightenment. Charles H. Long described, "The Enlightenment was not only a critique

305.

⁸³Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 13.

⁸⁴Ibid., 15.

of religion; it was a critique also of the former modes of thought and theories of knowledge.”⁸⁵ Instead of propositions to examine, humans were now examining themselves rationally and scientifically in search of ultimate truth. Long also summarized, “The object of the new sciences, the human, had not existed before as the object of a science.”⁸⁶ The individual became the center of analysis.

Individual-driven

In religion, individualization was gaining popularity. Personal reason and thought was rising to the level of individual driven control. This shift gave personal opinions in religion more attention. Personal autonomy had now become more relevant. Through this movement, autonomy was now rising to the level of endowed right of all humanity rather than for the privileged few in power or authority. People were given the space to think openly for themselves and use reason rather than supplant it with obedience.

Second, the cultural swing toward the idea of freedom had also become a force with society. As people were “enlightened,” their personal desire to be free from the tyrannical kings and governments began to grow. Independence of mind and governance gained momentum quickly as the balance of power was shifting toward the people in democracy rather than traditional monarchy rule.

Third, morality became questionable. Given the rise of clerical mischief as a means of control, the populace was now more educated toward personal morality. Without a trusted, objective guide in place, many sought to create their own moral structures with reason and science. The process of completing this task gave further implications to the individual and not the societal impact of morality.

⁸⁵Charles H. Long, “Study of Religion in the United States of America: Its Past and Its Future,” *Religious Studies and Theology* 5, no. 3 (September 1985): 34.

⁸⁶Ibid.

Experience-Based

Personal experience was a key term within this movement also. Pearson noted, “Experience was to be the watchword of the era and truth the goal.”⁸⁷ The empirical, experiential reasoning of Francis Bacon and John Locke was the preferred type.⁸⁸ For this span of time, reason was also attributed to the pursuit of the “natural” man grounded in natural things.⁸⁹ Reason and the return to the “natural” can be traced back to Newton in the sense that his scientific theories of nature were orderly and universal. Newton also generalized that human experience could also be consistent in terms of universality. The idea that experience can shape the search for ultimate truth is the return to Newton’s idea. All people have experiences that shape their understanding of ultimate truth. The key for philosophers of this time was to be able to funnel reason and experience into a system of thought that was observable. Science became that system.

Scientific discovery became a way to verify truth and truth claims within society. It was trusted due in large part to gratifying knowledge of proof in either truth or error. Eventually, the idea of science was applied to all propositional truth. Truth, in the scientific sense of the Enlightenment, is discovered gradually and is always changing.⁹⁰ The search for truth in experiencing observational methods of science was now being applied to all areas of life. Previous to this time, religion was questioned as a means of reform. During the Enlightenment, religion questioned in terms of validity. Tolerance, in religion, was becoming acceptable experientially especially in the Colonial period.

The ability to choose religion, or at least the portions that were personally acceptable, promoted further tolerance. If a person could defend their perspective in somewhat of a reasonable fashion, then others were more obliged to potentially listen. An

⁸⁷Pearson, “Enlightenment Influence on Protestant Thought in Early National America,” 194.

⁸⁸Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 4.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., 7.

experience continued to further undergird reason. Acceptance of ideas was now shifting away from government mandates and now being given to the people. Taking generations to fully form, tolerance was becoming socially accepted when searching for ultimate truth against tradition.

The final piece of the experience model was that all of life was to be deeply personal and could not possibly apply to society as a whole. Individuals were becoming increasingly responsible for their own personal experience without relying upon the church or the government to provide enrichment through experience. Personal ideas about experience, rooted in reality or a preferred version of it, were now garnering more attention from society.

Problems with the Enlightenment

Given all the supposed good the Enlightenment accomplished, there were several problems with the movement. First, the Enlightenment movement began in Europe with a rather small number of philosophers attempting to challenge, what they felt to be, the status quo of their time. While some steps were taken to further the effort of humanity in the search for authentic truth, others were clearly motivated by means of destroying tradition for the sake of intellectual freedom. Naugle called the movement an, “Idiosyncratic product of a limited number of western European thinkers.”⁹¹ While seeking to disconnect personal presuppositions from the search for truth, most philosophers of this period injected their experience within the movement. Their thoughts seemingly enriched life. This process could happen if individual thoughts were widely accepted in reform. Personal knowledge was now public as long as it did not interfere with personal pursuits as offensive.

⁹¹Naugle, *Worldview*, 305.

A second problem exists within the epistemology of this cultural movement. The foundation of knowledge appears to be a blend of various opinions rather than solid evidence. Society became fragmented as a result. Naugle noted,

The Enlightenment epistemology has faltered in its ability to agree upon what propositions constitute an indubitable foundation, in excluding from cogency forms of knowledge that seem to be universally accepted (for example memory beliefs and other minds), and in its inability to establish cultural epistemic consensus (hence, social fragmentation).⁹²

Order was becoming chaos as societal foundations such as government appointed religion was being invalidated. There seems to be no one unifying source of finding ultimate truth outside individual reason and experience. While there are no experiences that are exactly alike from different perspectives, ultimate truth became more elusive for the individual given the unsure foundation of knowledge. Epistemology did not translate into ontology.

A third problem existed in the idea of tradition. The Enlightenment period sought to move away from tradition and its representation of ultimate truth in every way. Only scientifically verifiable evidence is considered in credible truth claims. The rise of science in importance to this development was also eroding to the legitimacy in traditional means of understanding ultimate truth (divine authority and the possibility of divine intervention).⁹³ In this line of thinking, the Enlightenment has become the very thing that its tenants argued against. It became a tradition. Naugle summarized, “Thus the Enlightenment’s very prejudice against prejudice as well as its antitraditionalism has become (at least until recently) the predominate modern prejudice and the new cultural and intellectual tradition!”⁹⁴ While attempting to “free” or “enlighten” mankind from the tyranny of tradition, the Enlightenment further impoverished humanity in the search for meaning and ultimate truth. The future brought clarity and a shift in worldview thinking.

⁹²Naugle, *Worldview*, 306.

⁹³Radest, *The Devil and Secular Humanism*, 33-34.

⁹⁴Naugle, *Worldview*, 306.

Awakenings

The term “awakening” involves nuance similar to that of revival. Whitefield used awakening in reference to a person being saved from their sin and being awakened to new life in Christ. While awakening on this level was still individual, the term also translated to larger meanings. Culturally, awakenings were taking place throughout the Enlightenment moving toward the First Great Awakening. Many divisions occurred with the Christianity during this massive movement. Thomas Kidd wrote,

On one end were the *anti-revivalists*, who dismissed the revivals as religious frenzy or “enthusiasm.” In the middle were the *moderate evangelicals*, who supported the revivals at their outset but became concerned about the chaotic, leveling extremes that the awakenings produced. Finally, on the other end were the *radical evangelicals*, who eagerly embraced the Spirit’s movements, even if social conventions had to be sacrificed.⁹⁵

Mixed emotion characterized the views of the Christian community, but that did not deter the movement of the Holy Spirit nor the individuals leading the movement.

Throughout the Enlightenment, several “awakenings” took place culturally. The First Great Awakening was by far the largest of the awakenings concerning the number of people effected and the geographical scope the movement encompassed. Tracing from the European Enlightenment, the culture in America mirrored the movement in Europe. Differing from revival, awakenings have the functions of revival only on a more expansive landscape. William McLoughlin wrote, “Revivals alter the lives of individuals; awakenings alter the world view of a whole people or culture.”⁹⁶ Individuals began by seeking ultimate truth, freedom, autonomy, and other characteristics of the Enlightenment in a new world. It was not long after that a massive cultural movement began during the First Great Awakening. While traditional elements of theism

⁹⁵Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xiv. Emphasis original.

⁹⁶William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977*, Chicago History of American Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), xiii.

were still alive in the colonies, a new wind was coming to the new world to usher in a greater obedience to the Lord.

First Great Awakening

The spiritual movement prior to the First Great Awakening seemed bleak in regard to the growth of Christianity. As previously noted, leaders of churches were consistently irreligious in nature due to the institutionalization from governmental rule. England is the prime example of this movement in relation to the Church of England. John Smith summarized, “The decades preceding the First Great Awakening are widely interpreted as a period of decline for institutionalized Christianity, as natives and newcomers shifted their attention to worldly concerns, while others became confused and indecisive when confronting new denominational and sectarian options before them.”⁹⁷ This factor left many people isolated to find a foundation philosophically concerning ultimate truth, meaning, morality, and destiny. The resurgence of Christianity happened at a time when the church failed to provide guidance that was desperately needed in light of these issues.

It is clear that individuals were left to their own thoughts as more philosophers began to promote Enlightenment thinking throughout Europe. The Printing Press also gave people the option to communicate to massive amounts of people in a short time. Pamphlets, books, and newspapers were printed as culture shifted quickly. The awakening also began as individuals were called or recalled by God back to the Word of God and a relationship with Him. As the movement spread, it grew from individuals to a massive cultural movement. McLoughlin noted,

At first the awakening was a spontaneous, indirected, individualistic breaking-out of dead skin of the past that had inhibited personal freedom and social energy. It began with private explosions of the personality in emotional conversion experiences;

⁹⁷John Howard Smith, *The First Great Awakening: Redefining Religion in British America, 1725-1775* (Lanham, MD: Fredrick Dickinson University Press, 2015), 51.

these occurred in scattering local revivals in the 1720s and 1730s throughout the colonies. Then, after 1739, when the experience had common shape and been given general articulation, the whole of British North America, from Georgia to Nova Scotia, seemed to explode like a string of firecrackers.⁹⁸

Awakening was both an individual term and a regional term. Revival was sweeping Europe, and when it moved to North America, it was then a true awakening given the massive impact spiritually and the expanse it covered.

One very important feature of the First Great Awakening is that it was not merely regional in geography. The span of this awakening was immense, and an awakening has yet to be duplicated to this magnitude. Smith described, “The First Great Awakening cannot be understood properly without its being recognized as a transatlantic phenomenon, the roots of which lie in Europe, with branches stretching across to North America.”⁹⁹ Several of the influencers of the First Great Awakening are connected to Whitefield with similar desires for the Gospel to spread around the world.

Influence of John Wesley

John Wesley was an important preacher during this time. Though his story differs from Whitefield’s, there are great similarities in their journey. During the Enlightenment, Wesley searched inquisitively for answers regarding religious truth. The search took Wesley to two continents, and his contribution to this period was marked by his preaching and his thoughts on truth. Wesley had thought he understood the means and merit of salvation before beginning to serve God, but it was a voice from his past that helped him find definition in the gospel along with other believers.

In 1735, both the Wesley’s were traveling from England to Georgia with a group of Moravian missionaries. The Moravians were established in 1722 by Count Zinzendorf who was educated in Germany. Zinzendorf opened his home to a group of

⁹⁸McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*, 59.

⁹⁹Smith, *The First Great Awakening*, 18.

Protestant refugees from Bohemia and Moravia. These refugees were being persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. Reformation of the church was still vital to this displaced group. By 1727, the Moravian community was a place of profound spiritual renewal.¹⁰⁰ Ian M. Randall described this renewal as, “Christ coming to the heart expressed the essence of the spiritual experience.”¹⁰¹ Anna Marie Johnson wrote of Zinzendorf’s theology as, “Focused on simple devotion to the crucified Christ, and he wanted his moment to awaken Christians in all denominations, encouraging them to increase their love for Christ.”¹⁰² Since that time, the Moravians were making a concentrated effort to share the Christian faith with those that had not experienced Christ in this way. As the missionaries sailed on the voyage with the Wesleys, weather turned violent. Randall depicted the English passengers on board as afraid and screaming out, but the Moravians were singing hymns together.¹⁰³ Wesley was impressed with their faith under pressure. Later, Wesley met a Moravian leader, August Spanenberg, an assistant to Zinzendorf. They had a conversation culminating in Spanenberg asking Wesley, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” Wesley replied, “I know he is the Saviour of the World.” Spanenberg agreed yet questioned further asking, “Do you know he has saved you?” Wesley reluctantly admitted that he did know, but later he wrote how those words felt empty.¹⁰⁴ Three years later, Wesley was returning from Georgia feeling frustrated as his missionary efforts seemed ineffective. John found the answers regarding salvation from Moravian thought. The true experience in salvation was yet to come.

¹⁰⁰Ian M. Randall, “Christ Comes to the Heart: Moravian Influence on the Shaping of Evangelical Spirituality,” *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 6, no. 3 (May 2006): 8.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Anna Marie Johnson, “Ecumenist and Controversialist: The Dual Legacy of Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf,” *The Journal of Religious History* 38, no. 2 (June 2014): 241.

¹⁰³Randall, “Christ Comes to the Heart,” 8.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 9.

His influence during this time was also connected to his personal struggles. Wesley was deeply concerning with making a personal connection to justifying faith. He struggled with doubts in that he did not fully grasp the concept early in his preaching ministry. As he struggled, there were several works that influenced his life. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas Kempis, *On Christian Perfection* and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* by William Law, and *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* by Henry Scougal all influenced Wesley as a new experience awaited.¹⁰⁵ Peter Bohler, a friend and fellow convert to Christianity, challenged Wesley with the assertion that “believers ordinarily should experience a full assurance of saving faith.”¹⁰⁶ Upon asking Bohler if he should continue his public ministry in light of these doubts, Bohler replied, “By no means, preach faith *till* you have it, and then *because* you have it, you will preach faith.”¹⁰⁷ Much like his brother Charles, John found the reassurance he needed after reading the preface to the book of Romans by Martin Luther. While at a meeting of a society in Aldersgate Street, John was listening to a reading from Luther’s work. Noll stated that the specific passage that struck Wesley was never recorded, but it had its roots within the Moravian concept of salvation in Christ.¹⁰⁸ Noll also described a possible example related to justifying faith from Luther.

Faith is living daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that the believer could stake his life on it a thousand times. . . . Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything out of love and praise to God who has shown him this grace.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵Randall, “Christ Comes to the Heart,” 7-8.

¹⁰⁶Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 94.

¹⁰⁷John Wesley, “March 4, 1738,” in *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*, vol. 1 (London: Conference Office 14, 1809), 261.

¹⁰⁸Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 97.

¹⁰⁹Martin Luther, “Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans,” in *Luther’s Works*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs and E. Theodore Bachmann, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 370-71.

While doubts resurfaced throughout his ministry, this event gave him clarity on justifying faith. Wesley wrote, “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.”¹¹⁰ Faith for Wesley continued to deepen with further experience.

Around ten weeks following Wesley’s experience at Aldersgate, George Whitefield asked him to come to Bristol with the intention of introducing him to open air preaching (field-preaching). Wesley preached for Whitefield at the Nicholas Street Society as Whitefield preached at Baldwin Street while also promoting Wesley’s preaching there the next day.¹¹¹ Wesley preached in the open air and, like Whitefield, he was deeply moved by the ability to reach such large numbers of people.¹¹² This opportunity propelled Wesley into a different form a ministry that was fresh and exciting to him. Ian J. Maddock described his acceptance of open air preaching to following the commands of Scripture. Maddock said, “Wesley was convinced that he had not simply been permitted, but rather commanded by God in Scripture to preach; indeed, that of fail to proclaim ‘the gospel of the grace of God’ was ‘*contrary to the Word of God.*’”¹¹³ For John, preaching was not to be considered as an afterthought to life’s experience. Preaching was to be the life of a person called by God to share the good news of Christ. Traditionally, the Church of England had given ministers boundaries relative to the people within a given area. These boundaries were known as a parish, and Wesley also had difficulty confining the gospel message to a predefined boundary. It was Wesley who

¹¹⁰John Wesley, Journal entry, May 24, 1738; Wesley, *Works*, 1:261. Emphasis original.

¹¹¹Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*, vol. 1 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1970), 274.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 275.

¹¹³Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 63. Emphasis original.

described “all the whole world is my parish” in relation his geographical boundaries in preaching the gospel.¹¹⁴ In his mind, the gospel was to be preached wherever he was to whomever could hear. Boundaries were of no consequence as the Lord emboldened the young preacher with more urgency and wider views of sharing the gospel message with all people.

Wesley also contributed in other ways to the Awakening. He had developed a paradigm for understanding the nature and use of truth. While other philosophers decided to forgo the authority of Scripture in favor of reason and experience, Wesley kept Scripture as authoritative in the humanity. Donald A. D. Thorsen described Wesley’s ideas as,

Wesley, like John Locke, was a germinal thinker in trying to apply a universal methodology in understanding our world—a world that consists of multiple dimensions of reality, including the religious. More than Locke, Wesley sought to incorporate into his theology what he considered a comprehensively experimental approach in the investigation of all experience relevant to Christian beliefs. As such, Wesley’s theology had a correlative structure that sought to reflect fully on the Christian experience in a way that was intelligible and relevant.¹¹⁵

Wesley never used the term “quadrilateral” in describing his model,¹¹⁶ but it does use four dimensions to describe truth.

First, Wesley continued to represent Scripture as authority in the human experience. Philosophers of his time were abandoning Scripture in favor of reason and experience. Wesley used Scripture as “the primary source of religious authority; all others were secondary though complementary resources in the search for religious truth.”¹¹⁷ Secondary sources undergird Scripture in confirming, evaluating, and applying

¹¹⁴John Wesley, “All the World Is My Parish,” in *Journal of John Wesley*, ed. Percy Livingstone Parker (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951), 74.

¹¹⁵Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 20.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 21.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 20.

knowledge of Scripture.¹¹⁸ From the beginning, Wesley thought that Scripture should “rule our lives as God’s Spirit serves to *guide* our lives.”¹¹⁹ A vital relationship with God was pivotal to his understanding of religious truth.

Second, Wesley used tradition as a dimension of reality to define religious truth. Thorsen wrote,

The priority of scriptural authority goes without question. Yet the secondary placement of tradition behind Scripture possesses an intuitive order of importance in Wesley’s theology. Especially as found in the classical orthodoxy of Christ antiquity, tradition provided genuine substance to our beliefs.¹²⁰

Tradition, in this case, could be used to better understand Scripture. Wesley was careful in never regarding tradition as infallible but allowing some traditions to undergird the strength of Scripture.¹²¹ As long as tradition within the Church of England or Christian antiquity remained true to Scripture, Wesley identified with them in view of religious truth. Thorsen added, “Wesley hesitated to say that either reason or experience adds substance to our beliefs, but tradition served to fill in doctrinal lacunae not specifically addressed in Scripture.”¹²² It seems that Wesley used Scripture as an “epistemological safeguard for Christian orthodoxy.”¹²³ Carefully, Wesley interwove traditions within his theology pointing toward his understanding of salvation.

Third, reason was the third dimension Wesley explored in religious truth. It is unclear as to which should come next in order of priority as both the *Book of Discipline* from the United Methodist Church lists experience next, but claims that experience can

¹¹⁸Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 20.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 129.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 126.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 154-55.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 126-27.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 165.

come before reason in religious truth.¹²⁴ For the purposes of following Wesley, reason will remain in this place due to his reliance upon it in defending his theology.¹²⁵ Thorsen wrote, “Wesley regarded reason as inextricably bound up with the truths of Scripture and thus deserving of special recognition.”¹²⁶ While Wesley never argued that reason can lead someone to religion, he did argue that religion is reasonable.¹²⁷ Based upon the image of God within humanity, Wesley thought that reason was a unique gift from God given to humanity even though a sin nature was present.¹²⁸ The Church of England also considered reason to be useful as it extended back to Aristotelian tradition. According to Thorsen, “Living during the Enlightenment, Wesley was certain of the dependability of reason and of the ultimate harmony between Scripture and reason.”¹²⁹ It is also clear that Wesley was influenced by the thoughts of Locke in empirical philosophy. Thorsen noted that Wesley read Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* while at Oxford in 1725 before the Aldersgate experience and his ministry career began.¹³⁰ Locke, being an Anglican himself, also allowed theological principles to influence his philosophical thoughts.¹³¹

Finally, Wesley uses experience in his thoughts on truth. Experience, in Wesley’s thoughts, was different from the philosophical understanding of the term. Jeffrey Lamp described,

¹²⁴Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 127.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid., 133.

¹²⁸Ibid., 170.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid., 171.

¹³¹Ibid., 172.

What he does not mean is subjective, emotional, or pneumatic-ecstatic revelatory experiences of spiritual enthusiasts. Rather, he bases the role of experience in doing theology on his understanding of the “witness of the Spirit.” By this Wesley means that inward impression of God’s Spirit on the souls of believers, whereby they know that they are loved by and reconciled to God, becoming his beloved children. The intimacy of this relationship provides the context for experiential verification of theological truth.¹³²

Wesley’s idea of experience was never without a relationship with God. Rather than finding all meaning within the human experience, it is the final portion of the discerning or attaining truth. Theology at work within human experience was the goal for him as he led people to Christ and into Societies for discipleship.

Wesley attempted to create an empirical structure for truth that was multifaceted. Being a learner during the Enlightenment and ministerial product of the Church of England, he brought Scripture to the forefront of ultimate truth. At the time, the view of the church was skeptical due to cultural factors previously mentioned. The distrust for the church also crossed over to Scripture by proxy. Wesley and other like-minded believers sought to reestablish the Bible as the initial source of truth.

Influence of Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards was better known as the theologian of the First Great Awakening. His background reveals a dedicated family committed to the work of the church and high standards. Timothy Edwards, his father, was perfectionist and a skilled teacher of many spiritual classics within his dense library. Fitted with a mastery of Scripture also, he prepared a number of young boys for the town college.¹³³ Jonathan left for college at age thirteen while the average age was sixteen during that time.¹³⁴ While studying in college, much like an earlier experience in childhood, sickness again took

¹³²Jeffrey S. Lamp, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: A Model for Evangelical Theology?” *Evangelical Theological Society Papers, ETS-4654* (1994), 7. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.tren.com.

¹³³George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 34.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

hold of Edwards. He gave his life to God, just as he did as a child during sickness, “only to fall back into sin.”¹³⁵ This time, the decision of salvation did not leave him. Edwards wrote,

But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; but I had great and violent inward struggles: till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, and repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek my salvation, and practice the duties of religion: but without that kind of affection and delight, that I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life.¹³⁶

After finally resolving himself to seek the Lord, the struggle for Edwards shifted to his social life. He broke ties with his roommate over behavior, experienced (but did not participate in) a student uprising and felt alienated as he shied away from immoral behavior.¹³⁷

Awakenings and conversion were both an experience and a subject of inquisitiveness. As a third-generation pastor, Edwards saw firsthand how the Gospel changed lives.¹³⁸ This experience in his upbringing added credibility to his role in preaching during this historic movement. Mark Shaw described Edwards as,

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) contributed more than most to the understanding of the spiritual dynamics of revival. . . . Edwards’ central insight is “the driving and supernatural light that makes gospel realities real and beautiful to the believer. The Holy Spirit, for Edwards, is the source of all other dynamics of renewed spiritual life. One of the realities made vivid by the Spirit was liberation in Christ.”¹³⁹

At this time in New England, awakenings were being studied by Edwards. His father, Timothy, had experienced at least two seasons of awakenings as a pastor that his son

¹³⁵Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn (*Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, vol. 16 [1716]), 791. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.yale.edu.

¹³⁶Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writing*, 791.

¹³⁷Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 37-39.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 25.

¹³⁹Mark R. Shaw, *Global Awakening: How 20th-Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 19.

recalled.¹⁴⁰ The earliest communication found from Jonathan revealed a curious fascination with conversion. As a twelve-year-old boy, he wrote to his oldest sister Mary about the awakening that was happening at their father's church. He described the event as, "Through the wonderful mercy and goodness of God there hath in this place been a remarkable stirring and pouring out of the Spirit of God, and likewise now is, but I think I have reason to think it is in some measure diminishing, but I hope not much."¹⁴¹ Edwards described awakening as,

Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable conditions by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape and get into a better state. . . . *Some* are more *suddenly* seized with convictions . . . *Others* are awakened more *gradually*, they begin at first to be something more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds, that it is their best and wisest way to delay no longer, but to improve the present opportunity. . . . *Others* who before had been somewhat religious, and concerned for their salvation, have been awakened in a new manner; and made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking, was never like to attain that purpose.¹⁴²

Even after being an observer of such change within people, the Puritan thought that time pointed forward to further reform in the life of a new believer. Edwards struggled through the idea of the sovereignty of God in conversion. He wrote in his personal narrative about God "in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in Hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me."¹⁴³ The grappling between the rationality of his mind and the feelings in his heart were apparent. George Marsden provided a theory regarding the struggle of Edwards,

¹⁴⁰Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 25.

¹⁴¹Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 30.

¹⁴²Jonathan Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards On Revival* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1984), 23. Emphasis original.

¹⁴³Jonathan Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace E. Anderson (*Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, vol. 6 [1714]), 27. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.yale.edu.

His heart and his intellect were not separable in this quest. His reason and his moral sensibilities had put a huge obstacle in his path. These objections were manifestations of a rebelliousness against the orthodoxy of his parents, dating to his childhood. He could not believe in God's total sovereignty, the doctrine at the very foundation of Calvinistic teaching. Yet he was sure also that he had no hope on his own. . . . He desperately wanted to trust in God, yet he could not believe in, let alone submit to, such a tyrant.¹⁴⁴

While it is easy to recognize the struggle of reconciling the reasonableness of God in conversion, Edwards found the faith he so desired. He found harmony for his thoughts in trusting the justice of God. He continued,

But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced; not in the least imagining, in the time of it, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it: but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections, that had till then abode with me, all the preceding part of my life.¹⁴⁵

Edwards was able to resolve the situation in his mind with faith in the Lord. Knowing reasonably how the Lord works in all situations within humanity is not for human minds to comprehend. Edwards, Wesley, and Whitefield struggled with issues related to conversion, and they were not alone. It seems reasonable to think that as the Lord blessed them with regenerating faith, God gave each of them opportunities to help others understand salvation.

In terms of preaching in the First Great Awakening, Edwards thought particular ideas in Scripture worked better than others. The strong doctrine of the sovereignty of God carried over to his preaching. He noted,

I think I have found that no discourse have been more *remarkably blessed*, than those in which the doctrines of God's *absolute sovereignty* with regard to the salvation of sinners, and his *just liberty* with regard to answering the prayers, or succeeding the pains, of natural men, continuing such, have been insisted on.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 40.

¹⁴⁵Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 792.

¹⁴⁶Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards On Revival*, 31. Emphasis original.

Countering the effects of Enlightenment rationalism was also a part of awakening people to the ultimate truth of God. Edwards described, “Not only does God have a personified Justice threatening death, but the earth, the elements, indeed all the creation, including devils, hell, death, and invisible fields of Newtonian force: all are contrived within the closed system of God's sovereignty to the end of destroying the condemned.”¹⁴⁷

Thematically, his preaching also offered a storyline approach openly acknowledged by Edwards. The theologian wrote, “There is the imminent confrontation with death and eternity, then the many variations upon the theme of suspense-suspension-hanging, and inevitably the there-but-for-the-grace-of-God-go-you motif common to the type.”¹⁴⁸ The grace of God is the corrective measure against the backdrop of the devastating effects of sin.

Second, Edwards noted that clarity in terms of the sinfulness of the people was characteristic of the awakening. In order for people to be awakened, the initial understanding must be to their own sense of spiritual deadness. Once the sovereignty of God was firmly established, the hearts of sinners are tender to the quality and quantity of their own sin. Edwards detailed,

Some are brought to this conviction by a great sense of their sinfulness, in general, that they are such vile wicked creatures in heart and life: *others* have the sins of their lives in an extraordinary manner set before them, multitudes of them coming just then fresh their memory, and being set before them with their aggravations. Some have their minds especially fixed on some particular wicked practice they have indulged. . . . Some are convinced especially by a sense of the sin of *unbelief*, the opposition of their hearts to the way of salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.¹⁴⁹

The mysterious work of conversion reveals the sin within the sinner as a part of the work of Christ. Edwards wrote, "And that great work of God in conversion, which consists in

¹⁴⁷Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kinnach (*Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, vol. 10 [1720]), 177. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.yale.edu.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 176-7.

¹⁴⁹Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards On Revival*, 32. Emphasis original.

delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh."¹⁵⁰ Once barriers were removed from within the hearts of people, brokenness followed leading to repentance of sin with faith in Christ.

Third, Edwards also knew that those awoken by the Spirit of God were seeing the Lord completely in view of His sufficiency and grace. Edwards wrote,

But very often some comfortable and sweet view of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the gospel, immediately follows, or in a very little time: and in some, the first sight of their just desert of hell, and God's sovereignty with respect to their salvation, and a discovery of all-sufficient grace, are so near, then they seem to go as it were together.¹⁵¹

Conversion to Edwards was a proper understanding of the grace of God. For most in Eastern Europe and America this point, religion involved good works to a large degree. Leaving out the sufficiency of God and replacing it with human effort is not true salvation. True conversion was taking hold of both grace and the completed work of Christ on the cross. Edwards remained hopeful for the spiritual state of the converted as well as the future of their belief. The theologian continued,

In some the excellency and loveliness of Christ, chiefly engages their thoughts; in some his divinity, that he is indeed *the Son of the living God*; and in others, the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.¹⁵²

Edwards, like other influences of the First Great Awakening, desired that all people comprehend the love of God in salvation. The boldest movements of God in the new world were coming faster than he may have imagined possible.

¹⁵⁰Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. Paul Ramsey (*Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, vol. 2 [1754]), 118. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.yale.edu.

¹⁵¹Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards On Revival*, 34.

¹⁵²Ibid. Emphasis original.

New Beginnings in America

The assumed promise of America was for new beginnings of many types. Religious freedom was a new beginning for those that sought to finally break free from a mandated state religion. The Puritans were involved in this movement directionally towards living a life from pure Scripture alone. Freedom from heartless religious ritual was an innovative spiritual idea with the new world as a prime location to start fresh from an oppressive English government.

Freedom-orientation Toward Philosophy

Freedom was beginning to mean more to people as new possibilities arose. For the first time, the idea of a real republic with democratic rule was becoming a reality. Before the American Revolution, philosophers used the idea of autonomy in seeking ultimate truth. The governmental system in England had proven untrustworthy in regards to disseminating ultimate truth to people. The Church had problems also given the political interference and large spiritual gap between church leaders and parishioners. Philosophers began to wrestle with the idea of freedom openly in works to help enlighten those seeking freedom both spiritually and physically.

In the Christian faith, the thought of human freedom and the sovereignty of God seem juxtaposed rather than coinciding. The theological argument between pure Arminianism and pure Calvinism divided many people and churches over the issue of free will and divine sovereignty. On the other hand, human freedom from sin consists of submission to the omnipotent creator.

Autonomy was used by Immanuel Kant in connection with Christian thought and virtues. In a pragmatic sense, Kant attempted to explain the value of doing good in light of the debt of sin. He did not attempt an answer to original sin, like Calvin, from the idea of autonomy. Kant wrote,

Whatever may have happened in his case with the adoption of a good attitude, and indeed, however persistently he continues in this attitude in a way of life conforming to it, he yet started from evil, and this indebtedness it will never be

possible for him to erase. He cannot regard [the fact] that after his change of heart he is not incurring any new debts as if he had thereby paid the old ones. Nor can he, in a good way of life to be led henceforth, extract any surplus beyond what he is intrinsically obligated.¹⁵³

Kant could not reconcile the idea of human behavior overcoming the overwhelming debt of moral wrongdoing. Human freedom and autonomy are linked together with the notion of moral activity. Providing freedom from sin for humanity takes more than good deeds, yet philosophers continued trying.

Other philosophers thought similar to Kant. John Locke wrote about freedom in relation to civil government. He noted,

The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges everyone; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions. For men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker—all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into this world by His order, and about His business—they are His property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during His, not one another's pleasure; and being furnished with faculties, sharing all in one community of Nature . . .¹⁵⁴

Locke thought freedom to be given to mankind only under the direction of the a divine, omnipotent “Maker” who made humanity. He also attempted to balance an authoritative maker with the reason of humanity. Kant also wrote, “The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule.”¹⁵⁵ The law of nature refers back to the notion of responsibility to humanity’s creator. Locke further explained his meaning of freedom as having a “standing rule to live by, common to everyone one of that society.”¹⁵⁶ The idea of separation of church and state was becoming a popular

¹⁵³Immanuel Kant. *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), 80.

¹⁵⁴John Locke, “The Second Treatise of Civil Government,” in *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 396.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 397.

conviction while the overall leadership of humanity was moving toward democracy or individual rule rather than monarchy.

Call to Return to Biblical Truth

Beginning in a new world, Christians seized an opportunity in seeking freedom of religion and the opportunity to govern themselves eventually. America offered many new possibilities to families from all over Eastern Europe. The Enlightenment also brought new ideas in finding ultimate truth for humanity. As philosophers began to think deeper about discerning truth, Scripture was outmoded progressively concerning ultimate truth. Before the American Revolution began, a spiritual revolution was forming calling all people back to the Bible for ultimate truth and salvation. The struggle with the Enlightenment and the church was not finished as people came to the new world. Pearson described,

Such a movement inevitably found itself in a struggle with Christianity as church, theology, and world view. Rediscovering antiquity as a source of its thought, the enlightenment used antiquity to struggle free from the hold of medieval and early modern Christendom. Dialectically playing the one source of its thought against the other, the enlightenment struggled toward mastery of both.¹⁵⁷

Within Christianity, both reason and faith can work together. Ultimate truth must contend with both even in cultural movements.

By pronouncing judgement on ultimate truth and claiming exclusive rights of sorts to knowledge, the Enlightenment attempted to set the paradigm for new ways of thinking. Pearson described,

The enlightenment defended the problems and established the matrix in which they would be considered. The enlightenment determined what would and would not be admitted as evidence. And the enlightenment rendered judgment in the issues before the court.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷Pearson, "Enlightenment Influence on Protestant Thought in Early National America," 195.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 196.

If the Enlightenment movement helped people know the right things in order to live the right way, then how did the idea of “right” become accepted universally? This question is closely related to the philosophical ideas of ontology¹⁵⁹ and epistemology.¹⁶⁰

Determining which one is primary is an important dynamic in worldview thinking.

If the ontological position is taken as primary for the Christian, then God is seen as the most basic form of reality and the hope for the future. Foundationally, there should be no other primary beginning according to Scripture. Central to the Christian worldview are several passages that affirm this aspect. The first chapter of Genesis begins the Bible with “In the beginning” moving toward the process of creation of everything by God. Naturally, humanity can observe that the origin of all things can be traced back to God. James Sire added, “If prime reality is the biblical God, ethics will not be based on humanity’s high-test aspirations but will be grounded in the character of God as ultimate goodness. Human purpose will not be self-determined by any person, community, nation or multinational group but will be predetermined by God.”¹⁶¹ God is both the beginning of all things as well as the one who determines all things. Once ontology is established first, then epistemology is activated. Sire continued, “It cannot be said too strongly: *Ontology precedes epistemology.*”¹⁶² If this process were reversed, the outcome looks significantly different.

¹⁵⁹See Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), s.v. “Ontology.” Geisler defines ontology as the study of being. It is the study of reality. Closely akin to metaphysics, both ontology and metaphysics deal with ultimate reality. Ontology seeks to answer the question “What is real?”

¹⁶⁰See Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), s.v. “Epistemology.” Geisler defines epistemology as the discipline that deals with theory of knowledge. It is the study of how we know. Epistemology considers whether ideas are innate or whether we are born a blank slate. This discipline also deals with tests for truth, coherence and foundationalism.

¹⁶¹James W. Sire, *Eating the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 55.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, 55-56. Emphasis original.

When epistemology is held as the primary philosophical disposition, human knowledge alone cannot sustain the philosophical proof for the existence of God. The quintessential example of epistemological primary is Descartes. Sire summarized Descartes' thoughts,

While he began from certain self-knowledge (I think, therefore, I am), Descartes realized that he could not sustain his philosophy solely on the self-certainty of his own existence—that is, the autonomy of his human reason. God needed to exist in order for Descartes to trust his own reasoning. At the same time, making the certainty of God's existence rest on the certainty of his own existence was the first step toward the undermining of trust in human reason.¹⁶³

Early in his life, Whitefield like Descartes, attempted to use human reason and good deeds alone for salvation. Whitefield thought that if he could just be good enough, he reasoned, then the Lord would bless him with salvation. It was not until Whitefield recognized the authority of the Word of God in detailing the goodness of God in saving sinners. The theology and polemic of the itinerant are possible glimpses into a developing apologetic for the Christian faith in relation to the presupposition of the authority of the Scripture.

¹⁶³Sire, *Eating the Elephant*, 63.

CHAPTER 4

THE APOLOGETIC OF WHITEFIELD

George Whitefield held a specific set of beliefs, or worldview, that informed his movements and actions. His personal theology was closely connected to his ministry life. The background of his theological position is a key factor in understanding his approach to ministry as well as his personal apologetic voice within history. Most historians and theologians do not recognize Whitefield as an apologetic voice during the First Great Awakening. Others like Jonathan Edwards were more philosophical during this time adding a stronger commitment to the depth of Scripture. Whitefield was determined to share with others the tenants of the Christian faith that had eluded him in an age of nominal belief. Defending his position in faith could have been a precursor to a particular form of apologetics in concept.

Historically, apologetics during Whitefield's time in England centered on the supremacy of Scripture regarding ultimate truth. Science and verifiable data sprang onto the human culture with great wonder. Humanity began to gain the ability to look deeper into the origin of the world. Deism became increasingly popular with the Church of England losing ground culturally. It was a mixture of traditional orthodoxy and the science of the time. An early opponent of deism, Robert Boyle, argued for the existence of revealed truth beyond human reason. Avery Dulles recalled,

In a late work, *The Christian Virtuoso* (1690), Boyle defended the truth of the Christian revelation on the basis of three main proofs: the sublimity of Christian doctrines, the testimony of miracles, and the beneficial effects of the Christian religion on the history of the human race.¹

¹Avery Robert Cardinal Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius

Following the death of Boyle, a lecture series was delivered in his honor in London concerning the validity of the Christian faith versus a number of others philosophies and religions.² Christian apologetics continued to battle science and reason.

Isaac Newton also presented a case for a renewed strength in Scripture with his work. He was previously highlighted as a Latitudinarian or even Unitarian in that he allowed for other beliefs alongside of his traditional theology of creation. His work attributed more scientific proof regarding a case for an intelligent designer. This view was upheld by Deists of that time, but Newton continued to hold to the significance of Scripture in papers published posthumously.³

Science continued to further reflect the idea of divinity in nature in the work of John Ray, the founder of modern botany and zoology, and William Derham. Ray developed a “teleological structure of living organisms and the marvels of animal instinct” in his work, *The Wisdom of God in Creation* (1691).⁴ Derham found numerous proofs as to “God’s power, wisdom, and goodness” within creation.⁵ Natural theology was an orthodox way in which the Christian faith had been defended in the previous era. The Enlightenment necessitated a more culturally appropriate apologetic to recall a generation back to God.

Types of Apologetics

While there are four different methods or styles of apologetics, each method is rooted in a particular form of thought in order to defend the Christian faith. The most

Press, 2005), 177.

²Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 177.

³Ibid., 178. See Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London: J. Darby and T. Browne, 1733).

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

dominant form throughout history is known as Classical apologetics.⁶ This form is known for a concentration on rational thought to deliver the most logical arguments and proofs in favor of the Christian faith.⁷ Throughout church history, this method has been the most prominent in defending Christianity. Natural theology was used to construct arguments and proofs defending a theistic worldview.⁸ Then, Christianity is shown to be the most plausible of the theistic worldviews through “historical evidences for the deity of Christ, the trustworthiness of Scripture, etc.”⁹ Proponents of this form include: C.S. Lewis, Norman Geisler, and William Lane Craig.

Another form of apologetics is Evidential apologetics. Some consider this method of apologetics a “subtype of classical apologetics in that reasons for faith are provided that are accessible to non-Christians.”¹⁰ Advocates of this form use evidence to support the Christian faith as a logical conclusion based upon verifiable support. By the eighteenth century, modern science had developed into the primary form of answering universal questions about life. As a result, Deism was becoming an increasingly popular worldview. Deism is the idea that God created the world, set the processes in motion for governing, and then left it all to mankind.

In order to combat the idea of deism, apologists sought to solidify natural religion first leading toward a high view Christian revelation.¹¹ William Paley used natural theology.¹² His work entitled *Natural Theology* introduces a famous watch and

⁶Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 49.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 51.

⁹Steven Cowan, Introduction to *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 15.

¹⁰Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 139.

¹¹Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 203.

¹²Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 140-41.

watchmaker analogy. Ideas like arrangement, function, purpose, and meaning were all explored in various facets of animal, plant, and human life in order to find sufficient evidence of God and His working in creation. Paley concludes by stating that natural theology should open the mind “to receiving as true whatever revelation God may choose to impart.”¹³ General or specific revelation is critical to evidential apologetics. A second effort was also made in order to further the evidential apologetic. John Locke, known previously in this work as a modern empiricist, approached apologetics from “general knowledge base leading to a defense of Christianity.”¹⁴ Evidential apologetics is more inductive than deductive in logical thought progression. Locke also likened reason to natural revelation in his work, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Reason, as he defines it is the portion of truth that God lays into the heart of man via natural faculties.¹⁵ Miracles were valuable to Locke as he thought these claims were reasonably true. Lock later reveals in his *Discourse on Miracles* a presupposition toward “the existence of God as creator and governor of the world.”¹⁶ Presupposing the existence of God was a common thread among seventeenth century apologists. Knowledge carries great emphasis in evidential apologetics. This apologetic functions in two primary kinds: epistemological evidentialism (belief should only be founded upon sufficient evidence) and epistemological suspicion (all beliefs should be considered false unless proven true by sufficient evidence).¹⁷ Epistemology is significant to the apologetic of Whitefield as this chapter will detail further. Ken Ham, John Warwick Montgomery, and Joseph Butler

¹³Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 141.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵John Locke, “Of Enthusiasm,” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J.F. Dove, 1828), 505.

¹⁶Ibid., 180.

¹⁷Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 156.

have been known practitioners of this method of apologetics. There is also a form of apologetics that deals mainly with faith.

The Fideistic apologetic view holds to proving the validity of the Christian faith based solely on the supernatural experience of the believer. There is no need to use any other form of proof in this method. This apologetic asserts that “the truths of faith cannot and should not be justified rationally.”¹⁸ Truth claims are rendered by faith alone. Experience is the primary means of proof regarding any spiritual event. Advocates of this method include Martin Luther, Blaise Pascal, and Soren Kierkegaard. Critics of this approach combine it with the presuppositional approach. Assumptions and reasoning seem to have no place in either according to apologist that hold to other methods, but there are substantial differences between these two methods.

The final method is the one most closely related to the position of Whitefield. The Presuppositional method focuses on a commonality that all humanity shares. Each person has presuppositions that influence their lives and choices. Boa and Bowman noted that Reformed apologetics (another name for Presuppositional apologetics) “typically appeals to the Bible as the standard of truth.”¹⁹ The Presuppositional approach is not without reason. It is a form of reasoning that demonstrates the truth. This form of apologetics is most notably exhibited Cornelius Van Til, Greg Bahnsen, and John Calvin. The focus of this chapter will be the historical background of this apologetic from the inception of the Anglican/Reformed church forward to the time of Whitefield.

The Roots of the Church of England

The Church of England originated from a royal purpose surrounding the succession of nobility. As history moved forward, the Church of England was accepted,

¹⁸Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 338.

¹⁹Ibid., 365.

mixed with Catholicism and other forms of Christianity, and even denied by various Kings and government authorities. The rise of confessional Presbyterianism and Puritanism leveraged new thought on Scripture and the practice of Christianity. As the prospect of the new world became a greater reality, the people were eager to express freedom in religion and government. The tumultuous task of the Enlightenment later tested values and beliefs that stemmed from the history of the Church of England.

Brief History of the Theology of the Church of England

In 1509, King Henry VIII had taken his brother's widow as a wife thanks to papal dispensation.²⁰ After twenty years of marriage, Catherine of Aragon, the Queen, was now over forty years of age. The chances of her conceiving a child grew increasingly small. Henry saw the marriage as a mistake at this point. The King broke from the Catholic tradition of England in order to begin the Church of England and sanction divorce to pursue an heir through another marriage. By 1533, King Henry VIII began to transition from the Roman Church in order to satisfy his desire for an heir to the throne of England. Under the current authority, divorce was not permissible for anyone. Henry became obsessed with his own succession leading to a more radical solution.²¹

A secondary reason for the break from Roman authority was the financial situation of England. Henry VII insured that his son had plenty of money upon his ascension to the throne. The Kingdom was wealthy allowing the new King to live lavishly and levy few taxes upon the people.²² Management of the funds provided much conflict between the King and Parliament. Expensive ventures and war costs added up

²⁰Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 7.

²¹Hervé Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 3.

²²*Ibid.*, 8.

quickly and depleted England's financial reserves. The marriage of the church and state was crumbling quickly as Henry VIII desired a change that fed his personal longings.

The King then married Anne Boleyn secretly at a ceremony presided over by a Lutheran theologian, Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury.²³ In order to complete this act as a sanctioned ceremony, the King needed to pass an official law providing him with divine authority. The Act in Restraint of Appeals reveals this idea clearly. The document stated,

This realm of England is an empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one supreme head and king, having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown of England the same, unto whom a body politic, compact of all sorts and degrees of people, divided in terms and by names of spirituality and temporality, be bounden and ought to bear, next to God, a natural and humble obedience.²⁴

The same text also denies the Roman courts any authority in church related issues according to the King. The significance of this statement raised England above Roman Catholic rule. The King was now elevated to slightly less than divinity. The Act continued,

He being also institute and furnished, by the goodness and sufferance of Almighty God, with plenary, whole, and entire power, preeminence, authority, prerogative and jurisdiction, to render and yield justice, and final determination to all manner of folk, residents, or subjects within this his realm, in all causes, matters, debates, and contentions, happening to occur, insurge, or begin within the limits thereof, without restraint, or provocation to any foreign princes or potentates of the world; the body spiritual whereof having power, when any cause of the law divine happened to come in question, or of spiritual learning, then it was declared, interpreted, and showed by that part of the said body politic, called the spirituality, now being usually called the English Church.²⁵

Henry VIII announced his own supremacy in relation to church situations over Roman rule with this act. He was not finished with his break from the Catholic Church.

²³Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 9.

²⁴Henry Gee and William John Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History: Compiled from Original Sources* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1896), 187.

²⁵Ibid.

In the next year, Parliament took all papal authority from the Pope and shifted it to the throne of England. The Succession Act was passed later that same year confirming the King's second marriage and declaring the children of his previous marriage illegitimate.²⁶ Next, the King dissolved all monasteries within England and continued to operate with a Lutheran ideology while attempting to maintain some semblance of Catholic roots. By the time of his death in 1547, the Church of England had initiated a nationalistic disposition while maintaining the authority of Scripture.

Edward VI took over the throne of England at age nine. He wasted no time in moving the Church of England in a more Protestant direction using the state to leverage the move.²⁷ Liturgical changes followed with the influence of reformers like John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli. Books on prayer and communion were published to clarify principles of ecclesiology for the church in view of increasing Protestant acceptance from the King. Edward died in 1553 leaving reform in process to a degree.

Mary I, Henry VIII's first daughter, reigned after Edward. She was a devout Catholic and sought to return England to align with the Catholic Church. Many of the reforming efforts of her father and Edward VI were undone quickly. Bishops that were banned were now reinstated, and Mary gave up the title of "Supreme Head of the Church of England" in order to comply with Roman Catholic authority.²⁸ The Queen died in 1558 without an heir following a war with France.

The next heir to the throne of England was Elizabeth, the half-sister of Mary. She was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne. Elizabeth reigned for nearly forty-five years.²⁹ Her family was deeply religious, but her religious intentions were more like

²⁶Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 10.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 23.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 36.

Henry's. Elizabeth reinstated many of her father's ideas as England regained its independence from Roman authority. One of the most important features of her rule was the adoption of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* in 1563. This work was amended from the *Forty-Two Articles* of 1553.³⁰ The *Thirty-Nine Articles* became a trusted source of education and the official position of the Church of England on many religious matters. Upon her death, a distant descendant claimed the throne.

James VI of Scotland, James I as King of England, recalled the nation back toward theology in 1603. Division within religion continued within England given the direction of rule with Elizabeth. The Puritans³¹ were gaining ground toward the end of her rule, and it did not seem to slow with an incoming King. James began to remove Catholic influences such as the Jesuits and priests.³² He consistently had difficulties with Parliament and Catholics. In 1605, a group of Catholics plotted to kill the King and Parliament with a gunpowder explosion beneath the meeting place of Parliament known as the *Gunpowder Plot*.³³ The alleged conspirators were captured before the explosion took place. The perpetrators were quickly executed without proof of their involvement.³⁴ As a result, James went to great lengths to impose further fines and confiscate things from various Catholics and imprisoning others during this time. The greatest accomplishment of King James I was the installation of the *Authorized Version*, or the

³⁰Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 29.

³¹See Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), s.v. "Puritanism." The Puritans originated as an organized movement during the English Reformation of the sixteenth century. The name references the reforming of the Church of England to "purify" its existence. The theology of the Puritans bears similarities to Reformed theology with figures representing their ideas such as John Wycliffe, William Tyndall, and John Knox. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the public began to accept their ideals, but as James I and Charles I were in power, following their work was prohibited. Their emphasis during the English Reformation was: personal salvation entirely from God, the Bible was an indispensable guide to life, the church should reflect the teachings of Scripture, and society was one unified whole.

³²Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 38.

³³Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 2, *The Reformation to The Present Day* (New York: Harper One, 2010), 198. Emphasis original.

³⁴*Ibid.*

King James Version, of Scripture translated in 1611. Divine authority of the King was strong during this time as it continued in the reign of the following King.

King Charles I took the throne in 1629 with the same views as his father regarding the centralization of the monarchy. Herve Picton noted, “Deeply convinced that he was accountable to God only, he placed himself above the laws of men and, for most of his reign, completely sidelined Parliament.”³⁵ With the Puritans and Anglicans still in conflict, Charles diverted back toward Catholicism with his marriage to a sister of King Louis XIII of France. Negotiations leading into the marriage consisted of her court to be free to practice their religious observances.³⁶ The Puritans were outraged comparing her to Jezebel of the Bible. Amid the controversy, Arminianism added to the turmoil from Parliament. A war with Scotland proved to be a further distraction from religious reform. Tension in all areas best describes his rule of England.

A civil war followed with Parliament and Charles for English rule. Parliament garnered support from Scotland while Charles resorted to nobility and the Catholics in Ireland.³⁷ Political freedom, religious freedom, and freedom of conscience were all reasons for this devastating war.³⁸ Politically, the nation was amid turmoil in deciding which body had the authority to rule. In a religious sense, England was mixed with Catholic, Anglican, and Puritan structures that were combatting over ideas flowing into politics. Armies grew on both sides as support came. No addition more important to the history of England than Oliver Cromwell to Parliament. A descendant of one of Henry VIII’s advisors, Cromwell was a wealthy man who had become a Puritan and avid reader

³⁵Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 42.

³⁶Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:199.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 204.

³⁸Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 46.

of Scripture.³⁹ His religious convictions brought him to base all decisions on the will of God. This idea slowed the decision-making process, but he was determined to follow this course. Cromwell communicated his ideas to his troops effectively as they followed in his concern for the will of God. During the war, Charles was caught making promises to Scotland that he did not intend to keep. The Scots turned the King over to Parliament where he later escaped. Charles then made further contradictory promises to both Scotland and Parliament. The Parliament army finally conquered the Scots, captured the King, and emptied Parliament. Charles I was tried, convicted without a personal defense due to his view of their illegal authority over him, and executed.

The Scots rushed to appoint the son of the former King, Charles II to rule Scotland as the Irish seized an opportunity to rebel. Cromwell took power in England while Charles II left the continent.⁴⁰ Cromwell first set out to reform both the church and state. Legislation was passed to reform customs back toward a Biblical model. He was more ecumenical leaving room for Presbyterians, Baptists, and advocates of episcopacy.⁴¹ Picton wrote,

In 1650, the government issued a decree requiring each citizen to attend a place of worship on a regular basis, without specifying the type of service people were supposed to attend. The measure, however, was hardly ever enforced. *The Instrument of Government*, which can be regarded as the constitution of the Protectorate, was published as soon as Cromwell became Lord Protector in 1653.⁴²

Within this document, vague terminology described the Christian religion of England deliberately. Topics like conversion, the training of clergy, and tolerance were covered to guide people within the different splinters of Christianity. Article 37 stated,

That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth) shall not be restrained from,

³⁹Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:205.

⁴⁰Ibid., 207.

⁴¹Ibid., 207-8.

⁴²Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England*, 49.

but shall be protected in, the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts: provided this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practice licentiousness.⁴³

This document, even with the latitude given to religious matters, proved to be a step in the right direction for peace in turbulent times. The Protectorate later failed with the death of Cromwell. His son, Richard, attempted to follow his father's direction only to fall short and leave England to restore the monarchy.

Charles II was recalled to the throne by Parliament. The King sought to bring Presbyterians within the national church which left the Puritans in outrage as Parliament opposed the movement.⁴⁴ Scotland had already accepted the Presbyterian movement, but the conflict between the Presbyterians and Catholics was still volatile. Riots broke out in Scotland while the English responded by slaughtering many Presbyterians. Charles II died shortly after claiming Catholicism as his religion. His brother, James II, was his successor. The new ruler desired to return Roman Catholicism to its former power. He positioned Catholic leaders in powerful positions and declared all other worship as unlawful. English rebellion resulted in a new king once again. William, Prince of Orange, and his wife Mary, the daughter of James, came to the throne as James II fled to France.⁴⁵ A significant event occurred for Anglicans when tolerance was granted to all who ascribed to the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of 1562. As for Puritans, their ideology continued but at a meager pace. Their influence was still weighty as figures within the movement published influential works like John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.⁴⁶ Both works were beneficial to the interpretation of Scripture and meditation.

⁴³Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, 576.

⁴⁴Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:208.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 209.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

Early Colonial Life

As Kingdom leadership changed hands many times over the years, people began migrating to the new world in search of greater freedom. Some left for religious freedom as the desire to have the ability to choose how to worship became convictional rather than to appease authority. Others came for freedom politically inspired by the idea of self-governing. The move was difficult as the new world presented many new challenges. Eastern European powers were already struggling for strongholds in America. Spain, France, and England had already begun the pursuit by conquering land and settling quickly to provide support and rule.

During the rule of Queen Elizabeth, England sought to settle in North America. Virginia was aptly named for Elizabeth in 1584 by Sir Walter Raleigh, the Queen's favorite. The venture became disastrous. His attempt failed leaving the first voyage to return home while the second attempt simply vanished.⁴⁷ Elizabeth died before the permanent colony was settled. As James the new King was in power, England founded Jamestown. The hope for the new colony was to establish the Church of England in the new world. The true purpose of the venture proved to be economic as agriculture and trade were profitable. The Puritan influence came with new settlers, but James did not approve. A war with the Indians became a distraction to furthering religious agendas. Though the war hindered religious movement to a degree, Puritanism remained in the background. Slaves were imported from Africa to assist in agricultural development, and eventually, their presence became a religious issue.

Steadily, the culture of the American colonies benefited greatly from English authority and impact. Economic stability took time, but it allowed families to start fresh in the new world. Joseph Smith said, "Dramatic improvements in the standard of living fostered a steady 'Anglicanization' of colonial American society in the eighteenth

⁴⁷Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:277.

century, fueled by increasing economic stability and modest prosperity.”⁴⁸ The Church of England found new ground and increasing stability to continue growing in the new world.

Further north, the Puritan movement found a stable beginning in New England. Several colonies were founded, the first being the Plymouth Plantation, with a clear religious motivation.⁴⁹ Smith wrote, “Religion provided a key organizing principle in the seventeenth-century process of colonial stabilization, which appeared to become less essential in the 1700s.”⁵⁰ The Puritans sought to live in a community more consistent with the teachings of the New Testament. The Massachusetts Bay Company was established in the community to accomplish this task as the Puritans believed it could never come to pass in England.⁵¹ As England battled the Puritan movement with Charles I in power and Archbishop Laud’s efforts, persecution of the Puritans continued. Some ten thousand Puritans left England for the new world.⁵² The Puritan mindset was twofold: the new world provided an opportunity to practice religion freely and Puritans desired to return to pure living directly from Scripture. Given the various denominations that were swiftly moving to the America from Europe, theological controversy was almost assured. Among many differences within the Christian faith, baptism was one of the first major issues for the Puritans to tackle.

The Puritans battled with the issue of baptism concerning children and faith. It was common practice to baptize children within Christianity as hope of the future blessings of salvation.⁵³ Puritans thought that conversion was necessary in order for the

⁴⁸John Howard Smith, *The First Great Awakening: Redefining Religion in British America, 1725-1775* (Lanham, MD: Fredrick Dickinson University Press, 2015), 40.

⁴⁹Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:279.

⁵⁰Smith, *The First Great Awakening*, 40.

⁵¹Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:280.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³See Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), s.v. “Baptism, Infant.” Infant baptism historically dates back as early as Irenaeus and Origen as given to children of professing believers. There is no direct command in Scripture for this

converted to experience true Christianity. Thinking in this direction allowed them to question the idea of infant baptism and seek biblical answers. Guarding their new life of purity in a new world proved to be difficult. Justo Gonzalez noted, “Thus, many came to the conclusion that there was a ‘half-way covenant,’ embracing those who, having been baptized, had not been converted.”⁵⁴ Those that experience the covenant only half-way were not granted full membership to the church until their conversion. Full membership came with privileges of participation in the decision-making process of the church as congregational rule became the choice of church government.

During the time approaching the Enlightenment, the Church of England carried on amidst a dominating presence of Calvinistic Congregationalism. The newly forming nation of America was also beginning to mirror this view. Smith noted, “New England was dominated by a Calvinistic Congregationalism challenged by Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, and various Independent denominations such as the Baptists and Quakers.”⁵⁵ The history and influence of Calvinism within both the Church of England and the new world is a critical feature to religious formation, the apologetic of Whitefield, and combatting Enlightenment thought.

practice, but the concept could exist in the household baptisms in Acts. The concept of covenant experience as a family is seen in the lives of Noah (his whole family received with him into the ark), Abraham (administered the covenant to all male members of his house), Israel (passing through the Red Sea as an act of redemption), John the Baptist (receiving the Holy Spirit as a child), and Peter (speaks of the covenant procedure of the Old Testament promised for the people and their children). The Puritans began with this concept as Christianity practiced at that time. The hope was that if the child was baptized, a profession of faith would follow as the Lord led in calling them to saving faith later. As their knowledge of Scripture grew, the concept became a theological issue of proper practice according to biblical living. See also s.v. “Baptism, Believers.” The concept the Puritans that began to be problematic was believers’ baptism. Baptism of those that had repented and believed in the saving work of Christ were to be baptized according to the New Testament. The Great Commission in Matt 28:19 assumes preaching first before baptism, at Pentecost Peter preached first before baptizing three thousand people (Acts 2:14-42), entire households were baptized after hearing the Gospel (Acts 10:45; 16:32-33), and the meaning of baptism described by Paul (Rom 6). The Puritans wrestled with this idea only in attempts to return to biblical principles over forced tradition.

⁵⁴Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2:282.

⁵⁵Smith, *The First Great Awakening*, 1-2.

Calvinistic Theology

The Reformer and theologian John Calvin is credited with the majority of the theological framework within Reformed theology that influenced both Whitefield and presuppositional apologetics. His work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, is an instrumental piece in reinforcing the idea of natural theology flowing toward a high view of Scripture in apologetic and theological thought. Phillip Johnson described the *Institutes* as,

It was a scholarly work, yet clear, concise, and compelling. It was also a perfect answer to the persecutors of Protestantism, because it was dispassionate, meticulous in its reasoning, and thoroughly biblical—neither accusatory nor overtly defensive, but a positive affirmation of Protestant belief. It dispelled many popular misunderstandings and won converts to the Protestant cause all over Europe.⁵⁶

For many during the time of the Reformation and beyond, this particular work of Calvin was both evangelistic and apologetic against the stream of Catholic theological tradition and the coming cultural tide of the Enlightenment. Specifically for Whitefield, he accepted Calvinistic theology because of the connection to Scripture. Whitefield wrote, “I embrace the Calvinistic scheme, not because of Calvin, but Jesus Christ, I think, has taught it to me.”⁵⁷ Scripture above all was the guiding force in Whitefield’s spiritual life.

In the initial chapter, Calvin struggles with the idea of knowledge and where it begins concerning God and humanity. He wrote, “Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes, and gives birth to the other.”⁵⁸ The struggle presented by Enlightenment thought was found in the individual search for ultimate truth

⁵⁶Phillip Johnson, “The Writer for the People of God,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016), locs. 234-35. Ebook.

⁵⁷George Whitefield, “Letter CCCCLVIII,” in *Letters of George Whitefield: For the Period 1734-1742* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976), 442.

⁵⁸John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1846), 38.

by seeking verifiable sources. In Calvin's time, reform recalled the Protestant church to Scripture for ultimate truth. He continued to point believers back to God first in the search for ultimate truth. Calvin was convinced that the truth about humanity resides not inside the individual but with God as the primary source of knowledge. Calvin continued, "For, in the first place, no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves; because it is perfectly obvious, that the endowments which we possess cannot possibly be from ourselves; nay, that our very being is nothing else than subsistence in God alone."⁵⁹ Seeking God first reveals the state of humanity in view of a holy God.

Next, Calvin noted the power of sin and its effects on all humanity as it related to knowledge. The compelling feature of *Institutes* is the reach of sin within all humanity. The effects of sin are devastating in many ways. Calvin described,

In particular, the miserable ruin into which the revolt of the first man has plunged us, compels us to turn our eyes upwards; not only that while hungry and famishing we may thence ask what we want, but being aroused by fear may learn humility. For as there exists in man something like a world of misery, and ever since we were stript of the divine attire our naked shame discloses an immense series of disgraceful properties, every man, being stung by the consciousness of his own unhappiness, in this way necessarily obtains at least some knowledge of God.⁶⁰

From the first human sin in the story of Adam and Eve (Gen 3),⁶¹ humanity lost a vital connection with God due to disobedience. Failing to adhere to the instruction of God, falling into temptation, and finally deciding to usurp God to find satisfaction led both them and all of humanity following them in a downward spiral. At the end of this abyss of sinful shame, Calvin held onto the hope that all humanity can find knowledge of God. He stated, "On the other hand, it is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after

⁵⁹Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 38.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture referenced will be from the Holman Christian Standard Version.

such contemplation to look into himself.”⁶² It is clear that, even with sin in view, humanity can find ultimate truth only when faced with the idea of sin in view of a holy God. Calvin continued, “Convinced, however, we are not, if we look to ourselves only, and not to the Lord also—He being the only standard by the application of which this conviction can be produced.”⁶³ The tainting of sin for all humanity changes the view of everything including the pursuit of ultimate truth. It is clear that Calvin points to a beginning point with God rather than humanity in this pursuit.

Second, Calvin wrote that things on earth are also tainted by sin, therefore, things around us are also susceptible to being corrupted. God also cursed the ground in Genesis 3 as a penalty for the disobedience of humanity. Even the things that humans perceive are corrupted with sin. He wrote,

And since nothing appears within us or around us that is not tainted with very great impurity, so long as we keep our mind within the confines of human pollution, anything which is in some small degree less defiled, delights us as if it were most pure: just as an eye, to which nothing but black had been previously presented, deems an object of a whitish, or even of a brownish hue, to be perfectly white.⁶⁴

The problem within humanity seeking human reason as the only means of ultimate truth is a problem of perspective. The devastating effects of sin skew perspective enough to seek ultimate truth inside a sin-ravaged viewpoint. Humanity is predisposed to discover the wrong answers regarding ultimate truth without God. Calvin expounded,

Thus, too, it happens in estimating our spiritual qualities. So long as we do not look beyond the earth, we are quite pleased with our own righteousness, wisdom, and virtue; we address ourselves in the most flattering terms, and seem only less than demigods. But should we once begin to raise our thoughts to God, and reflect what kind of Being he is, and how absolute the perfection of that righteousness, and wisdom, and virtue, to which, as a standard, we are bound to be conformed, what formerly delighted us by its false show of righteousness, will become polluted with the greatest iniquity; what strangely imposed upon us under the name of wisdom,

⁶²Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 39.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

will disgust by its extreme folly; and what presented the appearance of virtuous energy, will be condemned as the most miserable impotence.⁶⁵

Even by attempting to utilize reason alone as a primary source of finding ultimate truth, Calvin believed that this pursuit was futile outside a proper view of God as the primary focus. When humanity views truth only from an earthly perspective, humanity becomes God. The source of all virtue, wisdom, knowledge, and truth become human centered.

John MacArthur wrote,

False belief systems always seem to downplay human depravity. Some even deny it altogether, insisting that people are fundamentally good. This is a tendency of nearly all quasi-Christian heresies, humanistic philosophies, and secular worldviews. Apostles of those religions and philosophies seem to think describing human nature in upbeat and optimistic terms somehow makes their viewpoint nobler. That fact alone perfectly epitomizes the blind illogic that goes hand in hand with unbelief and false religion.⁶⁶

The downplaying of human sin and the depths of depravity is a common thread among philosophies seeking to supplant God and the source of ultimate truth. The Bible compiles ample evidence of the human condition in relation to sin. The first occasion of human sin is found within the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is imperative to note that temptation by the serpent took place before sin became a reality (Gen 3:1-7). Temptation from the serpent consisted of three specific areas of temptation that all humanity: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life (Gen 3:6). Jesus faced temptation in the same way in three gospel accounts (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). Matthew and Luke provide more detail as Jesus resists temptation by directly quoting the Old Testament in response to each level of intensity. The New Testament specified that these areas of temptation are from the world and not God (1 John 2:16). These temptations are no different than what all humanity faces (Heb 4:15), but Jesus remained sinless.

⁶⁵Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 39.

⁶⁶John MacArthur, "Man's Radical Corruption," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016), locs. 290-91. Ebook.

The pervasiveness of sin from the first man to contemporary humanity is also seen in Scripture. Calvin used the doctrine of original sin to build a case for the total depravity of man. The Apostle Paul notes that sin and death entered the world through the disobedience of one man. Now, death is passed on to all those who sin (Rom 5:12, 19). The pervasiveness of sin is also total in terms of humanity. Not one man has remained sinless as already seen from Hebrews, but Paul wrote that everyone has sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul describes the state of humanity as being found dead in transgressions (Eph 2:1-3). King David noted that sin came from birth and passed down from parents (Ps 51:5). The prophet Jeremiah describes the condition of the human heart in a spiritual sense as being deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). The devastation of sin within humanity is only alleviated by the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit (Isa 59:2; Rom 5:8; Heb 4:13). Once a new believer has come to know God as Savior, then the person can begin to actively pursue ultimate truth in the revelation of God. The beginning point or source of ultimate truth for Calvin resides within the Word of God given to humanity. The reformer noted,

That the authority of Scripture is founded on its being spoken by God. This confirmed by the conscience of the godly, and the consent of all men of the least candour. . . . Last and necessary conclusion, that the authority of Scripture is sealed on the hearts of believers by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The certainty of this testimony.⁶⁷

Certainty for the authority of Scripture is found with the author, God, and it is sealed with the work of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of humanity. Scripture, since it began with God, can only be truthful in all areas of its reach given the character of its author (John 1:1, 14:6-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

Third, he consistently founded thought regarding truth upon the authority of Scripture. Calvin believed that the finite mind within all humanity was so darkened by sin

⁶⁷Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 66.

that efforts to gain knowledge outside of Scripture only led to idolatry.⁶⁸ Authority in the human experience could not be humanity alone due to the devastating effects of sin.

Johnson noted,

Calvin's devotion to the authority of Scripture is probably the work's most distinctive and persuasive feature. He frequently appealed to the church fathers' writings to demonstrate that he was setting forth no new ideas about what the Bible meant. But he was not reluctant to dissent from the fathers and demonstrate clearly where their opinions were at odds with Scripture when those occasions arose. Because Scripture was so prominently highlighted throughout the work as Calvin's supreme authority—and given Calvin's remarkable knowledge of the Bible—anyone who would dispute him must do it biblically.⁶⁹

The stability of his view of Scripture was in that arguing against those principles required the opponent to use Scripture. This idea is a main point of presuppositional apologetics, which will be detailed in a further section in this work.

The English Calvinists came to New England carrying the ideas of Calvin toward theological clarity. It was clear that the struggle with reason and Enlightenment thought followed them to another continent. Brooks Holifield wrote, “They thought of theology as a delicate balance of human reasoning and divine biblical revelation, an appeal to ‘the evidence of Scripture and reason.’ They aspired to give reason its due credit while subordinating it always to the revealed Word.”⁷⁰ Though reason was thought of highly, it still was not to take the place of Scripture regarding ultimate truth. The tradition of the scholastics brought reason into theology with the works of Aristotle. Holifield noted that this tradition of proving the existences of God with rationality carried over to New England theologians.⁷¹ In Calvin's writings, he attempted to prove the existence of God by reason of Scripture. A true representation of the knowledge of God

⁶⁸E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 29.

⁶⁹Johnson, “The Writer for the People of God,” 235.

⁷⁰Holifield, *Theology in America*, 25.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 31-32.

required true faith. The church in the new world battled with both Enlightenment rationalism and incomplete or nonexistence of faith in both preachers and the people.

As previously noted history of the Church of England, articles of faith were developed to aid the church in theological education. Queen Elizabeth sanctioned the *Thirty-Nine Articles* for the church in 1563. Whitefield ascribed to this confession at his ordination, but it was not without his personal examination against Scripture.⁷² The articles themselves are Calvinistic in detail. While it is clear that the articles provided theological structure for Whitefield, the confession was also tied closely with Calvin's theology. Timothy McKnight noted, "Although Whitefield identified himself as a Calvinist, he was more committed to Christ and the Scriptures than to any theological system."⁷³ Identifying as a Calvinist also connected Whitefield to a system of thought that held presuppositions set by Scripture rather than by tradition or the rational thought of humanity.

Presuppositional Apologetic Approach

The origin of apologetics can be historically traced back to the early church fathers with figures such as Aristides, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.⁷⁴ While their works and others following them have been invaluable to

⁷²George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (London: Banner of Truth, 1965), 68.

⁷³Timothy Ray McKnight, "George Whitefield's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 87.

⁷⁴Early apologists of the Patristic era were greatly concerned with the Christian faith being confused with pagan thaumaturgy. Though these were not the only apologist of this period, these three are important to the presuppositional apologetic approach. Aristides was an Athenian philosopher who addressed Emperor Hadrian with an Apology that divided humanity into five categories: barbarians, Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, and Christians. Ultimately, Aristides believed Christians to surpass all others due to their worship of the one true God and righteousness both religiously and toward others. Justin Martyr provided a style for apologetic work. He remained brief and to the point which gave rise to pseudo-Justinian argument structures. See *Exhortation to the Greeks* and *Discourse to the Greeks*. Clement of Alexandria was the first master apologist coupling the Christian faith with ancient culture. He was able to combine Christian piety with the high value of the arts and classical civilization. Origen would succeed Clement and branch into the study of philosophy. Origen maintained that faith is not based on philosophy but through prophecies and miracles in the preface of *Contra Celsum*. In this work, Origen adopted a direct, logical style of pursuing an argument to its ultimate conclusion. Each of these apologists were helpful in laying the groundwork sufficient for progress in explaining the reason for belief in the Christian faith See

Christians, various forms of apologetics were created to help believers better understand how to defend the Christian faith against the ideas of humanism and atheism. Reason became an enormous issue to struggle with as time progressed. Smith noted, “Sixteenth-century Protestant theologians did not deny the power of reason to explain the natural world, but defended the doctrine that the superior truths of Christianity superseded reason even if they were not necessarily contrary to it.”⁷⁵ As previously reviewed, Calvin was instrumental in both reforming the church and providing sound theology for defending the Christian faith. His work was also adopted by a range of Protestant perspectives from the English Reformation. Puritans, Anglicans, and Presbyterians used his work to continue to understand Scripture more clearly and live it out more precisely. As the break from Catholicism continued in the new world, questions regarding the practice of religion arose and drove leaders back to the Bible for answers.

George Whitefield was a beneficiary of the labors of those that began to question the Christian faith. His life was marked with finding personal clarity concerning God and salvation through the study of the Word of God. Whitefield found himself a wretched sinner compared to a holy, pure God. The itinerant wrestled with salvation and good works in attempts to be good enough to accept the precious gift of salvation. He eventually learned the truth that the work for salvation was already completed in Christ, and his role was to accept the Lord and allow Jesus to restore his heart. As he began to preach the message of the gospel, Whitefield displayed this idea as a presupposition from the authority of the revelation of God.

Presuppositions are built-in points of beginning and interpretation within the mind. Philosophers and theologians differ widely on the origin of presuppositions. J. Oliver Buswell regarded the mind as a blank tablet that draws conclusions based on data

Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 30-47.

⁷⁵Smith, *The First Great Awakening*, 20.

from experience.⁷⁶ Stuart C. Hackett felt that the mind had everything necessary to make valid conclusions.⁷⁷ Theists also warrant a positive notion of presuppositions within the mind, but natural theology⁷⁸ is capable of leading humanity to the idea of the existence of God. Whitefield did not seem to question the existence of God, rather he had the most difficulty understanding salvation without an accurate view of God. Once he understood the true value of the Gospel through a presuppositional change towards the authority of the Word of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit in his heart, Whitefield could not contain the glorious message of Christ that freed humanity from the bondage of sin. His preaching validates this idea in the both the pace and distance covered to deliver the Gospel. His preaching will be detailed in the following chapter.

Christian Apologetics is defined as a defense of the Christian faith. The term “apologetics” derives from a Greek root meaning “defense” or “reply to a formal charge.”⁷⁹ One of the most prominent biblical passages containing this terminology is found in the Apostle Peter’s writings. He exhorts readers to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Pet 3:15). Robert Reymond noted a surface analysis of this passage as

commanding that we make the Lordship of Christ our ultimate heart-commitment, assumes a heart stance of faith, implies that the Christian’s hope is fully capable of a reasonable defense, assumes the possibility of communication between the believer and unbeliever, calls *every* believer to be ready upon *every* occasion to give *anyone*

⁷⁶Gordon R. Lewis, *Testing Christianity’s Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 36.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸ See Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), s.v. “Natural Theology.” Geisler calls Natural Theology the study of God based on what one can know from nature. Natural theology depends on arguments for God’s existence: the cosmological argument, the moral argument, and the teleological argument. Scripturally, natural theology has a strong presence in Romans 1 giving power to all creation pointing to God as its author.

⁷⁹Robert L. Reymond, *Faith’s Reasons for Believing: An Apologetic Antidote to Mindless Christianity* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2008), 18.

who asks the, reason for his faith commitment, and indicates the proper attitude with which the Christian is to make his “apology.”⁸⁰

First, apologetics is for the nonbeliever. Hope is a central tenant of the Christian faith, and it is the hope that guides believers to live transformed lives. Second, apologetics also assists believers in battling unbelief. John Frame expounded on this idea. “On this definition, apologetics is part of evangelism, witness to non-christians. We should not forget, of course, that Christians also sometimes ask reasons for their hope. Apologetics evangelizes nonbelievers, but it also evangelizes the unbelief within the believer.”⁸¹

Third, the task of apologetics is not simply to defeat arguments. Apologetics has an inherent goal of repentance and faith. Frame described,

Apologetics, like evangelism, has the goal of repentance and faith (Acts 2:38; 16:31), with baptism as the consequence of faith in those who are not yet baptized (Matt 28:19). Faith is turning to Christ. Repentance, the opposite side of the coin, is turning from sin. Repentance and faith designate a common movement of the soul from two perspectives, for one cannot turn to Christ without turning from sin, or vice versa.⁸²

Finally, reason also has a place within apologetics. While the Enlightenment sought to place reason above faith, R. C. Sproul, a classical apologist, noted, “Christianity is a faith, to be sure; but there are reasons for this faith. Faith is not to be confused with reason; but neither is it to be separated from it.”⁸³ Though reason cannot stand alone in satisfying faith, it can assist both believers and nonbelievers toward ultimate truth.

Theologians and philosophers continued to defend both God and the Christian faith during the time of Whitefield, but Cornelius Van Til later became a prominent leader in communicating the value of presuppositional apologetics. Considerably,

⁸⁰Reymond, *Faith's Reasons for Believing*, 19-20. Emphasis original.

⁸¹John M. Frame, *John Frame's Selected Shorter Writings* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007), 1:165.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 13.

Whitefield's preaching demonstrated much of Van Til's thought in defending Christianity. Defending the value of knowing God, finding ultimate truth in Scripture, and living changed by faith were all exemplified by Whitefield. Van Til further defined the reasonability of the Christian faith, and he gave apologists another tool to use in defending it.

Approach of Cornelius Van Til

Presuppositional apologetics can be traced to Reformed Theology building largely from the work of John Calvin. In the nineteenth century, James Orr and Abraham Kuyper desired to present Christianity as a complete worldview.⁸⁴ At that time, Modernism was beginning to permeate the culture giving rise to further scientific explanations in the areas of knowledge and truth. Travis Freeman noted, "Building on the foundation laid by Orr and Kuyper, Cornelius Van Til endeavored to defend Christianity as a holistic worldview. Considered the father of presuppositional apologetics, Van Til felt that 'all of one's person should be involved with defending the faith.'"⁸⁵ Van Til began with a strong presupposition of the authority of the Bible in the human experience. In loving the Lord with your mind, Van Til hinged this approach on intellectual analysis and confrontation.⁸⁶ Defining presuppositional apologetics begins with terminology. Van Til defined presuppositional apologetics as

an elementary assumption in one's reasoning or in the process by which opinions are formed. In this book, a presupposition is not just any assumption in an argument, but a personal commitment that is held at the most basic level of one's network of

⁸⁴David K. Naugle Jr., *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 5.

⁸⁵ Travis Allen Freeman, "Preaching to Provide a Worldview Change: Tim Keller's Use of Presuppositional Apologetics in Preaching" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 83.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 84.

beliefs. Presuppositions form a wide-ranging foundational perspective in terms of which everything else is interpreted and evaluated.⁸⁷

Presuppositions guide this apologetic specifically in the sense of authority and a beginning point. This apologetic begins with God and His revelation to humanity.⁸⁸ Man is not the center of this apologetic like other apologetic approaches that are based in human reason that leads to a logical conclusion for the existence of God. Gordon Lewis wrote, “All other attempts to defend Christianity, he (Van Til) thinks, fail to do justice to man’s total depravity, to divine grace, to covenant theology, or to biblical authority.”⁸⁹ Unlike other forms of apologetics, Van Til sought to begin by presupposing the existence of God and not to prove the existence of God from the view point of man. He continued,

The question we must ask constantly is how anyone has conceived of the relation of the human mind to the divine mind. It is on this point that the greatest difference obtains between the theistic and non-theistic position. The former cannot think of the human mind as functional at all except when it is in contact with God; the latter presupposes it to be possible that the human mind functions normally whether or not God exists.⁹⁰

Perspective and theology drove Van Til to a robust knowledge of Scripture for the sake of deeper understanding. Boa and Bowman further defined this apologetic as, “Emphasizing the presentation of Christ *revealed*—as based on the authoritative revelation of God in

⁸⁷Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998), 2. In discussing Van Til’s apologetic method, John Frame defines a presupposition when as, “A presupposition is a belief that takes precedence over another and therefore serves as a criterion for another. An ultimate presupposition is a belief over which no other takes precedence.” John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987), 45. Frame distinguishes between a basic presupposition and an ultimate presupposition, stating that Christian’s ultimate presuppositions come from the Bible. Norman Geisler further defines Van Til’s apologetic as revelational presuppositionalism. According to revelational presuppositionalism, one must begin any rational understanding of truth by presupposing the truth of the Christian faith. One must posit that the Triune God has revealed himself in Holy Scriptures, the divinely authoritative Word of God. Without this presupposes one cannot make any sense out of the universes, life, language, history, or anything else. See Norman Geisler, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 607.

⁸⁸John M Frame, “Van Til and the Ligonier Apologetic,” *The Westminster Theological Journal* 47, no. 2 (September 1985): 282.

⁸⁹Lewis, *Testing Christianity’s Truth Claims*, 125.

⁹⁰Cornelius Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (N.p.:Den Dulk Foundation, 1969), 4.

Scripture and in Jesus Christ.”⁹¹ The presuppositional apologetic is focused on clarity leaving no ambiguity or neutrality. According to Frame, this aspect is evident in the work of Van Til in two simple assertions: (1) that human beings are obligated to presuppose God in all of their thinking, and (2) that unbelievers resist this obligation in every aspect of thought and life.⁹² Like Christianity, this apologetic touches every area of life once Scripture is viewed as truth and God worshipped as Savior and author of all things including truth.

One particular nuance of this apologetic is the close connection with Calvinism. While Calvinism does not necessarily align perfectly with presuppositional apologetics, it does hold to the noetic effects of sin. Calvinism and presuppositional apologetics agree that sin extends to the mind⁹³ within total depravity. Whitefield preached from the same “Calvinist theological paradigm wherein God chooses the time and place of one’s conversion, the ‘appropriate response’ would be repentance and turning to Christ.”⁹⁴ Coupled with this paradigm was his talent as a preacher to “evoke life-changing ‘religious experiences’ and appealing for the ‘personal decisions’ which he made so very necessary.”⁹⁵ The itinerant formed his polemic around the presuppositions of the Word of God.

This apologetic method has specific goals in focusing on these critical aspects of humanity in view of God and His revelation. According to Frame, “The goal of

⁹¹Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 221.

⁹²Frame, “Van Til and the Ligonier Apologetic,” 282.

⁹³Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 222.

⁹⁴Jerome Dean Mahaffey, “George Whitefield’s Homiletic Art: Neo-Sophism in the Great Awakening,” *Homiletic* 31, no. 1 (June 1, 2006): 12-13.

⁹⁵Richard B. Steele, “John Wesley’s Synthesis of the Revival Practices of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Nicholas von Zinzendorf,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 160.

apologetics is to evoke or strengthen faith, not merely to bring intellectual persuasion. Directed toward unbelievers, it is an aspect of evangelism; toward believers, it is training in godliness.”⁹⁶ Critics of presuppositional apologetics compare it to fideism, but Van Til believed fideism to be at great odds with presuppositional apologetics.⁹⁷ The obvious reason for his disagreement is the issue of authority or starting point for the apologetic. Fideism begins with the individual and “leaves open the question of what criterion of truth the self should acknowledge.”⁹⁸ Within fideism, the spiritual experience is the only necessary component and it is not necessary to justify anything. Simply, this apologetic could be considered experience without reason while presuppositional apologetics finds authority in Scripture.

Initially, the point of reference for seeking truth is God in this apologetic. Unlike the classical apologetic and the Enlightenment movement, humanity is not the central figure. Greg Bahnsen noted, “A Christian apologetic grows out of, and shaped according to, a total dedication to the wisdom of the *Logos* as expressed in His inscripturated Word—not self-sufficient human ‘wisdom.’”⁹⁹ Reason, as considered in the Enlightenment, begins with the thoughts of humanity, which is completely infiltrated by sin. Relying on the work of Calvin, presuppositional apologetics begins first with the authority of the revelation of God. The Bible informs the doctrine of sin and its effects on the human condition. If man is capable of nothing good due to sin, then the reasoning of man must also be tainted. This thought stems from the work of the apostle Paul in

⁹⁶John M. Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” in *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 219.

⁹⁷Frame, “Van Til and the Ligonier Apologetic,” 284.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 285.

⁹⁹Greg L. Bahnsen, *Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended*, ed. Joel McDurmon (Powder Springs, GA: The American Vision Press; Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2008), 3-4. Emphasis original.

Romans. He wrote about the unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (Rom 1:18). Sin, being a blinding agent within humanity, causes human beings to remain blind or lost when dealing with truth. Then Paul provides an idea known as natural theology. Within this version of theological thought, nature has shown all things that are necessary in order for God to be evident. Creation reveals the power of God with such tangible features that humanity is compelled to notice the obviousness of His work (Rom 1:19-20). Paul continued to describe the wickedness of sinful humanity as they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God . . . their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools (Rom 1:21-22). Sin, ultimately the choice to reject God, leads humanity into further spiritual and intellectual peril. Authority was removed from God and placed with humans. By becoming fools, god, or at least a representation of God, was now the product of human thought (Rom 1:23). The Apostle summarized this action in total explaining that the truth of God was exchanged for a lie and humanity worshipped something created rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25). Frame added, “So the unbeliever’s problem is first ethical, and only secondarily intellectual. His intellectual problems stem from his ethical unwillingness to acknowledge the evidence. Unbelief distorts human thought.”¹⁰⁰ The distortion of human thought leads to a belief that God is not enough, therefore “right” human action replaced God in the Enlightenment.

Second, God, in His all-sufficiency, has given humanity a way to ground knowledge and truth in an objective way. Van Til understood that brute facts were of no real use unless there was a scheme for them to fit. He claimed that Christianity is the only schematism that allows facts to fit. Any other schematism devised by humanity ultimately fails due to the finite capabilities of the human mind.¹⁰¹ Humanity can only

¹⁰⁰Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” 211.

¹⁰¹Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Evidences*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint, 2nd ed.

know God through His special revelation to the world. He concluded, “If God does not exist, we could know nothing.”¹⁰² Bahnsen added, “Faith must necessarily start with the clear, authoritative, self-attesting, special revelation of God in Scripture coordinated with the Holy Spirit’s inner testimony to the regenerated heart.”¹⁰³ The Scripture contains all humanity needs in order to know saving faith, but it is the Holy Spirit’s presence that illuminates truth to human hearts. Frame wrote,

The content of faith, Scripture, may transcend reason in these senses: (1) it cannot be proved by human reason alone; (2) it contains mysteries, even apparent contradictions, that cannot be fully resolved by human logic; (3) only the Spirit, not reason alone, can create belief from the heart, overcoming sinful impulse toward unbelief. There is no conflict between faith and reason, however, when the latter functions in accord with God’s norms.¹⁰⁴

The role of the Holy Spirit is undeniable in the work of ultimate truth in Scripture. The authority of biblical truth within this apologetic is seen as an assumed positive, but all worldviews have presuppositions. The challenge remains as to which presuppositions are considered helpful in seeking ultimate truth.

Third, presuppositions are foundational for every worldview. Presuppositions are accepted beliefs that support other beliefs, arguments, or evidence.¹⁰⁵ All human beings have presuppositions that lead ultimately to a set of beliefs that govern the way life is lived out. Bahnsen agreed in that

each worldview has its presuppositions about reality, knowledge, and ethics; these mutually influence and support each other. There are no facts or uses of reason which are available outside of the interpretive system of basic commitments or assumptions which appeals to them; the presuppositions used by Christians and non-

(Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2016), 68.

¹⁰²Cornelius Van Til, “An Introduction to Systematic Theology” (Classroom Syllabus: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1949), 9.

¹⁰³Bahnsen, *Presuppositional Apologetics*, 4-5.

¹⁰⁴Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” 210.

¹⁰⁵Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 21. Nash also stated that an acceptance of the presuppositions of the Christian worldview will lead a person to conclusions very different from those that would follow a commitment, say, to the presuppositions of naturalism. One’s axioms determine one’s theorems.

Christians determine what they will accept as factual and reasonable, and their respective presuppositions about fact and logic will determine what they say about reality.¹⁰⁶

Having presuppositions is basic in all humanity. Knowing where each should be grounded within a solid foundation is critical to the presuppositional apologetic and the polemic of Whitefield.

Similarities to Approach of Whitefield

Whitefield and the presuppositional apologetic share a variety of similarities. First, he was committed to the authority of Scripture as an initial point of understanding God. Whitefield acknowledged,

If we once get above our Bibles, and cease making the written word of God our sole rule both as to faith and practice, we shall soon lie open to all manner of delusion and be in great danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Our blessed Lord, though he had the Spirit of God without measure, yet always was governed by, and fought the devil with, "It is written."¹⁰⁷

Submission to the Word of God is a practical component of Whitefield's thoughts as well as the presuppositional apologetic. Instead of relying on personal, rational thoughts, he dedicated a great deal of time learning from the Scriptures. Steven Lawson noted, "He was deeply troubled by those who viewed the Scripture as an antiquated book of irrelevant writings. In a day when many evangelicals spent considerable time reading secular philosophy, rhetoric, and logic, Whitefield devoured the divine revelation."¹⁰⁸

Whitefield's position on the ideas of man concerning knowledge was clear from his journal. He wrote, "I got more true knowledge from reading the Book of God in one month, than I could ever have acquired from all the writings of men."¹⁰⁹ The total

¹⁰⁶Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict*, 15.

¹⁰⁷George Whitefield, "Walking with God," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 70-71.

¹⁰⁸Steven J. Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2014), 33.

¹⁰⁹George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (London: Banner of Truth, 1965), 60.

depravity of man and original sin are two doctrines of the Christian faith found within Scripture. Each are a fundamental portion of the apologetic and polemic of Whitefield.

Presuppositional apologetics and Calvinistic theology agree on the depravity of man. The English itinerant instilled the same idea based on presupposition of the authority of God in Scripture within many texts in preaching. While a specific overview of his preaching in this thought will follow in another chapter, it is fitting to show a relevance. In the sermon entitled “The Potter and the Clay,” Whitefield spoke,

And however his servants and followers may now be looked upon as fools and madmen; yet there will come a time, when those who despise, and set themselves oppose divine revelation, will find, that what they now call reason, is only reason depraved, and as utterly incapable of itself, to guide us not the way of peace, or show the way of salvation, as the men of Sodom were to find Lot’s door, after they were struck with blindness by the angels who came to lead him out of the city. The horrid and dreadful mistakes which the most refined reasoners in the heathen world ran into, both as to the object as well as manner of divine worship, have sufficiently demonstrated the weakness and depravity of human reason: nor do our modern boasters afford us any better proofs of the greatness of its strength, since the best improvement they generally make of it, is only to reason themselves into downright willful infidelity, and thereby reason themselves out of eternal salvation.¹¹⁰

In the following chapter, further detail will be provided from the sermons of Whitefield on several pivotal topics from Calvinistic theology, presuppositional apologetics, and the cultural challenges presented by the Enlightenment.

Cultural Challenges

The Enlightenment movement challenged normal cultural characteristics that were in the process of fading from popularity. Traditional trends were leaving people dissatisfied with the answers regarding ultimate truth. New thought was given to alternative means of discovery, and with it, new knowledge produced various doubts toward the established favored religion. Though a cultural shift was imminent, the Enlightenment movement failed to answer ultimate questions to the level of detail found in Scripture. The following section will detail both Enlightenment difficulties in

¹¹⁰Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:250-51.

answering philosophical questions about reality as well as how presuppositional apologetics provides answers.

Enlightenment Difficulties

The Enlightenment thinkers sought to remove irrationality from humanity in order to promote rational thought. The achievement of rational thought was a result of removing false beliefs to replace them with rational truth. The difficulty is that both irrationality and rationality are a part of the human experience. Frame noted,

Neither rationalism nor irrationalism can be confined; each demands total sovereignty over human thought. If part of the universe is irrational, autonomous reason cannot be the ultimate criterion of truth. If part of the universe is accessible to autonomous reason, irrationalism cannot succeed in its attempt to deny the existence of objective truth.¹¹¹

Pivotal struggles remained within Christianity and the Enlightenment. Answers for original sin, presuppositions, the new birth, salvation, truth, and reason were necessary from both perspectives. Some Enlightenment thinkers sought to answer as follows.

Original Sin. Original sin was a particular difficulty for Enlightenment thinkers. Rather than ascribing to the idea that humanity was once perfect from creation and now in a fallen state capable of nothing good without intervention from the ultimate good in God, rationalism was devoted to the idea that humanity was good from the start. There is also the potential to get better if irrational thought was eliminated. Humanity was thought of as capable of good inherently without intervention. The mind can control all things in life including irrational thoughts and impulses that can lead to false beliefs or doubt in the human experience.

Presuppositions. Presuppositions exist also in the mind for Enlightenment thinkers. Having the power to overcome any obstacle with the mind, rationalists portray

¹¹¹Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," 213.

their thoughts as infallible once irrationalism is eradicated. Presuppositions have many connections to the human experience and the culture. Admitting that presuppositions have the power to mold an entire belief system would undercut rationalism to great lengths.

New Birth. The New Birth was another idea that was irrational from the perspective of Enlightenment thinkers. Kant in particular utilized experience as a spiritual notion. While the experience of living with Christ seems to line up with his thoughts, Kant missed the idea of an old nature becoming new in Christ. Hood noted, “This is the key. The new birth is not about an existential experience that must be attained for salvation, but an enabling from God to lay hold of Christ, and so an entering into a spiritual bond with the Day star. In short, this is union with Christ.”¹¹² Rather than meshing two different types of religion together to help satisfy the arguments of both, Christianity simply answers for new life in a corrupt, sinful body destined for death and separation from God. Stout added that Whitefield saw salvation as a personal affair of the heart. To Whitefield, “The New Creation of which he spoke was not a ‘mere metaphor’; it was as self-evident and palpable as a ‘tasteless palate’ suddenly brought alive at a sumptuous feast.”¹¹³ Crossing over from spiritual death to spiritual life seems much more life altering and answerable from the Christian perspective.

Salvation. Salvation in the Enlightenment was not connected to the work of Christ for philosophers. To a large degree, removing irrational thought was the goal for improving human circumstances. In the Enlightenment, men were seen as good from their birth which made salvation obsolete. Salvation becoming outmoded also meant that

¹¹²Jared C. Hood, “Whitefield: The Heart of an Evangelist,” *Reformed Theological Review* 69, no. 3 (December 1, 2010): 171.

¹¹³Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 39.

Christianity can be replaced with another system of thought that allowed humanity to get better at being good rather than fixing what went wrong.

Truth. Truth was also contentious from Enlightenment thinkers. With the rise of scientific innovations, humanity was now able to better understand the universe. Rather than seeking truth from the perspective of God toward humanity, philosophers sought to reason from man toward earthly truth. It is likely that this resulted from a move of culture and government-driven worship rituals to the Enlightenment idea of autonomy and freedom. Spiritual freedom, in this case, was having the ability to choose religion based on truth. In the ontological sense, metaphysical realities were now subject to human rationalism as well as scientific verification. Science was not able to undergird reason within this worldview.

Reason. Reason presented a difficult challenge to Christianity as it was either being mixed with biblical authority or overtaking it. Puritans accepted reason as a guide leading to Scriptural truth from the Renaissance. Smith wrote,

The New England's Puritan clergy believed that reason offered a guide to biblical revelation, deriving their ideas from Aristotelian scholasticism and Renaissance humanism. They saw the study of nature as being ultimately a study of God, but that science alone cannot fathom the mysteries of the cosmos without scriptural support.¹¹⁴

Science can lead to God as natural theology demonstrated the previous era, but presuppositions were now rising to a greater level of importance due to the cultural shift. Belief in God, His provision and sovereignty, the gospel, Jesus, etc. were becoming abnormal belief structures. Whitefield answered with a polemic supported by a presuppositional apologetic steeped in Scripture and theology.

¹¹⁴Smith, *The First Great Awakening*, 47.

Presuppositional Apologetic Answers

Whitefield preached sermons directed toward these topics that became struggles for the cultural movement of the Enlightenment. While he is not known as an apologist, his polemic was influenced by Reformed Theology and presuppositional thought. Later, a system of apologetics was founded upon the Scriptures. As a collective work, the Bible provides answers for each of these struggles. Inspired writers used the words of God to illuminate truth in each of these areas for humanity alongside the work of the Holy Spirit. The next chapter will detail the preaching of Whitefield in connection with Calvinistic Theology as a precursor to presuppositional apologetics.

CHAPTER 5

CHALLENGING THE ENLIGHTENMENT IN WHITEFIELD'S SERMONS

Preaching was the primary means in which George Whitefield is remembered by historians and theologians. Arnold Dallimore accounted historically that Whitefield preached, spoke, or exhorted nearly a thousand times a year for thirty years from his ordination to his death.¹ The contents of this chapter will examine both Whitefield's style and content to reveal a connection to a presuppositional apologetic within his polemic.

Textual Style of Sermons

The preaching style of Whitefield was textual in terms of content. Mostly, each sermon used one verse as a title text. Other verses were included to further each individual point throughout messages. Stylistically, the English itinerant allowed one primary text to speak clearly throughout the sermon while other texts were used to reinforce the main point. According to Jim Shaddix, C. H. Spurgeon valued the textual style of Whitefield. Shaddix wrote,

As opposed to studying a text, probing it, and drawing out of it the truths that were in it, Spurgeon seemed to reverse the process by selecting a text and then grouping around it closely related Bible truths. At times he would stress meanings that were somewhat foreign to the text under consideration. It is probably no surprise that Spurgeon viewed George Whitefield as a hero and a preaching model, given that Whitefield was more topical and theological than expositional.²

¹Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*, vol. 2 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1980), 522.

²Jim Shaddix, "A History of Text-Driven Preaching," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 47.

The form of Whitefield's sermons used a central idea and surrounded it with further strength from other texts. Technically, this style could produce a "good" sermon, but Whitefield desired to deliver much more than a sermon. He was delivering the good news of Christ with Holy Spirit power.

A recognized difference between Whitefield and other preachers of his time was the method of delivering the sermon. Passionate pleas to follow Christ characterized his model in communicating the Gospel. Bill Bennett described the difference between preaching and presenting information. He wrote, "Preaching is not primarily an explanation or a lecture and certainly not an apology. It is a heralding, a heart cry, a bold declaration with the urgency of the Master Himself ringing out through His anointed, yielded vessel."³ Rather than communicating with stale, stuffy language and emotion, the itinerant's orations were infused with passion and excitement about the Lord and salvation.

Notable Sermons Used to Engage Culture

Whitefield is largely known by historians as an excellent pulpiteer with a dramatic flair for evangelism. In the following sections, evidence will be presented to show that Whitefield had a polemic that was built upon a close connection with Reformed thought and presuppositional apologetics. Where the Enlightenment fell short in answering questions regarding ultimate truth for humanity, Whitefield sought to draw people back to God through the lens of Scripture.

Original Sin

Reflecting back on Whitefield's ministry, R. Elliot, a convert under Whitefield's ministry, preached a message at Whitefield's funeral. Within it, Elliot noted

³Bill Bennett, "The Secret of Preaching with Power," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 56.

Whitefield's strong doctrinal stances on "original sin, the new birth, justification by faith in Christ, the final perseverance of saints, and eternal and unconditional election."⁴ Elliot expounded,

He taught the Scripture doctrine of original sin, which consists in these two things: First, Adam's personal offence imputed; and, second, the entire depravity of his fallen nature, imparted to all his seed. By the former we are held faulty and stand guilty in our persons before God: and by the latter our natures are corrupted, prone to sin, and naturally included to all evil: and thus it is written: "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." And again it is written: "Every imagination of the thought of man's heart is only evil continually." Hence we are all by nature sinners and children of wrath.⁵

Previously in this work, Calvinistic theology was detailed showing the same view.

Whitefield's polemic displayed the doctrine of original sin in many ways. The equalizing factor for all humanity, according to him, was that, "We are altogether equally become abominable in God's sight, all equally fallen short of the glory of God and consequently all alike so many pieces of marred clay."⁶ All humanity is guilty and in desperate need of restoration. Whitefield described the state of sinners, "Though you may value yourselves as fine rational creatures and that you are noble beings—and you were so, as you first came out of God's hands. But now you are fallen, there is nothing lovely, nothing desirable in man. His heart is a sink of pollution, full of sin and uncleanness."⁷

The English itinerant spoke clearly about the penalty of sin for all humanity even if decay and old age could be prevented. He stated, "But supposing it was possible for us to escape the inconveniences of old age, yet still death is a debt, since the Fall, we all must pay."⁸ The Fall of man introduced death to humanity as the payment for

⁴R. Elliot, "A Summary of Gospel Doctrine Taught by Mr. Whitefield," in *Selected Sermons of George Whitefield: With an Account of His Life* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1990), 52.

⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

⁶George Whitefield, "The Potter and the Clay," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 254.

⁷George Whitefield, "Christ the Support of the Tempted," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 335.

⁸George Whitefield, "The Benefits of an Early Piety," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*,

disobedience toward God. There is no escaping sin as it became human nature from the first man in creation. Whitefield's messages targeted the sin nature of humanity with the Gospel in order to show the redemptive plan of God to be with humanity eternally. The itinerant was known for preaching sermons that evoked spiritual movement within the massive crowds that gathered to hear him speak. Whitefield proclaimed, "Although believers by nature, are far from God and children of wrath, even as others, yet it is amazing to think how nigh they are brought to him again by the blood of Jesus Christ."⁹ He preached in another sermon regarding the condition of sinners in view of a holy God,

You may see how vile we are by nature, that it requires so great a change to be made upon us, to recover us from this state of sin and therefore the consideration of our dreadful state should make us earnest with God to change our condition and that change, true repentance implies. Therefore, my brethren, consider how hateful your way are to God, while you continue in sin. How abominable you are not him, while you run into evil. You cannot be said to be Christians while you are hating Christ and his people.¹⁰

Knowing from Scripture the natural proclivities of humanity are always rebellion and self-satisfaction, Whitefield preached this scriptural truth readily to crowds in order for the lost to know the current state of their sin and the power of Christ in saving humanity from its grip.

Original sin is also illustrated from "The Pharisee and the Publican."

Specifically from the perspective of the Publican, he announces the pervasiveness of sin in his own life. Whitefield spoke,

But, God be merciful to me, even to a sinner, a sinner by birth, a sinner in thought, word, and deed, a sinner as to my person, a sinner as to all my performances, a sinner in whom is no health, in whom dwellers not good thing, a sinner, poor, miserable, blind and naked, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, a self-accused, self-condemned sinner.¹¹

ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 210.

⁹George Whitefield, "Christ the Believer's Husband," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 215.

¹⁰George Whitefield, "A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year's Gift," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 29.

¹¹George Whitefield, "The Pharisee and the Publican," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*,

The shattered life of the Publican is met with brutal honesty about sin. Being born a sinner taints all other efforts and events in life, but the hope of Christ remains.

The English evangelist also believed the truth of original sin to be self-evident once considered in view of God. He preached “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers” calling original sin reasonable. Whitefield spoke, “I say of demonstration, for it stands on this self-evident truth that we are fallen creatures or, to use the Scripture-expression, ‘have all died in Adam.’”¹² In the sermon, “The Holy Spirit Convincing the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” Whitefield continued,

Though everything in the earth, air, and water, everything both without and with, concur to prove the truth of that assertion in the Scripture, “in Adam we all have died,” yet most are so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that notwithstanding they may give an assent to the truth of the proportion in their heads, yet they never felt it really in their hearts.¹³

The English itinerant contends that original sin can be known in the head but never truly take root in the heart potentially. Whitefield continued describing what human life would be like without sin in reference to evidence for the revealed Word of God. He communicated,

Had man continued in a state of innocence, he would not have needed an outward revelation, because the law of God was so deeply written in the tables of his heart. But having eaten the forbidden fruit, he incurred the displeasure of God and lost the divine image and, therefore, without an external revelation, could never tell how God would be reconciled unto him, or how he should be saved from the misery and darkness of his fallen nature. That these truths are so, I need not refer you to any other book, than your own hearts. For unless we are fallen creatures, whence those abominable corruptions which daily arise in our hearts? We could not come thus corrupt out of the hands of our Maker, because he being goodness itself could make nothing but what is like himself, holy, just, and good. And that we want to be delivered from these disorders of our nature, is evident, because we find an

ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 68.

¹²George Whitefield, “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 122. While the *Thirty-Nine Articles* were mentioned in the previous chapter, they are included in the Appendix of this work for further detail.

¹³George Whitefield, “The Holy Spirit Convincing the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 156.

unwillingness within ourselves to own we are thus depraved and are always striving to appear to others of a quite different frame and temper of mind than what we are.¹⁴

Seeing the truth does not necessarily make it believable to the point of change in the human life. The only remedy for original sin is Christ.

The effects of sin and the fall of humanity are consistent themes in Whitefield's preaching. The English itinerant summarized the two in the sermon, "Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost." He expounded,

Accordingly we read, that soon after Adam had fallen, he complained that he was naked; naked, not only as to his body but naked and destitute of those divine graces which before decked and beautified his soul. The unhappy mutiny and disorder which the visible creations fell into, the briars and thorns which now sprung up and overspread the earth, were but poor emblems, lifeless representations of that confusion and rebellion and those diverse lusts and passions which sprung up in and quite overwhelmed the soul of man immediately after the Fall. Alas! He was now no longer the image of the invisible God. But as he had imitated the devil's sin, he became as it were a partaker of the devil's nature and from an union with, sunk into a state of direct enmity with God.¹⁵

Sin nature was passed down from the first Adam throughout humanity, but there was a second Adam that was the answer for all sin. Whitefield preached, "The nature of the old, Adam still reigneth in your souls. And unless the nature of the second Adam be grafted in its room, you can never see God."¹⁶ The Gospel story and knowledge of Jesus was the way to understand and know salvation.

The itinerant used knowledge of Jesus Christ to help hearers comprehend the Gospel story in view of all Scripture. He preached "The Knowledge of Jesus Christ the Best Knowledge" stating,

The foundation or first cause of his (Jesus) suffering, was our fall in Adam, in whom, as the living oracles of God declare, "We all died." His sin was imputed to us all. It pleased God, after he had spoken the world into being, to create man after

¹⁴George Whitefield, "The Duty of Searching the Scriptures," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 106.

¹⁵George Whitefield, "Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 189.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 198-99.

his own divine image, to breathe into him the breath of life and to place him as our representative in the Garden of Eden.¹⁷

The process of original sin was the reason for Jesus coming to secure the salvation of humanity and freeing all from death. Justification is necessary for all who seek a relationship with Jesus. The English itinerant continued to expound in “Of Justification.” He preached,

First, I affirm that we all stand in need of being justified, on account of the sin of our natures. For we are all chargeable with original sin, or the sin of our first parents. Which, though a proposition that may be denied by a self-justifying infidel, who “will not come to Christ that he may have life,” yet can never be denied by anyone who believes that St. Paul’s epistles were written by divine inspiration, where we are told that “in Adam all died” that is, Adam’s sin was imputed to all. And lest we should forget to make a particular application, it is added in another place, “that there is none that doth good (that is, by nature) no, not one. That we are all gone out of the way (of original righteousness) and are by nature the children of wrath.” And even David, who was a man after God’s own heart, and if could, might surely plead an exemption from this universal corruption, yet he confesses, that “he was shaped in iniquity and that in sin did his mother conceive him.” And, to mention but one text more, as immediately applicable to the present purpose, St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says, that “Death came upon all men, for the disobedience of one, namely, of Adam, even upon those (that is, little children) who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” who had not been guilty of actual sin and therefore could not be punished with temporal death (which came into the world, as this same Apostle elsewhere informs us, only by sin) had not the disobedience of our first parents been imputed to them.¹⁸

Whitefield persisted with the same idea in justification related to original sin in another sermon, “On Regeneration.” The English preacher continued,

Man is described (and every regenerate person will find it true by his own experience) as a creature altogether “conceived and born in sin,” as having “no good thing dwelling in him,” as being “carnal, sold under sin.” Nay, as having “a mind which is at enmity with God,” and such-like. And since there is such an infinite disparity, can anyone conceive how a filthy, corrupted polluted wretch can dwell with an infinitely pure and holy God, before he is changed and rendered in some measures like him?¹⁹

¹⁷George Whitefield, “The Knowledge of Jesus Christ the Best Knowledge,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 231.

¹⁸George Whitefield, “Of Justification by Christ,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 242.

¹⁹George Whitefield, “On Regeneration,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 280.

The vileness of sin itself is a perplexing thought placed against a holy, perfect God. Whitefield comprehended that only God is capable of forgiving sin, and God accomplished this task through the perfection of His Son and His work on the cross. The weight of sin was also apparent to the itinerant. He preached in “Christ the Only Preservative against a Reprobate Spirit” on the amount of sin necessary to separate humanity from God. Whitefield preached, “The sin of your nature, your original sin, is sufficient to sink you into torments, of which there will be no end. Therefore unless you receive the Spirit of Christ you are reprobates and you cannot be saved.”²⁰ The saved are also reminded that the nonbelievers will continue to act as reprobates and hate God along with all those that love God.

Whitefield further described the action of nonbelievers. Sinners behave like sinners toward all people including believers. Persecution towards believers is a consistent concern with varying degrees of intensity. The evangelist spoke,

How can it be otherwise in the very nature of things? Ever since the Fall, there has been an irreconcilable label entity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Wicked men hate God and therefore cannot but hate those who are like him. They hate to be reformed and therefore must hate and persecute those who by a contrary behavior testify of them that their deeds are evil. Besides, pride of heart leads men to persecute the servants of Jesus Christ. If they commend them, they are afraid of being asked, “Why do not you follow them?” And therefore because they dare not imitate, though they may sometimes be even forced to approve their way, yet pride and envy make them turn persecutors. Hence it is, that as it was formerly, so it is now and so will it be to the end of time. “He that is born after the flesh (the natural man), does and will persecute him that is born after the Spirit (the regenerate man).” Because Christians are not of the world but Christ hath chosen them out of the world, therefore the world will hate them.²¹

Original sin impacts the life of the believer continuously. First, the believer will struggle with individual sin. Since this world is still impacted by sin, human nature struggles against the image of God placed within humanity. Fortunately, the believer has been

²⁰George Whitefield, “Christ the Only Preservative against a Reprobate Spirit,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 303-4.

²¹George Whitefield, “Persecution Every Christian’s Lot,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 353-54.

given the gift of the Holy Spirit to help during times of struggle as a means of support and guidance in overcoming with the power of God. Second, believers will struggle with the interactions with other sinners, both regenerate and unregenerate. Sin impacts relationships with others. Jealousy, strife, and envy are parts of the human experience when believers lose focus on God and begin to focus on comparing their circumstances to others. While these are just two examples of the work of sin in a believers' life, total freedom from sin does not happen until the believer reaches glory in heaven. In the meantime, believers are offered another way to live in light of the effects of sin. Freedom in Christ offers freedom from the trappings of sin so humanity can choose to live like God rather than the natural self. Christ has suffered so His people would live in victory over sin. Whitefield noted in, "And all this, he underwent to save you, who were vile and polluted and by nature, since the Fall, a motley mixture of the beast and devil."²² Jesus faced the most awful of terrors in sin in order that humanity would be free from the corruption of sin. Modern philosophers and rationalists of Whitefield's time desired to erase the idea of original sin from humanity. The English itinerant challenged their ideas with his polemic and theological understandings. To Whitefield, the Bible was the great source of ultimate truth leading to the proper understanding of salvation with regard to original sin. To the unconverted, the Bible may be no different than other types of literature until the Spirit of God illuminates truth. The evangelist described,

A natural man, indeed, goes no further than the outward court of the Scripture and reads this and the other miracles of our blessed Saviour, just in the same manner as he reads Homer's battles, or the exploits of Alexander. But God forbid that we should rest in only hearing this matter of fact. For I tell thee, O man, I tell thee, O woman, whoever thou art, that sits this day under a preached gospel, that if thou art in a natural state, thou art as blind in thy soul as Bartimeus was in his body. A blind child of a blind father, even of thy father Adam, who lost his sight when he lost his innocence and entailed his blindness, justly inflicted, upon thee and me and his whole posterity.²³

²²George Whitefield, "An Exhortation to the People of God Not to Be Discouraged," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 365.

²³George Whitefield, "Blind Bartimeus," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss,

Speaking of the natural man evokes ideas found in philosophy. Whitefield did know about philosophy, but he was not considered a philosophical influencer during this time.

While Whitefield was also not known for his philosophical musings, the evangelist did use reason show hearers that reason alone could never take the place of Scripture and a relationship with God. He preached in “The Method of Grace,”

There are many poor souls that think themselves fine reasoners, yet they pretend to say there is no such thing as original sin. They will charge God with injustice in imputing Adam’s sin to us. Although we have got the mark of the beast and of the devil upon us, yet they tell us we are not born in sin. Let them look abroad into the world and see the disorders in it and think, if they can, if this is the paradise in which God did put man. No! Everything in the world is out of order. I have often thought, when I was abroad, that if there were no other argument to prove original sin, the rising of wolves and tigers against man, nay, the barking of a dog against us, is a proof of original sin. Tigers and lions dare not rise up against us, if it were not for Adam’s first sin, for when the creatures rise up against us it is as much as to say, “You have sinned against God and we take up our Master’s quarrel.”²⁴

The current condition of the world as Whitefield saw took more explanation than the “fine reasoners” could muster. Original sin as a doctrine contained far more depth and explanation for the behavior and situation of humanity than reason alone. The itinerant continued,

Further: before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must not only be troubled for the sins of your life, the sin of your nature but likewise for the sins of your best duties and performances. . . . And as Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden and sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness, as the poor sinner when awakened flies to his duties and to his performances, to hide himself from God, and goes to patch up a righteousness of his own.²⁵

Original sin affected so much about human life. Believers have the ability to hide behind their good works as well as the potential to hide sin. Nominal belief in Christ is not what the Lord requires in salvation. The evangelist expounded,

For there is no fitness in you. I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, there is not fitness in you but a fitness for eternal damnation. For what are you by nature but

vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 463.

²⁴George Whitefield, “The Method of Grace,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 427.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 428.

children of wrath and your hearts are Satan's garrison. Because you have gone to church, said the prayers, gone to the sacrament and done no-one harm you speak peace to your souls. And all is in peace you think and your case is good enough. But indeed, all is a false peace and if you have no other peace than this, you must shortly lie down in everlasting flames. This is an ungrounded, self-created peace and if you trust to this peace you will perish.²⁶

Whitefield felt, likely from both personal experience and from observing the nature of his audiences, that believers are to be made sick of their own sin and well as what sin does to all things including good deeds. He continued, "Before you can speak peace in your heart, you must not only be made sick of your original and actual sin but you must be made sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances."²⁷ The realization of the sickness of sin is to be followed with brokenness and dedication to the one that can remove sin, guilt, and shame. Whitefield encouraged hearers, "And beg of God to break hearts, beg of God to convict you of your actual sins, beg of God to convince you of your original sin, beg of God to convince you of your self-righteousness, beg God to give you faith and enable you to close with Jesus Christ."²⁸ For the warning of the result of original sin is real. The inevitable destiny of those still in original sin is clear separation from Christ. The English itinerant continued,

I know what it is to live a life of sin. I was obliged to sin in order to stifle conviction. And I assure this is the way any of you take. If you get into company, you drive off conviction. But you had better go to the bottom at once. It must be done, you wound must be searched, or you must be damned. If it were a matter of indifference, I would not speak one word about it. But you will be damned without Christ. He is the way, he is the truth and the life. I cannot think you should go to hell without Christ. How can you dwell with everlasting burnings? How can you abide the thought of living with the devil forever? Is it not better to have some soul-trouble here, than to be sent to hell by Jesus Christ hereafter? What is hell but to be absent from Christ? If there were no hell, that would be hell enough. It will be hell to be tormented with the devil forever.²⁹

²⁶George Whitefield, "The Folly and Danger of Parting with Christ," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 372-73.

²⁷Whitefield, "The Method of Grace," 2:429.

²⁸Ibid., 436.

²⁹Ibid., 439.

The pure understanding of hell for the unrepentant sinner is separation from the Creator and Redeemer for eternity. The promise to send a Savior existed the first moments of fallen humanity.

Whitefield preached a sermon on the first mention of the Gospel from Genesis 3:15. This sermon, “The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent,” depicted original sin and the promise of God in redeeming humanity. The itinerant preached, “For this is the first promise that was made of a Saviour to the apostate race of Adam.”³⁰ A great majority of information regarding original sin in Whitefield’s thoughts are found in this message. One particular temptation from the Garden of Eden is possibly connected to the Enlightenment rationalism in its efforts to replace God with reason. The evangelist continued, “So that the grand temptation was that they (Adam and Eve) should be hereafter under no control, equal, if not superior, to God that made them, knowing good and evil.”³¹ This aspect of the Fall precisely described the desire of Enlightenment thinkers who pushed to elevate reason above God. The English preacher continued,

Here is the utmost pride of heart. They wanted to be equal with God. Here’s the utmost content put upon his threatening and his law. The devil is created and obeyed before him and all this only to satisfy their sensual appetite. . . . But instead of looking up to God for succour we patch up a righteousness of our own (as our first parents platted fig-leaves together) hoping to cover our nakedness by that.³²

Hiding behind anything in the human experience to conceal sin reveals the corruption of sin in the hearts of humanity. The curse of original sin is also seen one generation from the Fall in the story of the sons of Adam and Eve. Whitefield spoke, “This enmity discovered itself in accursed Cain. He hated and slew his brother Abel, because Abel loved and was peculiarly favoured by, his God. And this same enmity rules and prevails

³⁰George Whitefield, “The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 45.

³¹Ibid., 49.

³²Ibid., 50-51.

in every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam.”³³ The reach of the sin nature within humanity is comprehensive from Adam and Eve to all in human history. Sinners also tend to design a system of good works to overcome immoral deeds.

Whitefield described,

Now, it is just thus between us and the Lord Jesus. For, we are all by nature born under and wedded to the law as a covenant of works. Hence it is that we are so fond of and artfully go about in order to establish a righteousness of our own. It is as natural for us to do this, as it is to breathe. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, even after the covenant of grace was revealed to them in that promise, “the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head” reached out their hands and would again have taken hold of the tree of life, which they had forfeited, had not God driving them out of paradise and compelled them, as it were, to be saved by grace. And thus all their descendants naturally run to and want to be saved, partly at least, if not wholly, by their works.³⁴

He continued to describe the human struggle in using good deeds as redemption from immoral activities. The English itinerant said, “Being once born under a covenant of works, it is natural for us all to have recourse to a covenant of works for our everlasting salvation. And we have contracted such devilish pride by our fall from God that we would, if not wholly, yet in part at least, glory in being the cause of our own salvation.”³⁵

Securing salvation on reason alone was a thought pattern of the Enlightenment by eliminating irrational thought. Salvation in that sense had nothing to do with God, but it was a man-centered effort. The evangelist proclaimed many times that the original state of man is found yearning for far greater than moral deeds to be redeemed. The image of God in man led Whitefield to further communicate the need for the Lord in restoration.

He declared,

Be pleased to observe that we say every man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, or every man since the Fall. For if we consider man as he first came out of the hands of his Maker, he was far from being in such melancholy circumstances.

³³George Whitefield, “Walking with God,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 67.

³⁴Whitefield, “Christ the Believer’s Husband,” 1:219.

³⁵George Whitefield, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 262.

No, he was originally made upright or as Moses, that sacred penman, declares, “God made him after his own image.”³⁶

In the same sermon, Whitefield calls hearers back to Scripture to identify both the current condition of sinners as well as the future hope we have in Christ. Whitefield proclaimed,

For, after all, we must be obliged to divine revelation, to know what we were, what we are, and what we are to be. In these, as in a true glass, we may see our real and proper likeness. And from these only can we trace the source and fountain of all those innumerable evils, which like a deluge have overflowed the natural and moral world. If any should object against the authenticity of this revelation and consequently against the doctrine this day drawn from thence, they do in my opinion thereby very much confirm it. For unless a man was very much disordered indeed as to his understanding, will, affections, natural conscience, and his power of reasoning, he could never possibly deny such a revelation, which is founded on a multiplicity of infallible external evidences, hath so many internal evidences of a divine stamp in every page, is so suited to the common exigencies of all mankind, so agreeable to the experience of all men and which hath been so wonderfully handed and preserved to us, hath been so instrumental to the convicting, converting and comforting so many millions of souls and hath stood the test of the most severe scrutinies and exact criticisms of the most subtle and refined, as well as the most malicious and persecuting enemies, that ever lived, even from the beginning of time to this very day.³⁷

The revelation of God is connected to the nature of mankind following the Fall. The English itinerant stands firm in the belief that all humanity would have known the law of God had sin not entered the human experience. The evangelist described,

Indeed, revelation itself is founded upon the doctrine of the Fall. Had we kept our original integrity, the law of God would have yet been written in our hearts and thereby the want of a divine revelation, at least such as ours, would have been superseded. But being fallen, instead of rising in rebellion against God, we ought to be filled with unspeakable thankfulness to our all bountiful Creator, who by a few lines in his own books hath discovered more to us, than all the philosophers and most learned men in the world could, or would, have discovered, though they had studied to all eternity.³⁸

The intervention of the Lord is required for the salvation of the broken and desperate sinner. Being born in this state, the sinner can find grace in the revelation from God.

Whitefield spoke, “That little children are guilty, I mean, that they are conceived and

³⁶Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:245.

³⁷Ibid., 253.

³⁸Ibid.

born in sin, is plain from the whole tenor of the book of God.”³⁹ Death itself was a factor that the itinerant used as proof of sin in all humanity. He explained,

So then, it is plain from Scripture and fact that children are born in sin and consequently that they are children of wrath. And for my part, I think, that the death of every child is a plain proof of original sin. Sickness and death came into the world by sin and it seems not consistent with God’s goodness and justice to let a little child be sick or die unless Adam’s first sin was imputed to him. If any charge God with injustice for imputing Adam’s sin to a little child, behold we have gotten a second Adam, to bring our children to him.⁴⁰

Whitefield then described the idea of change within the heart of man toward God. In fact, it was man that disobeyed and now is in need of restoration. The Scriptures communicate the necessity of moving from death to life in Christ. Whitefield preached,

Some think indeed, that they see. But alas! Such talk only like men in their sleep, like persons beside themselves. The Scriptures everywhere represent fallen man not only as spiritually blind but dead also. And we no more know, by nature, savingly the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, than Bartimeus when he was blind knew the colours of the rainbow. This, I trust, some of you begin to feel.⁴¹

God, according to Scripture, does not change (Mal 3:6; Num 23:19; Heb 13:8), but He is ready to forgive the repentant sinner and regenerate humanity to the former position with God (1 John 1:9; Eph 1:7; Heb 10:17). The evangelist continued,

For either God must change his nature, or we ours. For as in Adam we all have spiritually died, so all that are effectually saved by Christ must in Christ be spiritually made alive. His only end in dying and rising again and interceding for us now in heaven, is to redeem us from the misery of our fallen nature and, by the operation of his blessed Spirit, to make us meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance with the saints in light.⁴²

If it is the nature of humanity to change in order to accept salvation, then it must be a full and complete change in nature. The plan of God in the gospel is to change original sin with the new birth because of total depravity.

³⁹George Whitefield, “Marks of True Conversion,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 388.

⁴⁰Ibid., 389.

⁴¹Whitefield, “Blind Bartimeus,” 1:464.

⁴²George Whitefield, “What Think Ye of Christ?” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 417.

The English itinerant also preached on the comprehensive infection of sin throughout humanity. In the sermon, “Abraham’s Offering Up His Son Isaac,” Whitefield communicated this idea clearly in speaking of the love God shows all humanity when He sacrificed His son. He proclaimed, “Let this convince you, that we are all fallen creatures and that we do not love God or Christ as we ought to do.”⁴³ The state or condition of sinners is a significant feature. Jesus finds all humans in the worst situation as sinners.

The evangelist expounded,

The Lord Jesus Christ when he first comes to you, finds you full of sin and pollution. You are deformed, defiled, enslaved, poor, miserable and wretched, very despicable and loathsome, by reason of sin. And he taketh choice of you, not because of your holiness, nor of your beauty, nor of your being qualified for them. No, the Lord Jesus Christ puts these qualifications upon you, as may make you meet for his embrace. And you are drawn to make choice of the Lord Jesus Christ because he first chose you.⁴⁴

Not only does Whitefield display Calvinistic theology, he also describes how humanity is chosen in salvation. Christ is the one who qualifies humanity by His sufferings on the cross in redeeming all from sin. The ultimate result of original sin was a perfect sacrifice in atoning for sin for salvation. Other proof of original sin is also found in self-examination.

The English itinerant noted another descriptor of original sin in the sermon “Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty.” While the sermon focuses on thanksgiving and mercy, Whitefield first directed hearers with the ultimate form of thanksgiving for God’s mercy in salvation from original sin. He proclaimed,

Numberless marks does man bear in his soul, that he is fallen and estranged from God. But nothing gives a greater proof thereof, than that backwardness, which every one finds within himself, to the duty of praise and thanksgiving. When God placed the first man in paradise, his soul no doubt was so filled with a sense of the riches of the divine love, that he was continually employing the breath of life, which the

⁴³George Whitefield, “Abraham’s Offering Up His Son Isaac,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 92.

⁴⁴George Whitefield, “Christ the Best Husband,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 110.

Almighty had not long before breathed into him, in blessing and magnifying that all-bountiful, all gracious God, in whom he lived, moved and had his being.⁴⁵

Clearly Adam, the first man, was created for intimate closeness with God (Gen 1:26-27), generations removed from Adam and Eve, humanity continues to strive to comprehend closeness with God. According to the Creation account, it was not long after breathing life into Adam that a helper was designed for him. Intimacy between humanity was also part of the plan of God. Inside the story of the Fall was a beautiful picture of life with God. Whitefield held to a view that likeminded companionship was essential before the Fall and significant after the Fall as well. He preached,

And how can this be done better, than by showing that it is absolutely necessary for the welfare both of the bodies and souls of men? Indeed, if we look upon man as he came out of the hands of his Maker, we imagine him to be perfect, entire, lacking nothing. But God, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, saw something still wanting to make Adam happy. And what was that? Why, a helper suitable for him. For thus speaketh the Scripture: “And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him.” Observe, God said, “It is not good,” thereby implying that the creation would have been imperfect in some sort, unless a help was found out suitable for Adam. And if this was the case of man before the Fall, if a helper was appropriate for him in a state of perfection, surely since the Fall when we come naked and helpless out of our mother’s womb, when our wants increase with our years and we can scarcely subsist a day without the mutual assistance of each other, well may we say, “It is not good for man to be alone.”⁴⁶

Though Whitefield communicated that being alone permanently is not a good thing while walking with Christ, he also indicates the increased need for companionship following the Fall. The state of humanity became worse without a close relationship with God. Sin made things strikingly more miserable. The English evangelist continued, “For let us view him a little in his natural estate now, since the Fall, as ‘having his understanding darkened, his mind alienated from the life of God’ as no more able to see his way wherein he should go, than a blind man to describe the sun.”⁴⁷ A standard of behavior

⁴⁵George Whitefield, “Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 139.

⁴⁶George Whitefield, “The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 153.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 154-55.

was set following the Fall. Strife and blindness are constant descriptors of the human condition without a Savior. Whitefield spoke,

But so it is, that ever since the fatal sentence pronounced by God after our first parents' fall, "I will put enmity between they seed and her seed" he that is born after the flesh, the unregenerate unconverted sinner, has in all ages "persecuted him that is born after the Spirit" and so it always will be.⁴⁸

Those stuck in original sin are enemies of God, but the unconverted are perpetually at war with believers. That, as Whitefield pointed out, will never change due to original sin.

Presuppositions

Presuppositions undergirded from Scripture informed both the doctrine of Whitefield along with his preaching. Apologetically, the presuppositional approach proved to be fitting for the polemic in Whitefield given his high view of Scripture. The importance of Scripture is also clear from Whitefield. He stated, "If we once get above our Bibles and cease making the written word of God our sole rule both as to faith and practice, we shall soon lie open to all manner of delusion and be in great danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience."⁴⁹ The itinerant pointed to common presuppositional objection to Christianity. He said,

Various are the pleas and arguments which men of corrupt minds frequently urge against yielding obedience to the just and holy commands of God. But perhaps one of the most common objections that they make is this, that our Lord's commands are not practicable, because contrary to flesh and blood.⁵⁰

Pragmatically, the foundation of the Word of God had not been completely comprehended by the common people due to the clerical situation of the time. The First Great Awakening was the moment when human understanding was catapulted into spiritual clarity on two continents.

⁴⁸Whitefield, "The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society," 1:163.

⁴⁹Whitefield, "Walking with God," 1:70-71.

⁵⁰Ibid., 64.

A distinguishing factor of presuppositional apologetics is that the unconverted mind is set against both God and itself. The problem arises within the presuppositions of both nonbelievers and believers. Whitefield declared,

Walking with God implies that the prevailing power of the enmity of a person's heart be taken away by the blessed Spirit of God. Perhaps it may seem a hard saying to some but our own experience daily proves what the Scriptures in many places assert, that the carnal mind, the mind of the unconverted natural man, nay, the mind of the regenerate, so far as any part of him remains unrenewed, is enmity not only an enemy but enmity itself, against God so that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.⁵¹

The carnal mind is stuck in the state of sin. Reason in the unconverted mind is unenlightened to the truth of God. Living to the full potential of humanity is a tenant of the Enlightenment, but those without the freedom of God in salvation are still hindered in comprehending ultimate truth.

In the sermon "The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful," he exhorts the crowd to consider the idea of soul care toward salvation in Christ from Luke 10:42. The context of the verse Whitefield used to preach this sermon is a of Mary and Martha. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus while Martha was caught up in keeping to domestic duties. It is clear from this text and sermon that Whitefield took great care in presenting a case for the eternal value of learning from Jesus Christ. He preached,

The care of their soul, implies a readiness to hear the words of Christ, to seat ourselves with Mary at his feet and to receive both the law and the gospel from his mouth. It supposes, that we learn from this divine teacher the worth of souls, their danger and their remedy. And that we become above all things solicitous about their salvation.⁵²

Learning from the divine teaching of Jesus is bringing attention to the worth of souls leading toward salvation. Presuppositionally, Whitefield used this thought to help guide hearers to the realization of attention to the divine teachings of Jesus. His teachings are

⁵¹Whitefield, "Walking with God," 1:66.

⁵²George Whitefield, "The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 8-9.

worth more than any service humanity can accomplish on His behalf. He later spoke, “The care of the soul is ‘a matter of the highest importance’ beyond anything which can be brought into comparison with it.”⁵³

Next, a sermon entitled “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift,”

Whitefield urged hearers to consider the condition of the sinful heart. He communicated,

And till you are thus sensible of your misery and lost condition, you are a servant to sin and to your lusts, under the bondage and command of Satan, doing his drudgery. Thou art under the curse of God and liable to his judgment. Consider how dreadful thy stat will be at death and after the day of judgement, when thou wilt be exposed to such miseries which the ear hath not heard, nor can the heart conceive and that to all eternity, if you die impenitent.⁵⁴

Whitefield presupposed a sinful nature in the heart of all humanity that requires repentance for salvation. He exhorted listeners to view sin as the Lord viewed sin. The wretched deeds of lust and sin prove to be more than humanity can overcome when left to self-righteousness alone. Attention is given to the idea of a Savior that can do what humanity in sinfulness cannot accomplish.

Whitefield also used presuppositional thought in “The Pharisee and the Publican.” In speaking about the Publican, he injects the thought that the Publican perceived the sinfulness in his own heart. His justification of sin was not left to personal righteousness as presented in the passage of the sermon in Luke 18:14. Whitefield preached,

He (the Publican) felt that he was inexcusable every way, that he could in no wise upon account of anything in himself be justified in the sight of God. And therefore lays himself at the feet of sovereign mercy. “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Here is no confidence in the flesh, no plea fetched from fasting, paying tithes, or the performance of any other duty.⁵⁵

⁵³Whitefield, “The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful,” 2:11.

⁵⁴Whitefield, “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift,” 2:31.

⁵⁵Whitefield, “The Pharisee and the Publican,” 2:68-69.

As seen from the actions of the Publican, presupposing the sinfulness abounding in his heart, the only recourse is to rely on a forgiving God.

Whitefield continued to ascribe to presuppositions in terms of salvation. In the sermon “The Conversion of Zaccheus” based on Luke 19:9-10, the evangelist noted salvation as a free gift given by God not based on human behavior or actions. He spoke,

Salvation, everywhere through the whole Scripture is said to be the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Not only free, because God is a sovereign agent and therefore may withhold from it, or confer it on, whom he pleaseth. But free, because there is nothing to be found in man that can any way induce God to be merciful unto him. The righteousness apprehended by faith (which is also the gift of God) makes it our own. And this faith, if true, will work by love.⁵⁶

The theological notion of salvation dependent upon the sovereignty of God is a presupposed one. While human choice appears to factor into responding to the effectual call of God, it is still God who calls humanity. The flesh is weak in many respects especially in terms of affections and passions. The decision to follow Christ can be seen as a war of sorts. The itinerant preached,

We love what we should hate and hate what we should love; we fear what we should hope for and hope for what we should fear; nay, to such an ungovernable height do our affection sometimes rise, that though our judgements are convinced to the contrary, yet we will gratify our passions though it be at the expense of our present and eternal welfare. We feel a war of our affections, warring against the law of our minds and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin and death.⁵⁷

The presupposition of Whitefield regarding the authority of God’s Word results in a precise view of sin nature. The unconverted are unaware of the struggle or war that is also spiritual. The battle is both internal and spiritual for eternity. The central issue in Whitefield’s preaching is seeing the redemptive plan of Christ as the answer to sinfulness. The evangelist continued,

These, these are precious truths, which a scoffing world would fain rally or ridicule us out of. To produce this glorious change, this new creation, the glorious Jesus left

⁵⁶George Whitefield, “The Conversion of Zaccheus,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 74.

⁵⁷Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:249.

his Father's bosom. For this he led a persecuted life. For this he died an ignominious and accursed death. For this he rose again. And for this he now sitteth at the right hand of his Father. All the precepts of his gospel, all his ordinances, all his providences, whether of an afflictive or prosperous nature, all divine revelation from the beginning to the end, all centre in these two points, to show us how we are fallen and to begin, early on and complete a glorious and blessed change in our souls.⁵⁸

The change in our souls also employs the work of the final part of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is active within the hearts of those being converted.

Salvation is also dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of humanity. In the sermon "The Marriage of Cana," Whitefield preached on the first miracle of Christ turning water into wine. He speaks to both the nonbeliever and the believer in a section pertaining to an outpouring of the Spirit. He differentiated in,

I know these terms are unintelligible to natural men, they can no more understand me than if I spoke to them in an unknown tongue, for they are only to be spiritually discerned. To you then that are spiritual do I speak, to you who are justified by faith and feel the blessed Spirit of Jesus Christ working upon your hearts, you can judge of what I say.⁵⁹

Whitefield understood from the Word of God that "natural men" were not ready to understand the meaning of the text based upon differing presuppositions. His presupposition of the authority of the Word of God informed this view of sin nature. Salvation is deeply dependent upon the Holy Spirit challenging presupposed notions in the process of regeneration. The mind and reason are not autonomous concerning ultimate truth. They are both subject to regeneration in salvation.

A similar thought is found in "The Duty of Searching the Scriptures." Whitefield speaks of believers and nonbelievers differently in terms of their ability to discern Scripture. He preached, "The words that Christ hath spoken, they are spirit and they are life and can be no more understood as to the true sense and meaning of them, by the mere natural man, than a person who never had learned a language can understand

⁵⁸Whitefield, "The Potter and the Clay," 1:258.

⁵⁹George Whitefield, "The Marriage of Cana," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 98.

another speak it.”⁶⁰ The gulf between the “natural man” and the believer significantly affects the mind in comprehending biblical truth without conviction of sin. Whitefield continued to expound, “And it is because the natural veil is not taken off from their hearts that so many who now pretend to search the Scriptures yet see no further than into the bare letter of them and continue entire strangers to the spiritual meaning couched under every parable and contained in almost all the precepts of the book of God.”⁶¹ Discerning the spiritual meaning of biblical texts remained a presupposed idea reserved for believers. Once the veil of sin is lifted by the work of Christ, the believer is able to seek insight from the Lord.

Whitefield furthered this thought in “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privileges of All Believers.” Reasonableness of the indwelling is approached from John 7:37-39 as Christ speaks of all the thirsty coming to Him for living water. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is mysterious to those outside the Christian faith. Whitefield explained, “I am, in the third place, to show the reasonableness of this doctrine. I say, the reasonableness of this doctrine, for however it may seem foolishness to the natural man, yet to those who have tasted the good word of life and have felt the power of the world to come, it will appear to be founded on the highest reason.”⁶² Reasoning with a nonbeliever about the truth of Christianity requires a presuppositional change on the part of the “natural man” in order to begin a discussion of Scripture. This idea is a presuppositional mainstay in apologetics. The itinerant also noted that sanctification was mysterious to the “natural man” as well as the spiritual man. He proclaimed, “Well may this be a mystery to the natural man, for it is a mystery even to this spiritual man, a mystery which cannot fathom.”⁶³ Though the idea of being old and

⁶⁰Whitefield, “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” 2:111.

⁶¹Whitefield, “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” 2:11.

⁶²Whitefield, “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of Believers,” 2:122.

⁶³George Whitefield, “Christ the Believer’s Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and

completely made new in Christ is not new, it is mysterious exactly how it happens. Believers understand to a certain level due to faith in Christ, but it is a foreign idea to those who have not yet believed. For those still opposed to the Gospel by means of rational arguments, Whitefield addressed the plight of the minds of sinners apart from God. The English evangelist declared,

We are mistaken if we imagine that men now commence or continue infidels and set up corrupted reason in opposition to divine revelation merely for want of evidence (for I believe it might easily be proved, that a modern unbeliever is the most credulous creature living). No, it is only for want of an humble mind, of a sense of their original depravity and a willingness to own themselves so depraved, that makes them so obstinately shut their eyes against the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.⁶⁴

The minds of sinners must be opened by the work of the Holy Spirit and forgiven by the work of Christ with the gospel.

The continuing idea of the work of the Holy Spirit was also communicated by Whitefield in “The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment.” With the text of the sermon from the Gospel of John, Whitefield concentrates specifically on the convicting power of the Holy Spirit in human life (John 16:8). He spoke of humanity presuppositionally as,

We all naturally are legalists, thinking to be justified by the works of the law. When somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, we immediately, like the Pharisees of old, go about to establish our own righteousness and think we shall find acceptance with God, if we seek it with tears. Finding ourselves damned by nature and our actual sins, we then think to recommend ourselves to God by our duties, and hope by our doings of one kind or another to inherit eternal life. But, whenever the Comforter comes into the heart, it convinces the soul of these false rests and makes the sinner so see that all righteousness are but filthy rags. And that for the most pompous services he deserves no better a doom than that of the unprofitable servant, “to be thrown into the darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.”⁶⁵

Redemption,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 219.

⁶⁴Whitefield, “Of Justification by Christ,” 2:243.

⁶⁵Whitefield, “The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” 2:157-58.

To consider that humanity prefers presuppositionally to think of legalism as a means of dealing with salvation only proves that unregenerate minds have not comprehended the truth of the Gospel. Righteousness concerning salvation cannot be attained outside the grace of God by any human action from the nonbeliever.

New Birth

The condition of original sin leaves humanity desperately in need of a Savior. When the effectual call of God is extended to a human life, new birth occurs spiritually. The new birth is the most thorough topic covered by Whitefield during his preaching efforts. Elliot described how Whitefield utilized this doctrine,

The new birth, our departed friend diligently taught and instead on as absolutely necessary to salvation. Of this doctrine, our Lord, in St John's Gospel, Ch. 3, speaks largely, and testifies the necessity of it: he there assures us, that except a man be born again, of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter, nor even see, the kingdom of God. The understanding of men by nature is darkness, the will obstinate and rebellious, the heart hard and obdurate, the affections wedded and enslaved to lusts and pleasures, and the whole carnal mind is enmity against God. Hence the necessity of such an entire change as may with propriety be called "A new creation." Every man whilst in his natural state though ever so refined by education and decent in his morals, is at enmity with God and is continually rebelling against him: therefore he must be changed and renewed in the spirit of his mind, else he can have not true love for God and for the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶⁶

The sermons of Whitefield contain a reflection of his doctrinal beliefs regarding new birth in Christ.

Given his beliefs on original sin, the itinerant communicated the necessity of moving from death in a sinful state to new life in Christ. Consequently, preaching on this indispensable priority ushered hearers closer to gospel understanding. The English evangelist proclaimed,

But if it consists in the heart, that there must be an inward principle wrought in us by faith, that there must be a change of the whole nature, a putting off the old man with his deeds, turning from sin unto God, a cleaving only unto the Son of Righteousness, and that there must be a new birth and we experience the pangs thereof, and that you must feel yourselves weary and heavy laden with your sins,

⁶⁶Elliot, "A Summary of Gospel Doctrine Taught by Mr. Whitefield," 53-54.

before you will seek for deliverance from them — if this is to be the case, if there is so much in being children of God, alas!⁶⁷

Laying burdens down is compared to repentance due to the work of Christ. All sin has been atoned for because of the shed blood of Jesus. Eternal life is the byproduct.

The sermon “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift” uses Luke 13:3 to detail the nature of repentance moving from nonbeliever to believer in Christ. The call for repentance is not to perish without God. Whitefield stated,

Repentance, my brethren, in the first place, as to its name, is the carnal and corrupt disposition of men being changed into a renewed and sanctified disposition. A man that has truly repented, is truly regenerated. It is a different word for one and the same thing. The motley mixture of the beast and devil is gone. There is, as it were, a new creation wrought in your hearts. If your repentance is true, you are renewed throughout, both in soul and body.⁶⁸

Repentance, in Whitefield’s doctrine, was the means by which humanity can receive the new birth from Christ once conviction over sin began as a work of the Holy Spirit. He continues by encouraging the crowd to repent of their sin. Whitefield spoke,

Resolve now this day to have done with your sins forever. Let your old ways and you be separated. You must resolve against it, for there can be no true repentance without a resolution to forsake it. Resolve for Christ, resolve against the devil and his works and go on fighting the Lord’s battles against the devil and his emissaries. Attack him in the strongest hold he has, fight him as men, as Christians and you will soon find him to be a coward. Resist him and he will fly from you. Resolve, through grace, to do this and your repentance is half done. But then take care that you do not ground your resolutions on your own strength but in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶⁹

It is clear that Whitefield desired all to repent, but it was not to be without a spiritual moment with God beforehand. Empty repentance results in empty salvation. Comparing vain self-righteousness to genuine repentance is deeply clarifying for an audience that cannot differentiate between the two.

⁶⁷George Whitefield, “Christ the Only Rest for the Weary and Heavy Laden,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 355.

⁶⁸Whitefield, “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift,” 2:28.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 31.

In the sermon “The Pharisee and the Publican,” Whitefield used Luke 18:14 describing the result of the story between a self-righteous man and a man broken over his personal sinfulness. Whitefield, in describing the Publican, preached,

And to show that his heart was full of holy self-resentment and the the sorrowed after a godly sort, he smote upon his breast. The word in the original implies that he struck hard upon his breast. He will lay the blame upon none but his own wicked heart. He will not, like unhumble Adam, tacitly lay the fault of his vileness upon God and say, “The passions which thou gavest me, they deceived me and I sinned.” He is too penitent thus to reproach his Maker. He sits upon his breast, his treacherous, ungrateful, desperately wicked breast; a breast now ready to burst: and at length, out of the abundance of his heart, I doubt not, with many tears, he as last cries out, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”⁷⁰

The spiritual condition of the tax collector is necessary to view the heart of a broken sinner before a holy God. True repentance is found in the heart of a penitent sinner ready for new life in Christ based on His righteousness and not that of human deeds.

The necessity of the new birth is predicated on the movement of God toward the lost sinner. In “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” Whitefield uses the command found in John 5:39 to do just that, search the Scriptures. The truth of the Word of God is held in high esteem for Whitefield as he encourages hearers to receive each word of which no other book can compare. He spoke,

The fountain of God’s revealing himself thus to mankind was our fall in Adam and the necessity of our new birth in Christ Jesus. And if we search the Scriptures as we ought, we shall find the sum and substance, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of them, is to lead us to a knowledge of these two great truths. All the threats, promises and precepts, all the exhortations and doctrines contained therein, all the rites, ceremonies and sacrifices appointed under the Jewish law, nay, almost all the historical parts of holy Scripture, suppose our being fallen in Adam and either point out to us a Mediator to come, or speak of him as already come in the flesh.⁷¹

Interestingly, Whitefield noted the presupposed nature of human sinfulness as an understood reality in the necessary work of Christ in saving humanity. The itinerant also proclaimed that being born again is a prerequisite to entering the Kingdom of God and

⁷⁰Whitefield, “The Pharisee and the Publican,” 2:68.

⁷¹Whitefield, “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” 2:106.

regeneration. In “Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost,” the English evangelist said, “This sanctification of the Spirit, is that new birth mentioned by our blessed Lord to Nicodemus, ‘without which we cannot see the kingdom of God.’ This is what St. Paul calls being ‘renewed in the spirit of our minds’ and it is the spring of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”⁷² The new birth is the necessary act of God in the lives of believers. The itinerant also said,

The Lord Jesus Christ knew this full well. He knew how desperately wired and deceitful men’s hearts were. He knew very well how many would go to hell even by the very gates of heaven, how many would climb up even to the door and go so near as to knock at it and yet after all be dismissed with a “verily I know you not.” The Lord, therefore plainly tells us, before we can have any well grounded hopes of entering into the kingdom of heaven. Hence, he tells Nichodemus, “that unless a man be born again and from above and unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”⁷³

New birth is essential due to original sin. As the First Great Awakening commenced, major influences of the movement used a new term for salvation.

Commonly referred to as “awakening” by Whitefield and others during the First Great Awakening, salvation is a spiritual waking up from darkness to see the light. The darkness being the original state of humanity deeply corrupted by sin while the light being illuminated from the Lord in the truth of the Gospel to the lost sinner. Whitefield proclaimed the idea as,

Their understandings, which were dark before, now become light in the Lord. And their wills, before contrary to, now become one with the will of God; their affections are now set on things above; their memory is now filled with divine things; their natural consciences are now enlightened; their members, which were before instruments of uncleanness and of iniquity, are now new creatures; “old things are passed away, all things are become new,” in their hearts. Sin has now no longer dominion over them; they are freed from the power, though not the indwelling of being, of it; they are holy both in heart and life, in all manner of conversation. They are made partakers of a divine nature and from Jesus Christ they receive grace.⁷⁴

⁷²Whitefield, “Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost,” 2:190.

⁷³Whitefield, “Marks of True Conversion,” 1:385.

⁷⁴Whitefield, “Christ the Believer’s Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption,” 2:218-19.

Newness of life is an aspect of redemption from sin. More specifically, regeneration is indispensable in response to the depravity of humanity. The state of true believers is that of life. Whitefield proclaimed, “Nor is there the least doubt of the state of true believers. For though they are despised and rejected of natural men, yet being born again of God, they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”⁷⁵

Whitefield was devoted to the idea of regeneration in the human experience. The Scripture from the Apostle Paul’s second letter to the Corinthian church speaks of anyone in Christ is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Immediately in the sermon, the evangelist identifies a problem with Christians and the doctrine of regeneration. He preached,

The doctrine of our regeneration, or new birth in Christ Jesus, though one of the most fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, though so plainly and often pressed on us in sacred writ, “that he who runs may read” [Habakkuk 2:2], nay though it is the very hinge on which the salvation of each of us turns and a point too in which all sincere Christians of every denomination agree, yet it is so seldom considered and so little experimentally understood by the generality of professors, that were we to judge of the truth of it, by the experience of most who call themselves Christians, we should be apt to imagine they had “not so much as heard” whether there be any such thing as regeneration or not.⁷⁶

New birth, in the itinerant’s time, was uncommon due to ignorance of the Gospel, and he was a steadfast in seeking that all that heard him experience the new birth. It must be an experience for each individual not relying on the faith of others or individual morality.

The English evangelist declared,

The reason is, because none but such who have a living faith in Jesus Christ are truly born again, can possibly enter into the kingdom of heaven. You may, perhaps, live honest and outwardly moral lives but if you depend on that morality, or join your works with your faith, in order to justify you before God, you have no lot or share in Christ’s redemption.⁷⁷

⁷⁵George Whitefield, “The Wise and Foolish Virgins,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 423.

⁷⁶Whitefield, “On Regeneration,” 2:275.

⁷⁷Whitefield, “The Wise and Foolish Virgins,” 1:438.

Comprehension of this doctrine was clearly lacking, but the itinerant was not finished applying detail. Whitefield proclaimed,

Which brings me to show, secondly, what we are to understand by being a new creature. And here it is evident at the first view that this expression is not to be so explained as though there was a physical change required to be made in us, or as though we were to be reduced to our primitive nothings and then created and formed again. For supposing we were, as Nicodemus ignorantly imagined, to enter a “second time into our mother’s womb and be born.” Alas! What would it contribute towards rendering us spiritually new creatures? Since “that which was born of the flesh would be flesh still,” we should be the same carnal persons as ever, being derived from carnal parents and consequently receiving the seeds of all manner of sin and corruption from them. No, it only means that we must be so altered as to the qualities and tempers of our minds, that we must entirely forget what manner of person we once were. . . . So our souls, though still the same as to offence, yet are so purged, purified and cleansed from their natural dross, filth, and leprosy by the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit, that they may be properly said to be made anew.⁷⁸

The itinerant knew the proper understanding of the doctrine of regeneration was critical for hearers. Redemption was costly for the Lord in purchasing humanity with His Son, and the result, once grasped by humanity, was lives changed to be more and more like Jesus and less like sinful people. Whitefield continued, “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.”⁷⁹ Explaining the work of the Spirit is not the goal of the Christian faith. The goal is worshiping the one able to save from sin and eternal separation by living changed into His likeness.

Interpretation of Scripture is critical in both the comprehension of the doctrine of regeneration and the previously noted sermon. Whitefield continued explaining the intricacies of the Word of God to aid in awareness of how God works in the lives of true believers. He spoke,

Now, what can be understood by all these different terms of being born again, or putting off the Old Man and putting on the New, of being renewed in the spirit of our minds and becoming new creatures, but that Christianity requires a thorough,

⁷⁸Whitefield, “On Regeneration,” 2:277-78.

⁷⁹Ibid., 278.

real inward change of heart? Do we think this are such-like forms of speaking are mere metaphors, words of a bare sound, without any real solid signification? Indeed, it is to be feared, some men would have them interpreted so. But alas! Unhappy men! They are not to be envied in their metaphorical interpretation. It will be well if they do not interpret themselves out of their salvation.⁸⁰

Dangerous are ideas when interpretations stray from the overall picture of the Bible.

Coherence of the regeneration of the believer is found within Scripture along with the life of Christ. Whitefield continued,

But since its joys are only spiritual and no unclean thing can possibly enter those blessed mansions, there is an absolute necessity of our being changed and undergoing a total renovation of our depraved natures, before we can have any taste or relish of those heavenly pleasures. It is, doubtless, for this reason, that the Apostle declares it to be the irrevocable decree of the Almighty, that “without holiness (without being made pure by regeneration and having the image of God thereby reinstamped upon the soul) no-one shall see the Lord.” And it is very observable, that our divine Master, in the famous passage before referred to, concerning the absolute necessity of regeneration, does not say, “Unless a man be born again, he *shall not*,” but “unless a man be born again, he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God.” It is founded in the very nature of things, that unless we have dispositions wrought in us suitable to the objects that are to entertain us, we can take no manner of complacency or satisfaction in them.⁸¹

The evangelist desired that hearers know the truth regarding this important doctrine.

Settling for complacency and satisfaction from misunderstanding are not acceptable in the mind of the itinerant. He dug deeper into the misconception of regeneration,

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 the changed by the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit and our moral actions proceed from a principle of a new nature, however we may call ourselves Christians we shall be found naked at the great day and in the number of those who have neither Christ’s righteousness imputed to them for their justification in the sight of God, nor holiness wrought in their souls as the consequence of that, in order to make them meet for the enjoyment of God.⁸²

Mere moral adherence is still left wanting of the love of Christ and justification of sin.

Whitefield implored cold moralists to find grace with Christ to change sinful hearts to devoted followers.

⁸⁰Whitefield, “The Wise and Foolish Virgins,” 1:279-80.

⁸¹Ibid., 281. Emphasis original.

⁸²Ibid., 284.

General observations of the new birth were also outlined to by Whitefield. Even in his personal judgment, the English itinerant remained steadfast with the truth. He preached Christ as the only way to regeneration. Whitefield stated, “You must be born again and become new creatures and have the Spirit of Christ within you. And until you have that Spirit of Christ, however you may think to the contrary and please yourself in your own imagination, I say, you are not better than reprobates.”⁸³ In order to live with Christ, conversion and transformation must occur. The itinerant spoke,

Unless we are thus converted and transformed by the renewing of our minds, we cannot properly be said to be in Christ, must less to live godly in him. To be in Christ merely by baptism and an outward profession, is not to be in him in the strict sense of the word. No, “They that are in Christ, are new creatures; old things are passed away and all things are become new” in their hearts.⁸⁴

Becoming a new creature means that all things are now placed under the leadership of God. Enlightenment thinking was greatly against giving leadership of self over to anyone or anything else including the government to a large degree. Whitefield expounded upon this idea in the sermon “The Potter and the Clay.” He proclaimed,

To make us meet to be blissful partakers of such heavenly company, this “marred clay,” I mean, these depraved natures of ours, must necessarily undergo an universal moral change. Our understandings must be enlightened; our wills, reason, and consciences, must be renewed; our affections must be drawn toward and fixed upon things above. And because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality. And the old things must literally pass away and behold all things, even the body as well as the faculties of the soul, but become new.⁸⁵

The new birth for Whitefield changed all things as the Lord granted grace in his heart. The image of original sin was now replaced with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Largely, Whitefield gathered much of his knowledge of salvation and the new birth from his own experience. He learned from the Word of God and others how to finally surrender his

⁸³Whitefield, “Christ the Only Preservative against a Reprobate Spirit,” 2:304.

⁸⁴Whitefield, “Persecution Every Christian’s Lot,” 2:348-49.

⁸⁵Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:256.

heart in faith to Christ for regeneration. The evangelist noted personal experience from another sermon when he declared,

I used to fast twice a week, I used to pray sometimes nine times a-day, I used to receive the sacrament constantly every Lord's-day. And yet I knew nothing of Jesus Christ in my heart, I knew not that I must be a new creature. I knew nothing of inward religion in my soul. And perhaps, many of you may be deceived as I, poor creature, was. And, therefore, it is out of love to you indeed, that I speak to you.⁸⁶

It is evident from his experience that he attempted to go through the motions of religion to find peace and salvation. His heart is also revealed in that his desire was for no other to repeat his mistakes. Whitefield also wanted each hearer to grow in Christ following new birth.

Progress in the Christian faith is becoming more like Christ each day. The English evangelist understood and communicated this idea in the sermon "Walking with God." He proclaimed,

For the new creature increases in spiritual stature. And though a person can but be a new creature, yet there are some that are more conformed to the divine image than others and will after death be admitted to a greater degree of blessedness. For want of observing this distinction, even some gracious souls, that have better hearts than heads (as well as men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith) have unawares run into downright Antinomian principles, denying all growth of grace in a believer, or any marks of grace to be laid down in the Scriptures of truth. From such principles and more especially from practices naturally consequent on such principles, may the Lord of all lords deliver us!⁸⁷

Whitefield not only desired nonbelievers to become believers, but he also wanted believers to grow in their relationship with the Lord. Sanctification of the believer is a process known well by the itinerant. He continued, "We must receive the Spirit of God in its sanctifying graces upon our souls. For Christ says, 'Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"⁸⁸ Spiritually, sanctification is also connected to emotions within the human experience. While emotions are deceptive and should not be

⁸⁶Whitefield, "The Method of Grace," 2:436.

⁸⁷Whitefield, "Walking with God," 1:69-70.

⁸⁸George Whitefield, "The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 170.

the sole deciding factor in decisions, Whitefield went against modern preaching of the time to speak for religion in the heart. He stated, “Religion consists not in external performance, it must be in the heart, or else it is only a name, which cannot profit us, a name to live whilst we are dead.”⁸⁹ The idea of inward religion was somewhat polarizing during this time. Inwardly only religion left the believer with no outward change. Whitefield struggled with this notion early in his life. If religion was external only, people were accused of being enthusiasts, which was a negative term. For the itinerant, true belief in Christ began inwardly to work outwardly. He proclaimed,

The attaining this real, inward religion, is a work of so great difficulty that Nicodemus, a learned doctor and teacher in Israel, thought it altogether impossible and therefore ignorantly asked our blessed Lord, “How this thing could be?” And, truly, to rectify a disordered nature, to mortify our corrupt passions, to turn darkness to light, to put off the old man and put on the new and thereby to have the image of God reinstamped upon the soul or in one word “to be born again,” however right some may make of it, must after all endeavors be owned by man to be impossible. It is true, indeed, Christ’s yoke is said to be an easy or a gracious yoke and his burden light but then it is to those only to whom grace has been given to bear and draw in it.⁹⁰

Rather than getting lost in details or complexity, the English evangelist attempted to make a complex idea simple for hearers. The overall idea of the new birth was not just for humanity to be saved, but the complete course of life to altered for the glory of God. Whitefield communicated the greater purpose of this doctrine later in the same sermon when he stated, “For to this end were we born and to this end were we redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, that we should promote God’s eternal glory.”⁹¹ The itinerant also provided a more concise description of the new birth in another sermon. He preached,

The Scriptures call it holiness, sanctification, the new creature and our Lord calls it a “New birth, or being born again, or born from above.” These are not barely

⁸⁹Whitefield, “The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough,” 1:171.

⁹⁰George Whitefield, “The Benefits of an Early Piety,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 206.

⁹¹Ibid., 208.

figurative expressions, or the flights of eastern language, not do they barely dent a relative change of state conferred on all those who are admitted into Christ's church by baptism. But they denote a real, moral change of heart and life, a real participation of the divine life in the soul of man.⁹²

Authenticity in faith is how Whitefield came to this understanding with the Word of God. Now, he wanted all hearers and readers to know that freedom from cold, moralistic religion was possible with genuine faith in the miracle work of Christ.

In another sermon, "The Resurrection of Lazarus," Whitefield uses the story of Lazarus in relation to sin and the new birth. The miraculous nature of this story also provides a parallel to the miraculous nature of salvation. Basing the sermon on John 11:43-44, the act of Jesus calling a dead person to come out of the grave is an excellent picture of the saving work of Christ in the effectual call of the sinner to salvation. Whitefield encouraged, "And O that he would rend the heavens and come down amongst you! O that there may be a stirring among the dry bones this day! O that whilst I am speaking and saying, 'Dead sinners, come forth,' a power, an almighty power might accompany the word and cause you to emerge into new life!"⁹³ Noticeably, Whitefield uses other evangelistic verses in Scripture to show his heartfelt passion for others to know Christ as Savior. Quoting from Isaiah 64:1, Ezekiel 37:1-4, and Ephesians 2:1, Whitefield captures both the power of God, miraculous nature of salvation, and the new birth of sinners into the Kingdom of God as believers.

In a similar thought, the new birth gives humanity the ability to do what is difficult for those that are unregenerate. Whitefield preached about loving enemies in "Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost." Specifically, this sermon parallels a duty of loving an enemy as difficult for the natural man yet it is an expectation of Christ both as an accomplishment and standard for His followers. The English itinerant proclaimed,

⁹²Whitefield, "The Potter and the Clay," 1:256.

⁹³George Whitefield, "The Resurrection of Lazarus," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 151.

“For if we are born again of God, we must be like him and consequently delight to be perfect in this duty of doing good to our worst enemies in the same manner, though not in the same degree as he is perfect.”⁹⁴ The carnal mind does good in a selfish manner in order to work for forgiveness while the truly converted does good to bless others. Salvation is secure in Christ not the works of humanity.

Salvation

Salvation, philosophically at least, in the Enlightenment period was the alleviation of irrationalism moving toward complete rational thought. God was not part of the process as those proclaiming His message were just as worldly as those outside the church. Whitefield understood the divide between the Anglican elected clergy and the authentic followers of God. He was also broken over the lostness and sin so apparent in the lives of people. His sermons give a great deal of information pertaining to salvation as found in Scripture.

The simplicity of the metanarrative of Scripture depicts salvation as necessity in moving from death to life. From the beginning of the Bible to the end, readers find significant insight into the plan of God in creation, the Fall, redemption, sanctification, and ultimate glorification of humanity. Whitefield described a similar line of thought in “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures.” He preached,

As I told you before, so I tell you again, upon these two truths rest all divine revelation. It being given us from no other end to show our misery and our happiness, our fall and recovery or, in one word, after what manner we died in Adam and how in Christ we may again be made alive. Hence, then arises the necessity of searching the Scriptures. For since they are nothing else but the grand charter of our salvation, the revelation of a covenant made by God with men in Christ and a light to guide us into the way of peace, it follows that all are obliged to read and search them, because all are equally fallen from God, all equally stand in need of being informed how they must be restored to and again united with him.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Whitefield, “Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost,” 2:195.

⁹⁵Whitefield, “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” 2:107.

The full picture of Scripture conveyed to Whitefield a complete idea of God working in the human experience toward the salvation of humanity. Due to the Fall of man and original sin, all people who gathered to hear the itinerant were to hear of salvation in Christ. The itinerant also said,

This is true and undefiled religion and for the perfecting of this good work in our hearts, the eternal Son of God came down and shed his precious blood. For this end were we made and sent into the world and by this alone can we become the sons of God. Were we indeed to judge by the common practice of the world, we might think we were sent into it for no other purpose than to care and toil for the uncertain riches of this life. But if we consult the lively oracles, they will inform us that we were born for nobler ends, even to be born again from above, to be restored to the divine likeness by Jesus Christ, our second Adam and thereby be made meet to inherit the kingdom of heaven. And consequently, there is an obligation laid upon all, even the most busy people, to secure this end, it being an undeniable truth that all creatures ought to answer the end for which they were created.⁹⁶

Salvation involves the whole Trinity according to Whitefield. The preacher declared.

The Father creates, the Son redeems, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies all the elect people of God. Being loved from eternity, they are effectually called in time, they are chosen out of the world and not only by an external formal dedication at baptism, or at the Lord's supper, but by a free, voluntary, unconstrained oblation, they devote themselves, spirit, soul and body, to the entire service of him, who hath loved and given himself for them.⁹⁷

With each person of the Godhead, action was necessary in the work of salvation. The story of the Gospel within humanity is ultimately about glorifying God, and there is sufficient reason involved in knowing that salvation will change everything for those that accept Christ. His reasoning continued,

Were we not fallen creatures, we might then act, perhaps, from other principles. But since we are fallen from God in Adam and are restored again only by the obedience and death of Jesus Christ, the face of things is entirely changed and all we think, speak, or do, is only accepted in and through him.⁹⁸

⁹⁶George Whitefield, "Worldly Business No Plea for the Neglect of Religion," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 348.

⁹⁷George Whitefield, "Christians, Temples of the Living God," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 289.

⁹⁸Whitefield, "The Knowledge of Jesus Christ the Best Knowledge," 2:237.

Since humanity has the capability of being rescued from sin, all things about life for those that accept Christ are now changed. The state of reality was the initial prognosis of the itinerant, not his own cognitive structures. The English evangelist continued, “For since the holy Scriptures are nothing but a revelation from God, how fallen man is to be restored by Jesus Christ, all the precepts, threats, and promises belong to us and to our children, as well as to those to whom they were immediately made known.”⁹⁹ Salvation was not just for the religious elite or those elected to serve the Church of England at that time. Salvation, as the Scriptures declare as soon as sin enters the story, is for everyone. Whitefield communicated,

But behold the goodness, as well as the severity of God! For no sooner had man been convicted as a sinner but lo! A Saviour is revealed to him, under the character of the seed of the woman, the merits of whose sacrifice were then immediately to take place and who should, I noted fullness of time, by suffering death, satisfy for the guilt we had contracted; by obeying the whole moral law, work out for us as everlasting righteousness; and by becoming a principle of new life in us, destroy the power of the devil and thereby restore us to a better state than that in which we were at first created.¹⁰⁰

The itinerant was not just concerned with identifying the problem with all humanity. He desired to provide a solution to sin and depravity.

Whitefield guided hearers toward how to be saved by the Lord in several sermons. Specifically, the evangelist sought to provide more than identifying the sinful state of hearers and readers. His heart was focused on transforming people with the Gospel. The itinerant revealed his heart again when he preached, “Hasten O Lord that blessed time! O let this thy kingdom come! Come, not only by the external preaching of the gospel in the world but by its renovating, heart-renewing, soul-transferring power to awaken sinners!”¹⁰¹ The Gospel was to bring hope rather than leave people in hopelessness. Whitefield proclaimed,

⁹⁹Whitefield, “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” 2:110.

¹⁰⁰Whitefield, “The Knowledge of Jesus Christ the Best Knowledge,” 2:231.

¹⁰¹George Whitefield, “The Day of Small Things,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed.

But behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy. If I have wounded you, be not afraid. Behold, I now bring a remedy for all your wounds. Notwithstanding you are sunk into the nature of the beast and devil, yet, if you truly believe on Jesus Christ, you shall receive the quickening Spirit promised in the text and be restored to the glorious liberties of the sons of God. I say, if you believe on Jesus Christ, “For by faith we are saved. It is not of works, lest anyone should boast.” And, however some men may say, there is a fitness required in the creature and that we must have a righteousness of our own, before we can lay hold on the righteousness of Christ, yet, if we believe the Scripture, salvation is the free gift of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And whosoever believeth on him with his whole heart, through his soul be as black as hell itself, shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰²

The concept of salvation is centralized with belief not only in the existence of Christ but also in His works. The works of humanity have no saving value. The itinerant declared,

No, when Christ comes into your souls, he pardons you, without any respect to your works, either past, present, or to come. . . . Therefore, while you flatter yourselves you are good enough and that you are in a state of salvation, you are only deceiving your own souls and hastening on your own destruction. Come unto him, not as being good enough but as vile sinners, as poor and blind and naked and miserable and then Jesus will have compassion.¹⁰³

The Word of God is clear that the truth of salvation must also contain faith. Whitefield preached, “This admirably points out the way in which God’s Spirit works upon the heart. It first powerfully convinces of sin and of our damnable state. And then puts us upon inquiring after Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁴ The truth of the Gospel unveils sin pointing humanity toward Christ for hope and salvation. The evangelist continued,

Though you are dead in trespasses and sins and might justly be condemned to die the second death, yet if you believe on the Lord Jesus you shall live. . . . What avail all the many great and precious promises of the gospel, unless they are applied and brought home in particular to each of our souls? The word does not profit unless it is mixed with faith.¹⁰⁵

For all readers, the text of Scripture identifies all humanity as lost in sin and in need of a Savior for redemption. The evangelist made known what conviction over sin felt like

Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 376.

¹⁰²Whitefield, “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of Believers,” 2:126.

¹⁰³Whitefield, “Christ the Only Rest for the Weary and Heavy Laden,” 1:356-57.

¹⁰⁴George Whitefield, “Saul’s Conversion,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 173.

¹⁰⁵Whitefield, “The Resurrection of Lazarus,” 2:142.

once fully realized. He communicated, “First, then, before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail, your actual transgressions against the law of God.”¹⁰⁶ The work of Christ in regenerating humanity is completely sufficient for salvation. Whitefield described, “Because he that hath begun the good work, hath engaged also to finish it. Though Christ found him as black as hell, he shall present him and every individual purchased with his blood, without spot or wrinkle, or any such-thing, before the Divine Presence.”¹⁰⁷ Repentance and faith follow conviction of sin as responses to the truth of the human condition. In another sermon, he preached,

But secondly, walking with God not only implies that the prevailing power of the enmity of a man’s heart be taken away but also that a person is actually reconciled to God the Father, in and through the all-sufficient righteousness and atonement of his dear Son. . . . As ambassadors for God we are to beseech sinners, in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled unto God, and when they comply with the gracious invitation and are actually by faith brought into a state of reconciliation with God, then and not till then may they be said so much as to begin to walk with God.¹⁰⁸

The Holy Spirit is likewise active in the process of humanity learning of lostness and the redeeming work of Christ. The itinerant communicated,

And since one great work of the Holy Spirit is to convince us of sin and to set us upon seeking pardon and renewing grace, though the all-sufficient merits of a crucified Redeemer, whosoever has felt the power of the world to come, awakening him from his spiritual lethargy, cannot but be always crying out, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?” Or, in the language of the importunate blind Bartimeus, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me.”¹⁰⁹

Left hopeless in sin and now hopeful in Christ, humanity can now pursue life with Christ. Generally, this is how the process of salvation comes together. Whitefield identified more insight into the role of God in saving humanity. He proclaimed,

¹⁰⁶Whitefield, “The Method of Grace,” 2:426.

¹⁰⁷George Whitefield, “The Day of Small Things,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 377.

¹⁰⁸Whitefield, “Walking with God,” 1:68.

¹⁰⁹Whitefield, “Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost,” 2:191.

For divine faith is not wrought in the heart by moral persuasion (though moral suasion is very often made use of as a means to convey it). Faith is the peculiar gift of God. No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draw him. . . . Thou mayest try the power of thy own boasted freewill and the force and energy of moral persuasion and rational arguments (which, without all doubt, have their proper place in religion). But all thy efforts, extort with never so much vigor, will prove quite fruitless and abortive, til that same Jesus, who said, "Take away the stone," and cried, "Lazarus, come forth," comes by his mighty power, removes the stone of unbelief, speaks life to thy dead soul, looses thee from the fetters of thy sins and corruptions and by the influences of his blessed Spirit, enables thee to rise and to walk in the way of his holy commandments.¹¹⁰

The heart is cannot be separated from the mind in salvation. While Enlightenment rationalism attempted to remove the heart in relation to salvation (or eliminating irrational thought creating a world where perfect decision-making is constant), Whitefield preached to the heart as well as the mind in explaining salvation within the Gospel. The role of the mind and the heart in salvation are should not be diminished or separated by degrees of importance. Adam Greenway recalled from R. A. Torrey's *What the Bible Teaches*,

The human heart is the soil; the preacher of the Word of God is the sower, and drops the seed into the soil; God by His Spirit opens the heart to receive the seed (Acts 16:14); the hearer believes; the Spirit quickens the seed into life in the receptive heart; the new Divine Nature springs up out of the Divine Word; the believer is born again, created a new, made alive, passed out of death into life.¹¹¹

Greenway later concluded that it is the work of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation that enabled the mind, heart, and will to act simultaneously. He wrote, "Since the Holy Spirit of God is the agent of conversion, it seems reasonable to understand that the mind, heart, and will of the unregenerate are acted upon at the moment of salvation, thus enabling the individual to be brought out of spiritual bondage and blindness and into the glorious light of redemption in Christ."¹¹²

¹¹⁰Whitefield, "The Resurrection of Lazarus," 2:150-51.

¹¹¹Adam W. Greenway, "The Integration of Apologetics and Evangelism in the Ministry of Reuben Archer Torrey" (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ph. D. diss., 2007), 111. See also R. A. Torrey, *What the Bible Teaches: A Thorough and Comprehensive Study of What the Bible has to Say Concerning the Great Doctrines of which It Treats* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 335.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 212-13.

The encouragement to surrender to Christ in salvation is evident throughout the work of the itinerant. Surrender was the opposite of Enlightenment philosophy. An example of such exhortation is found in “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift.”

He urged,

Resolve to cast thyself at the feet of Christ in subjection to him and throw thyself into the arms of Christ for salvation by him. Consider, my dear brethren, the many invitations he has given you to come unto him, to be saved by him. “God has laid on him the inquiry of us all.” O let me prevail with you, above all things, to make choice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Resign yourselves unto him, take him, O take him, upon his own terms and whosever thou art, however great a sinner you have been, this evening, in the name of the great God, do I offer Jesus Christ unto thee.¹¹³

In order to accept salvation from Christ, repentance is necessary. The English evangelist preached regularly on salvation with repentance. In the same sermon, he continued, “And this, my brethren, is plainly revealed to us in the word of God, ‘The soul that does not repent and turn unto the Lord, shall die in its sins and their blood shall be required at their own heads’ [Ezekiel 18, 33]. It is necessary, as we have sinned, we should repent.”¹¹⁴

Repentance also calls believers to give their whole hearts to Christ and turn from sin. In another encouraging portion of a sermon, Whitefield exhorts hearers to given themselves to God. He spoke,

O the love of Christ! It constrains me yet to beset you to come to him. What do you reject, if you reject Christ, the Lord of glory! Sinners, give the dear Redeemer a lodging in your souls. Do not be Bethshemites [Judges 1:33; 1 Samuel 6]. Give Christ your hearts, your whole hearts. Indeed he is worthy. He made you and not you yourselves. You are not your own. Give Christ then your bodies and souls, which are his!¹¹⁵

The deeds of man have no saving power absent the work of Christ in the heart of humanity. The itinerant continued to encourage hearers, “On then, let me beseech you,

¹¹³Whitefield, “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift,” 2:32.

¹¹⁴Ibid, 33.

¹¹⁵Whitefield, “The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” 2:167.

give God your hearts, your whole hearts. And suffer yourselves to be drawn by the cords of infinite love, to honor and obey him.”¹¹⁶ His encouragement continued,

And when you thus go to the Lord Jesus Christ out of yourself, in full dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find him an able and a willing Saviour. He is pleased to see sinners coming to him in a sense of their own unworthiness. And when their case seems to be most dangerous, most distressed, then the Lord in his mercy steps in and gives you his grace. He puts his Spirit within you, takes away your heart of stone and gives you a heart of flesh. Stand not out then against this Lord but go unto him, not in your own strength but in the strength of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁷

Complete surrender is exactly how the itinerant came to salvation, and he encouraged others to allow the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts.

Previously from the life of Whitefield, he learned that saving himself through religious pursuits alone was a futile effort. Constant stress and discouragement left the preacher empty and without resolution in salvation. It was not until he realized that God had already provided all the necessary things for salvation. He warned hearers of the dangers of relying on personal good works in religion alone for salvation. Actions without any connection to the heart and God are futile. The itinerant declared,

But I mean such unbelievers, that have not more faith than the devils themselves. Perhaps you may think you believe, because you repeat the Creed, or subscribe to a Confession of Faith, because you go to church or meeting, receive the sacrament and are taken full communion. These are blessed privileges. But this may be done, without our being true believers.¹¹⁸

Such ideas were similar to Whitefield’s own experience in seeking salvation. Humanity cannot save itself in religious pursuits a part from God. The English evangelist also identified other means in which people attempted to earn salvation. He preached,

Secondly, let me apply myself to those who deceive themselves with false hopes of salvation. Some, through the influx of a good education, or other providential restraints, have not run into the same excess of riot with other men and they think

¹¹⁶Whitefield, “Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty,” 1:144.

¹¹⁷Whitefield, “Christ the Only Rest for the Weary and Heavy Laden,” 1:363.

¹¹⁸Whitefield, “The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” 2:159.

they have not need to receive the Holy Ghost but flatter themselves that they are really born again.¹¹⁹

Whitefield proclaimed, “Men could never have made such provision for themselves, or angels for them. No, our salvation is from God, from the beginning to the end.”¹²⁰

Enlightenment thinkers encouraged individual autonomy and freedom from normal cultural patterns. Salvation cannot be attained by works alone through glorified reasoning. The itinerant also expounded,

But, my brethren, unless you go in the strength of Jesus Christ, unless you depend only upon him for salvation, unless he is your wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, he will never be your redemption [1 Corinthians 1:30]. Our salvation is the free gift of God. It is owing to his free love and the free grace of Jesus Christ that ever you are saved.¹²¹

Further detail is found in his sermon on “The Conversion of Zaccheus.” A picture of the pursuit of Jesus toward saving humanity, Jesus came after Zaccheus knowing redemption was near. He declared,

Thus it is the great God brings home his children. He calls them by name, by his word or providence. He speaks to them also by his Spirit. Hereby they are enabled to open their hearts and are made willing to receive the King of glory. For Zaccheus’ sake, let us not entirely condemn people that come under the word out of no better principle than curiosity. Who knows but God may call them? It is good to be where the Lord is passing by. May all who are now present out of this principle, hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to their souls and so hear that they may life! A few words from Christ, applied by his Spirit, will save their souls.¹²²

Just like God called Zaccheus to salvation through the earthly ministry of Jesus, God also calls nonbelievers to salvation. Speaking directly about Zaccheus, Whitefield communicated, “We know not what Zaccheus underwent before he died. However, this one thing I know, he now believed in Christ and was justified, or acquitted and looked

¹¹⁹Whitefield, “Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost,” 2:197.

¹²⁰George Whitefield, “The Gospel Supper,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 48.

¹²¹George Whitefield, “The Folly and Danger of Parting with Christ for Pleasures and Profits of Life,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 367.

¹²²Whitefield, “The Conversion of Zaccheus,” 2:80.

upon as righteous in God's sight."¹²³ Free justification from sin only occurs when complete repentance from sin and genuine faith in Christ transpire. The reason for repentance and faith is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to every true believer. Whitefield acknowledged, "Whatever other scheme of salvation men may lay, I acknowledge I can see no other foundation whereon to build my hopes of salvation but on the rock of Christ's personal righteousness, imputed to my soul."¹²⁴ With much confusion surrounding salvation, the English evangelist sought to clarify the doctrine of salvation. He communicated,

I say salvation is the free gift of God. It is God's free grace, I preach unto you, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Jesus Christ justifies the ungodly. Jesus Christ passed by and saw you polluted with your blood and bid you live [Ezekiel 16:6]. It is not of works, it is of faith. We are not justified for our faith, of faith is the instrument but by your faith the active as well as the passive obedience of Christ must be applied to you. Jesus Christ hath fulfilled the law, he had made it honourable. Jesus Christ hath made satisfaction to his Father's justice, full satisfaction and it is as complete as it is full and God will not demand it again. Jesus Christ is the way, Jesus Christ is the truth, and Jesus Christ is the life.¹²⁵

The free grace of God and the effectual call of God work together to fully satisfy the new birth within humanity. Jesus and the Holy Spirit come to lost sinners at the perfect time.

The pursuit of sinners by Christ is essential in salvation. It was Jesus that came to Zaccheus. Whitefield followed this thought in the same sermon. The itinerant spoke,

He came not to save but to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to Jericho to seek and save Zaccheus, for otherwise Zaccheus would never have been saved by him. . . . Even from guilt and also from the power of their sins, to make them heirs of God and joint heirs with himself and partakers of that glory which he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Thus will the Son of Man save that which is

¹²³Whitefield, "The Conversion of Zaccheus," 81.

¹²⁴Whitefield, "The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment," 2:162. The itinerant continued in combining the notions of original sin and salvation. He explained, Poor Christless souls! Do you know what a condition you are in? Why, you are lying in the wicked one, the devil. He rules in you, he walks and dwells in you, unless you dwell in Christ and the Comforter is come into your hearts. And will you contentedly like in that wicked one, that devil? What wages will he give you? Eternal death. O that you would come to Christ! The free gift of God through him is eternal life. He will accept you even now, if you will believe in him. The Comforter may yet come into your hearts, even yours. All that are now his living temples, were once lying in the wicked one, as well as you. This blessed gift, this Holy Ghost, the blessed Jesus received even for the rebellious, 2:165-66.

¹²⁵Whitefield, "The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough," 1:181-82.

lost. He was made the Son of Man on purpose that he might save them. He had no other end but this in leaving his Father's throne, in obeying the moral law and hanging upon the cross.¹²⁶

With God directing and Jesus pursuing, the human experience in salvation is accepting what the Lord has already accomplished. Humanity can be saved through the work of Christ and the movement of God. In comparison to the marriage covenant, Whitefield connects the pursuit of Jesus in forgiveness of sin. He described, "Though your sins have been never so great, yea, the blood of Christ will cleanse you from them. The marriage covenant between Christ and your souls will dissolve all your sins. You will then be weary of your old ways, for all things will become new in your souls."¹²⁷ In another sermon, the evangelist used the love of God as a strong function of salvation. He spoke,

And, as he is altogether lovely, so is he altogether loving: his name and his nature is Love. God, God in Christ is love: love in the abstract. And in this has he manifested his love, in that while we were yet sinners, nay open enemies, Jesus, in his own due time, died for the ungodly. He loved us so as to give himself for us. O what manner of love is this! What was Jacob's love to Rachel, in comparison of the love which Jesus bore to a perishing world! He became a curse for us.¹²⁸

The combination of fear and love can be found in appeals to salvation. Fear is utilized in describing the destination of hell destitute of the presence of God for eternity for those that are not saved. Love describes the work of Christ on the cross so salvation can happen for humanity. Richard Baxter noted a connection between fear and love with respect to the idea of salvation. He wrote,

Though love must be the principle or chief spring of our obedience; yet he that knoweth not that fear must drive, as love must draw, and is necessary in its place to join with love, or to do that which the weakness of love leave undone, doth neither know what a man is, nor what God's word is, nor what his government is, nor what either magistracy or any civil or domestical government is; and therefore should spend many years at school before he turneth a disputer.¹²⁹

¹²⁶Whitefield, "The Conversion of Zaccheus," 2:85.

¹²⁷Whitefield, "Christ the Best Husband," 1:121.

¹²⁸Whitefield, "Christ the Believer's Husband," 1:239.

¹²⁹Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, vol. 3 (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 665.

The reality of fear can be enough to awaken the human soul to the idea of the love of God. Utilizing fear as the primary motivator was not the chief tactic of the English itinerant. Communicating the reality and effects of sin and how God responded with the Gospel are readily found along with what happens in the life of a believer following salvation.

The results of salvation are also prevalent in the work of Whitefield. It was significant for all to hear the message of Christ, be changed by redemption and faith, and live consistently with Christ. The English evangelist explained,

But further, let us consider ourselves as Christians, as having this natural veil, in some measure, taken off from our eyes by the assistance of God's Holy Spirit and so enabled to see what he requires of us. Let us suppose ourselves in some degree to have tasted the good word of life and to have felt the powers of the world to come, influencing and moulding our souls into a religious frame; to be fully and heartily convinced that we are soldiers lifted under the banner of Christ and to have proclaimed open war at our baptism, against the world, the flesh and the devil.¹³⁰

The war in this life has a great deal to do with combating the lies of the devil with the truth of God. The truth in the Enlightenment and Whitefield's polemic are critical. His work was recalling all back to orthodox Christianity through the influence of Christ.

Truth

The English itinerant rarely sought truth outside God's Word within his sermons. In most instances, truth was represented clearly from Scripture. Like presuppositional apologists and Reformed theologians, the Word of God is to be understood first as the source of ultimate truth. All other categories and disciplines of thought flow through Scripture to inform truth.

The evangelist proclaimed the truth of Scripture in his sermons regularly. Most began with only one to three verses and then expounded upon. Whitefield regularly quoted other verses in order to theologically ground the chosen text of the sermon. The

¹³⁰Whitefield, "The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society," 1:155.

truth meant a great deal to him as he proclaimed in discussing the composition of the Bible, “These are emphatically styled the Scriptures and, in one place, the ‘Scriptures of Truth,’ as though no other book deserved the name of true writings of Scripture in comparison to them.”¹³¹ Some that opposed Christianity regarded Scripture as insufficient in directing humanity towards proper, precise action due in every life situation possible. Whitefield denied this line of thought stating,

But this I deny and affirm on the contrary, that God at all times, circumstances, and places, though never so minute, never so particular, will, if we diligently seek the assistance of his Holy Spirit, apply general things to our hearts and thereby, to use the words of the holy Jesus, will lead us into all truth and give us the particular assistance we want.¹³²

The English itinerant believed that the Holy Spirit to be capable of leading humanity to the truth but neglecting to search the Scriptures in favor of following the Holy Spirit was not advisable. The work of the Word of God in the life of the believer requires the work of the Holy Spirit in communicating ultimate truth. Faith, as pertaining to Whitefield’s preaching, worked alongside truth.

A second idea concerning truth for Whitefield was found in opposition to reason alone. Rationalism by itself did not explain the truth of the Gospel and other questions surrounding Christianity. He pointed to unconventional and unlikely means of transferring truth to humanity throughout generations. Whitefield expounded,

But the sacred Oracles and historians of all ages acquaint us that God brings about the greatest thing, not only by small and unlikely means but by way and means directly opposite to the carnal reasonings of unthinking men. He chooses things that are not, to bring to nought those which are. How did Christianity spread and flourish by one who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and who expired on a cross? He was despised and rejected, not merely by the vulgar illiterate but the Rabbis and Masters of Israel, the Scribes and Pharisees, who by the Jewish churchmen were held too in so high a reputation for their outward sanctity, that it became a common proverb, “if only two went to heaven, the one would be a Scribe and the other a Pharisee.” Yet here were those who endeavoured to silence the voice of all his miracles and heavenly doctrine with, “Is

¹³¹Whitefield, “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures,” 2:106.

¹³²Ibid., 111.

not this the Carpenter's son?" Nay, "He is mad, why hear you him? He hath a devil and casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."¹³³

The truth of God's Word withstood various forms of ridicule. Autonomous reason eventually attempted to discredit Jesus. In the Enlightenment, rationalism attacked the validity of the Word of God as truth given a seemingly irrational plot. The truth of the story of Christianity was extremely important to the ethos of Whitefield's preaching.

Thirdly, truth for the English itinerant was formed through the lens of the Gospel. A sermon entitled "The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough" revealed a connection to this idea. The evangelist stated,

It is true, talking at this rate will offend the Pharisees, who do not like this leveling doctrine (as they call it) but if ever you are brought to Jesus Christ by faith, you will experience the truth of it. Come by faith to Jesus Christ. Do not come, Pharisee-like, telling God what you have done, how often you have gone to church, how often you have received the sacrament, fasted, prayed, or the like. No, come to Christ as poor, lost, undone, damned sinners. Come to him in this manner and he will accept of you.¹³⁴

The doctrine of original sin informed Whitefield of the truth in knowing Christ as Savior. Coming to Christ on an individual level boasting of accomplishments will not secure salvation. Human works do not save people from sin. It is by faith alone in Jesus that lost sinners destined for eternal life separate from God find redemption.

The evangelist also categorized truth with the Gospel in terms of eternal life. For hearers of the sermon "A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year's Gift," truth was related to eternal life in view of separation from Christ. Whitefield spoke about the frightening reality of hell awaiting those that do not know Jesus as Savior. Many hearing the sermons of Whitefield were nominal believers meaning they knew of Christ, but the hearers had not yet been spiritually reborn. A warning came to them through the itinerant to take seriously the idea of salvation and new birth. Whitefield preached, "These are truths,

¹³³Whitefield, "The Day of Small Things," 2:375.

¹³⁴Whitefield, "The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough," 1:182-83.

though awful ones. My brethren, these are the truths of the gospel.”¹³⁵ Truth, in this case, was founded upon biblical knowledge flowing into the spiritual reality of human life. Reasoning with ultimate truth was part of the polemic of the itinerant.

Reason

Reason in Whitefield’s sermons leans heavily on the Word of God as does all other topics. The sermon previously noted as “The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful” also utilizes reason. Whitefield used Scripture to reason toward regeneration as the goal of the revelation of God to humanity. He spoke,

This is the “one thing needful,” represented indeed in various Scriptures by various names. Sometimes it is called “Regeneration,” or “the new creature,” because it is the blessed work of God’s efficacious grace. Sometimes the “Fear of God,” and sometimes “his love and the keeping his commandments” and very frequently in the New Testament it is called “faith,” or “receiving Christ and believing on him,” which therefore is represented as the “great work of God” [John 6:29], the great thing which God in his glorious gospel requires, as well as by his Spirit produces in us.¹³⁶

Whitefield reasoned from Scripture that the lost are called to Christ through revelation. Regeneration is a common thread among his sermons as an evangelist. Reasoning in this way brought theological understanding to people in smaller bits for better comprehension.

He continues in the same sermon to describe that all humanity is in need of regeneration. Ministers, the rich, the poor, the old, and the young are in immediate need of salvation in Christ as the highest importance.¹³⁷ The universal concern of Whitefield displayed in this sermon is directly linked to the presupposition of original sin. Reasoning forward to all people being trapped in sin, he exhorted all to embrace the work of Christ in salvation.

¹³⁵Whitefield, “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift,” 2:36.

¹³⁶Whitefield, “The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful,” 2:9.

¹³⁷Ibid., 10-11.

Following the universal need for regeneration, Whitefield expanded his reasoning to include a story of King Solomon. This particular King of Israel was the wisest of all men to live until the time of Christ. Even with all the wisdom known to man, Solomon still sought God for knowledge. Whitefield preached,

When he had raised up one man on the throne of Israel, with the character of the wisest that ever lived upon the face of the earth, he chose to make him eminently a teacher of this great truth. And though now all that he spoke on the curious and less concerning subjects of natural philosophy is lost, “though he spoke of trees from the cedar to the hyssop and of beasts and of fowls and of creeping things and of fishes” [1 Kings 4:33], that saying is preserved in which he testifies, that “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [Prov 1:7, 9, 10]. And those Proverbs, in almost every line of which they who neglect God and their own souls are spoken of as fools, as if that were the most proper signification of the word, while the religious alone are honoured with the title of wise. But in this respect, as attesting this truth in the name of God and in his own, “a greater than Solomon is here.”¹³⁸

In reasoning with the Scripture, Whitefield communicated that even reason must begin with the Lord. Human reason was not to override the revelation of God in the search for ultimate truth. The “wise” in neglecting God became fools.

Whitefield analyzes reason further in giving a reason for sadness in view of the folly of human reasoning. Again, he used Solomon as a reference for the need for God. He spoke,

How much reason have we to lament the folly of mankind in neglecting the one thing needful. If religion be indeed the truest wisdom, then surely we have the justest reason to say with Solomon, “the folly and madness is in men’s hearts” [Ecclesiastes 9:3]. Is it the one thing needful? Look on the conduct of the generality of mankind and you would imagine they thought it the one thing needless.¹³⁹

The Enlightenment period helped shift reason above the Word of God proclaiming the need for God abandoned. Whitefield preached against this idea by reasoning with Scripture first and placing human reason dependent upon God. The itinerant further described the gulf between reason alone and obedience to God as,

¹³⁸Whitefield, “The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful,” 2:13-14.

¹³⁹Ibid., 21.

There are mysteries in religion which are above, though not contrary to, our natural reason. And therefore we shall never become Christians unless we cast down imaginations, “and every high thing exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ [2 Corinthians 10:5]. It is in this respect, as well as others, that we must become fools for Christ’s sake and acknowledge we know nothing without revelation, as we ought to know.”¹⁴⁰

Whitefield’s understanding of reason is dependent upon Scripture, which is presuppositional in nature. Reality and evidence seen by Whitefield was verifiable to the point of action-oriented belief. He continued to operate toward ontology that preceded epistemology, but faith is a remaining factor in submission to the truth of God’s Word. The Enlightenment reversed the idea beginning with epistemology. The evangelist continued,

For it is nothing else but pride of the understanding, an unwillingness to submit to the truths of God, that makes so many, professing themselves wise, to become such fools as to deny the Lord who has so dearly bought them and dispute the divinity of that eternal Word, “in whom they live and move and have their being.”¹⁴¹

Pride has long since been a barrier to salvation. The spirit of humanity must recognize the weight of sin before placing faith in Christ for redemption.

In the same sermon, Whitefield illustrates the direction of human reason toward a disconnection with God. He knew that eternity and salvation were at stake if reason was declared the victor over Scripture in ultimate truth. He preached,

In the name of God, brethren, is this the part of a man, of a rational creature? To go on with your eyes open towards a pit of eternal ruin, because there are a few pretty flowers in the way? Or what if you shut your eyes, will that prevent your fall? It signifies little to say, “I will not think of these things, I will not consider them.” God has said, “In the last days they shall consider it perfectly” [Jeremiah 23:20]. The revels of a drunken malefactor will not prevent nor respite his execution. Pardon my plainness. If it were a fable or a tale, I would endeavor to amuse you with words but I cannot do it where souls are at stake.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰George Whitefield, “The Extent and Reasonableness of Self-Denial,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 477.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 477-78.

¹⁴²Whitefield, “The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful,” 2:23.

The heart of Whitefield in evangelism is apparent in helping hearers understand where reason can lead if it is not subordinate to the wisdom of the revelation of God. The evangelist also proclaimed,

Yet there have been and are now, such fools in the world, as to “say in their hearts, ‘There is no God,’” or so wise, as by their wisdom, not to know God, or own his divine image to be stamped on that book, wherein these grand things are recorded and that in such legible characters, that he who runs may read.¹⁴³

Whitefield understood that reason alone continued to lead people away from Christ. The opposition to the Gospel and Christianity was not a new feature within humanity. During the Enlightenment, opposition was more visible. The English preacher declared,

How both the Jewish and Christian dispensations have been and even to this day are despised, by the wise disputers of the world, on this very account, is manifest to all who read the lively oracles with a becoming attention. What ridicule, obloquy and inveterate opposition Christianity meets with, in this our day, not only from the open deist but from formal professors, is too evident to every truly pious soul.¹⁴⁴

The truth concerning the destiny of man apart from God drives his thoughts to stimulate the minds of others toward caring enough about eternity to choose Christ. The itinerant used destiny to display a portion of ultimate truth from Scripture within the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Whitefield said,

The great Apostle just mentioned, when brought before Felix, could think of no better means to convert that sinful man than to reason of temperance, righteousness, and more especially the judgment to come. The first might in some measure affect, but I am persuaded, it was the last consideration, a judgment to come, the made him to tremble. And so bad as the world is now grown yet there are few have their consciences so fare seared as to deny that there will be a reckoning hereafter.¹⁴⁵

The itinerant understood that he could reason with others about many things, but reasoning toward the impending judgment (destiny) was imperative. The reason of God is the appropriate reason that humanity should seek after Him. In His perfect wisdom, the balance of grace and justice are found for those who believe. God’s reason is not the

¹⁴³Whitefield, “The Day of Small Things,” 2:372.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 375.

¹⁴⁵Whitefield, “The Wise and Foolish Virgins,” 1;422.

reason of humanity. The Lord operates perfectly within His power as creator and sustainer. The itinerant proclaimed,

But in answer to this objection we affirm that God's threatenings, as well as promises are without repentance. And for this reason, because they are both founded on the eternal laws of right reason accordingly we always find that where the conditions were not performed, on the nonperformance of which the threatenings were denounced, God always executed the punishment threatened. The driving Adam out of Eden, the destruction of the old world by a deluge of water, and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah are and will be always so many standing monuments of God's executing his threatenings when denounced, though to our weak apprehensions the punishment may seem far to exceed the crime.¹⁴⁶

The promises of God will be fulfilled both positively as blessings or negatively with His wrath. The Lord is just and demands justice for disobedience and sin.

Whitefield's thoughts on reason alone in the human effort to find freedom and ultimately salvation continued in "The Pharisee and the Publican." Removing the Word of God in the investigation of ultimate truth is folly to Whitefield. He compares the one that exalts himself to the one that humbles himself in view of God. He expressed,

"Everyone," without exception, young or old, high or low, rich or poor (for God is no respecter of persons) "every one," whosoever he be, that exalteth himself and not free-grace, every one that trusteth in himself that he is righteous, the rest in his duties, or thinks to join them with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for justification in the sight of God, though he be no adulterer, nor extortioner, though he be not outwardly unjust, nay, though he fast twice in the week and give tithes of all that he possess—yet shall he be abased in the sight of all good meant who know him here and before men and angels and God himself, when Jesus Christ comes to appear in judgment hereafter. How low, none but the Almighty God can tell. He shall be abased to live with devils and make his abode in the lowest hell forevermore.¹⁴⁷

The fear of hell in the words of Whitefield seems more serious as he compares the repentant one to the prideful. His reasoning from Scripture to those that trust in their own rationality in justification is clearly intended to confront human rationality and self-righteousness with the heart of the Gospel.

¹⁴⁶George Whitefield, "The Eternity of Hell Torments," in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 445.

¹⁴⁷Whitefield, "The Pharisee and the Publican," 2:70.

Whitefield further argued against human reason alone from the perspective of original sin. The evangelist described,

The horrid and dreadful mistakes, which the most refined reasoners in the heathen world ran into, both as to the object, as well as manner of divine worship, have sufficiently demonstrated the weakness and depravity of human reason. Nor do our modern boasters afford us any better proofs of the greatness of its strength, since the best improvement they generally make of it is only to reason themselves into downright willful infidelity and thereby reason themselves out of eternal salvation.¹⁴⁸

The English itinerant also preached on the unreasonableness of not following Christ. He declared, “Let not, therefore, the deceived reasoner boast any longer of his pretended reason. Whatever you may think, it is the most unreasonable thing in the world not to believe on Jesus Christ, whom God has sent.”¹⁴⁹ Reason on the human level can comprehend the necessity of salvation in Christ. Whitefield reasoned from Scripture knowing that the Lord would work as His will dictated.

Reason was encouraged by Whitefield, but only if the Scriptures were considered as primary. The evangelist proclaimed,

This is good in its place. And I am so far from thinking, that Christian preachers should not make use of rational arguments and motives in their sermons, that I cannot think they are fit to preach at all, who either cannot, or will not use them. We have the example of the great God himself for such a practice; ‘Come (says he) and let us reason together.’ And St. Paul, that prince of preachers, “reasoned of temperance and righteousness and a judgment to come.’ . . . The Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, everywhere abound with them. And when can they be more properly employed and brought forth, than when we are acting as ambassadors of heaven and beseeching poor sinners, as in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled unto God.¹⁵⁰

Scripture contains reason as Whitefield demonstrated in many sermons, but it does not leave reason to itself in determining ultimate truth for humanity. Faith is clearly involved in connecting reason back to God. The itinerant also said,

¹⁴⁸Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:251.

¹⁴⁹Whitefield, “Christ the Believer’s Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption,” 2:227.

¹⁵⁰Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:256-57.

Reason is the glory of a man, the chief thing whereby God has made us to differ from the brute creation. And our modern unbelievers have exalted it to such a high degree, as even to set it in opposition to revelation and so deny the Lord that bought them. But though, in doing this, they greatly err and whilst they profess themselves wise, become real fools; yet we must acknowledge, that reason is the candle of the Lord and whosoever puts it out, shall bear his punishment, whosoever he be.¹⁵¹

Reason was useful, but it was not to be disconnected from faith in God. Whitefield referred to the story of Abraham. In a specific sermon on the actions of the patriarch, the itinerated proclaimed, “For, where reason ends, faith begins. And, however infidels may style themselves reasoners, of all men they are the most unreasonable. For is it not contrary to all reason, to measure an infinite by a finite understanding, or think to find out the mysteries of godliness to perfection?”¹⁵² Whitefield also questioned the position of philosophers concerning the mysteries of nature. He said,

Nay, is it not the greatest mystery, that men, who pretend to reason and call themselves philosophers, who search into the *arcana naturae* [secrets of nature] and consequently find a mystery in every blade of grass, should yet be so irrational as to decry all mysteries in religion? Where is the scribe? Where is the wise? Where is the disputer against the Christian revelation? Does not everything without and within us, conspire to prove its divine original? And would not self-interest, if there was no other motive, excite us to observe God’s statutes and keep his laws?¹⁵³

He continued in another sermon reflecting upon the ideas of science and philosophers of his time compared to the thoughts of God in Scripture. Rather than focusing on dry, brute facts, Whitefield preferred the warmth of the revelation of God. The itinerant preached,

Men of low and narrow minds soon commence wise in their own conceits and having acquired a little smattering of the learned languages and made some small proficiency in the dry sciences are easily tempted to look upon themselves as a head taller than their fellow mortals and accordingly too, too often put forth great swelling words of vanity. But persons of a more exalted and extensive reach of thought, dare not boast. No, they know that the greatest scholars are in the dark, in respect to many even of the minutest things in life, and after all their painful researches into the *Arcana Naturae* [secrets of nature], they find such an immense void, such an unmeasurable expanse yet to travelled over, that they are obliged at

¹⁵¹George Whitefield, “The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 318.

¹⁵²Whitefield, “Abraham’s Offering Up His Son Isaac,” 1:86.

¹⁵³George Whitefield, “Britain’s Mercies and Britain’s Duty,” in *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, ed. Lee Gatiss, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 136.

last to conclude, almost with respect to everything, “that they know nothing yet as they ought to know.”¹⁵⁴

Later in the same sermon, Whitefield noted this same idea propelled Socrates to give an answer for the unknown things in philosophy as, “Perhaps it is, because I am most sensible to my own ignorance.”¹⁵⁵ Whitefield professed that wise men, according to worldly knowledge alone, were still without primary knowledge of God in salvation. Given the common preaching of ethics and morals without a connection to God in the Church of England, the evangelist defended the preaching of the gospel in favor of behavior modification or moral alignment. He preached,

Mere heathen morality and not Jesus Christ, is preached in most churches. . . . For it would not be gospel. It would be only a system of moral ethics. Seneca, Cicero, or any of the Gentile philosophers would be as good a Saviour as Jesus of Nazareth. It is the divinity of our Lord that gives a sanction to his death and makes him such a High Priest as became us, one who by the infinite mercies of his suffering could make a full, perfect, sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation to infinitely offended justice.¹⁵⁶

The English itinerant also had a view on atheism. He continually reasons from Scripture to show the reason for the providence of God. Whitefield communicated,

We may, indeed, atheist-like, ascribe all these things to natural causes and say, “Our own skill and foresight has brought us hither in safety.” But as certainly as Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant, in the days to his flesh, walked upon the water and said to his sinking disciples, “Be not afraid, it is I,” so surely has the same everlasting I AM, “who decketh himself with light as with a garment, who spreadeth out the heavens like a curtain, who clasps the winds in his fist, who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hands,” and guided the wise men by a star in the east; so surely, I say, has he spoken and at his command the winds have blown us where we are now arrived. For his providence ruleth all things.¹⁵⁷

Learning about the providence of God and trusting in the provision of the Lord are vastly different. One is cognitive only while trusting in God involves submission to His power and authority.

¹⁵⁴Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:246.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 247.

¹⁵⁶Whitefield, “What Think Ye of Christ?” 1:404-5.

¹⁵⁷Whitefield, “Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty,” 1:143.

His final plea in “The Pharisee and the Publican” is for the hearts of those that trust in self-righteousness over God. Whitefield encourages listeners, “Sinners, I know not how to leave off talking with you. I would fill my mouth with arguments, I would plead with you. ‘Come, let us reason together,’ though your sins be as scarlet, yet, if you humble yourselves, they shall be as white as snow. One act of true faith in Christ justifies you forever and ever.”¹⁵⁸ His polemic remained fixed on the notion of reasoning with Scripture rather than a part from it. In other cases, Whitefield noted that humanity can be rationally convicted over sin, but some suppress conviction. He proclaimed,

We are mistaken if we imagine that men now commence or continue infidels and set up corrupted reason in opposition to divine revelation merely for want of evidence (for I believe it might easily be proved, that a modern unbeliever is the most credulous creature living). No, it is only for want of a humble mind, of a sense of their original depravity and a willingness to own themselves so depraved, that makes them so obstinately shut their eyes against the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.¹⁵⁹

The English evangelist also spoke about the natural man not having the ability to see spiritual things. He seemingly came to expect friction from those who were not believers when the Gospel was preached. Whitefield declared,

But before I proceed to this it may not be improper to observe that if any of you amongst whom I am now preaching the kingdom of God are enemies to inward religion and explode the doctrine of inward feelings as enthusiasm, cant, and nonsense, I shall not be surprised if your hearts rise against me whilst I am preaching. For I am about to discourse on true, vital, internal piety and an inspired Apostle hath told us “that the natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit, because they are spiritually discerned.”¹⁶⁰

The offense was palpable in other sermons as men were compared to other beings that knew certain aspects of the physical world, but these beings were without the knowledge of God as Savior. He spoke,

¹⁵⁸Whitefield, “The Pharisee and the Publican,” 2:73.

¹⁵⁹Whitefield, “Of Justification by Christ,” 2:243.

¹⁶⁰Whitefield, “Christ the Believer’s Husband,” 1:218.

I am sensible that many are offended when mankind are compared to beasts and devils. And they might have some shadow of reason for being so if we asserted in a physical sense that they were really beasts and really devils. For then, as I once heard a very learned prelate who was objecting against this comparison observe, “a man being a beast would be incapable, and being a devil would be under an impossibility, of being saved.” But when we make us of such shocking comparisons, as he was pleased to term them, we would be understood only in a moral sense and in so doing, we assert no more than some of the most holy men of God have said of themselves and others, in the lively oracles many ages ago.¹⁶¹

Original sin has an adverse effect on humanity in terms of doing good without the new birth. With humanity residing in a state of sin, only evil and selfishness await until the removal of the old nature. The itinerant communicated a similar idea to those that thought reason identified humanity filled with all manner of good. The Englishman preached,

For though you cannot do what is spiritually good because you want spiritual principles of action, yet ye may do what is morally and materially good, inasmuch as ye are reasonable creatures. And though doing your duty as you can no ways deserves mercy, or entitles you to it, yet it is the way in which you are required to walk and the way in which God is usually found. While you are attempting to stretch out your withered arm, peradventure it may be restored.¹⁶²

Good, even reasonable good, is not possible given the sin nature within all humanity. The restoring power of the gospel is the only way humanity can be regenerated. The truth of the gospel was the utmost of importance for the English preacher to communicate in all ways possible.

In the sermon “The Conversion of Zaccheus,” Whitefield targets the press for not communicating the truth about the Gospel. With the rise of print media in popularity, the itinerant used it to proclaim the truth of Scripture while others used it to conceal truth. He spoke, “For, I am fully persuaded, numbers are rationally convicted of gospel-truths, but not being able to brook contempt, they will not prosecute their convictions, nor reduce them in practice.”¹⁶³ Rationally, humans can be convicted of sin, but it is the heart

¹⁶¹Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:249.

¹⁶²Whitefield, “Blind Bartimeus,” 1:461.

¹⁶³Whitefield, “The Conversion of Zaccheus,” 2:77.

that is also necessary to fully submit to the call of God in salvation. Whitefield also applied reason in preaching the Gospel.

Whitefield compared human reason to Christ in terms of authority. While he used reason within Scripture, the itinerant was proclaiming that Christ is the sufficient reason for all things in humanity. The English evangelist declared,

Nor does that great and boasted Diana, I mean unassisted unenlightened reason, demonstrate the justness of such an assertion. Far be it from me to decry or exclaim against human reason. Christ himself is called the “*logos*, the Reason” and I believe it would not require much learning, or take up much time to prove that so far and no farther than as we act agreeably to the laws of Christ Jesus, are we any way conformable to the laws of right reason. His service is therefore called “a reasonable service.”¹⁶⁴

If Jesus is the reason for all things, then the new birth is necessary for all mankind. The work of the Holy Spirit is a critical component of new birth and the reason for His work is captured in the story of salvation. The sermon “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers” captures the rational thought of Whitefield regarding the necessity of the indwelling of Holy Spirit as a result of salvation. He stated,

From this plain reason then appears the necessity why we, as well as the first Apostles, in this sense, must receive the Spirit of God. For the great work of sanctification, or making us holy, is particularly reserved to the Holy Ghost. Therefore, our Lord says, “Unless a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”¹⁶⁵

Reasonably from Scripture, Jesus proclaims that the Holy Spirit will be with believers as a result of salvation as the Comforter. Not only does the Holy Spirit convict the human spirit of sin, He is also charged with sanctifying the soul. Jesus told the disciples that He must go so the Comforter could come in His place as a presence on earth with humanity (John 16:7).

¹⁶⁴Whitefield, “The Potter and the Clay,” 1:250.

¹⁶⁵Whitefield, “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers,” 2:125.

Whitefield placed the miraculous testimony of Lazarus against rationality. In the sermon “The Resurrection of Lazarus,” he spoke of rational arguments as having a place within religion. He preached,

Thou mayest try the power of thy own boasted freewill and force and energy of moral persuasion and rational arguments (which, without all doubt, have their proper place in religion). But all thy efforts, exerted with never so much vigour, will prove quite fruitless and abortive, till that same Jesus, who said, “Take away the stone,” and cried, “Lazarus, come forth,” comes by his might power, removes the stone of unbelief, speaks life to thy dead soul, looses thee from the fetters of thy sins and corruptions and by the influences of his blessed Spirit, enables thee to arise and to walk in the way of his holy commandments.¹⁶⁶

Without disregarding rationalism, Whitefield keeps Scripture as most prominent in ultimate truth matters. The supernatural is possible and not irrational with the omnipotent God described in Scripture (Heb 1:3; Col 1:17).

Rationality also has a place within salvation. In “The Holy Spirit Convincing the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” Whitefield described rational convictions toward salvation. He stated,

Many, I believe, have a rational conviction of and agree with me in this. But rational convictions, if rested in, avail but little. It must be a spiritual, experimental conviction of the truth, which is saving. And therefore our Lord says when the Holy Ghost comes in the day of his power, it convinces of this righteousness, of the reality, completeness, and sufficiency of it, to save a poor sinner.¹⁶⁷

Unfortunately, rational conviction is not enough to secure salvation according to the Word of God. The working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of humanity is more significant in the effectual call of God than rational thought.

Conclusion

The English itinerant displayed the presuppositional apologetic characteristic of holding to the authority of God’s Word within his polemic to help all hearers learn

¹⁶⁶Whitefield, “The Resurrection of Lazarus,” 2:151.

¹⁶⁷Whitefield, “The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment,” 2:164.

how to follow the Lord in salvation. His sermons were clearly designed to impact those who were nominal in their belief in Christ to those who had never heard of Jesus.

Whitefield desired those being swept up by the Enlightenment to return to God through the reasoning of the Scriptures. Viewing reality from the perspective of the revelation of God allowed Whitefield to communicate the truth of God in a creative way to captivate audiences and lead them to following Christ.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Summary of Analysis

The first chapter of this dissertation focused on a research question dealing with the Enlightenment as a philosophical and cultural movement set alongside the preaching ministry of George Whitefield. The research questions are presented to guide the flow of thought for the work. What is the relationship between the evangelistic preaching and writing of George Whitefield and the rise of the Enlightenment as America gained independence from England? What were the effects of Whitefield's preaching in Eastern/European/American culture? To what extent should these findings influence cultural engagement with the gospel today? What changes took place within Enlightenment rationalism that make sharing the gospel more difficult? It also mentioned the methodology for research would be driven by an analysis of the primary source material of Whitefield's sermons and journal, the cultural/philosophical ideology of the Enlightenment through major contributors, and an apologetic analysis of Whitefield's polemic.

The following chapter of this work surveyed the biographical information of Whitefield revealing a personal struggle in finding salvation due largely to a philosophical and theological presupposition that required changing. His culture was of particular interest as he matured during the decline of the Church of England. Other influences like John and Charles Wesley were discussed as they were vital to his spiritual life. The beginning stages of his preaching ministry was also discussed with insight into

his growing popularity. The impact on the current culture of England was highlighted to show the significance of his work in ministry.

The third chapter involved the rise of the Enlightenment period during Whitefield's time. Influencers of this movement were detailed to provide sufficient background to the cultural abandonment of Christian theology for rationalism and scientific discovery. John Locke, Isaac Newton, David Hume, Rene Descartes, and Immanuel Kant are all overviewed regarding their specific contributions to the rise of rationalism. Then, the cultural movement is identified as having a philosophical leaning toward the individual over the nationalistic and experience over tradition. Problems of the Enlightenment are also identified as the idiosyncratic product of rationalism, epistemology as primary over ontology, and the Enlightenment distrust for tradition as it became tradition. Awakenings are described in general terms focusing toward the First Great Awakening. In order to better understand this particular awakening, investigation into the lives of two major figures in John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards was necessary. With the state of Eastern Europe becoming more resistant to the idea of monarchical rule, many fled to America in search of greater freedom and a fresh start. Freedom also appeared as a philosophical notion during this time, and it is overviewed as a means of flowing back to ultimate freedom in Christ in returning to biblical truth.

Chapter four examined the underlying apologetic of Whitefield that is displayed both through the history of the Church of England, its' theology, and a connection to Calvinistic theology. Given the close connections to presuppositional apologetics, a comparison was drawn between the work of the father of presuppositional apologetics, Cornelius Van Til, and the polemic of Whitefield. Cultural challenges remained for the Enlightenment in view of both the theology and apologetic of Whitefield within his preaching. Major points of interest like original sin, the new birth, salvation, truth, and reason were discussed from the perspective of the Enlightenment as problematic. The presupposition of the authority of the Word of God answered for each

of these difficulties of Enlightenment rationalism revealing the necessity for presuppositional change and not epistemological growth.

The fifth chapter analyzed the sermons of George Whitefield in light of the problems from the Enlightenment. Given his connections to Calvinistic theology and the Church of England, identifying the itinerant as combatting the cultural, and to some degree, the philosophical notions of rationalism with presuppositional thought. His sermons reveal a robust collection of answers to each Enlightenment difficulty. The one addition is identifying his connection to presuppositional notions within his sermons. The final result was a revealing look into the heart of the English itinerant for helping hearers and readers embrace the truth of Scripture, be confident in the new birth, and the desire to continue moving forward in taking back the heart of humanity from the trappings of rationalism alone as ultimate truth.

The final chapter in this work presents a conclusion from the Enlightenment, the preaching of Whitefield, and presuppositional apologetics. Additional insights for the contemporary church and ministry leaders are provided in relation to cultural, philosophical, and apologetic issues effecting current practices of the church. A second section will give insight into both the writing and preaching of Pastors in local churches in regards to evangelism and apologetics.

Implications of Analysis

The expansive preaching of Whitefield carried the presupposition of supreme authority of God's Word. His fixation on the Bible for the source of ultimate truth is easily seen within his journals. He repeatedly poured over the revelation of God out of love and devotion to the Lord. That same devotion also drove him to share the Gospel message with as many people that would listen. Promotion and propagation were means to communicate the ultimate truth of the Lord as lives were changed. As the Church of England was losing influence in England and America, Whitefield replaced corruption

with orthodoxy returning hearts toward redemption and not tradition. Authority figures within the Church of England attempted to quiet his voice, but the idea of field-preaching allowed audiences to balloon in number. As he watched hearts turn toward the Lord, a sense of joy and further burden followed. The joy was in seeing people come to Christ in obedience to the Lord while the burden was knowing that more people were in need of redemption. No matter the time or place, Whitefield preached the Word of God. His apologetic as the authority of the Bible was a glimpse of what did become a form of apologetics rooted in this same presupposition.

Whitefield was connected to the presuppositional approach with the work of John Calvin. The reformer sought to reemphasize the authority of the Word of God by replacing human tradition with the infallible revelation of God. Implications of this reform eventually spread to England where they were adopted as part of the confession of the Church of England. The authority of the Bible and the authority of human thought converged during the Enlightenment. The surge of Enlightenment rationalism sought to replace the authority of the Bible, and insistently the authority of God, with the authority of the reason of man. Salvation, or bettering circumstances through rational thought over irrational thought, pushed the Lord out of the scope of thinking and ultimately belief. A contributing factor to this notion was the condition of the partnership between the church and state. The clergy was publicly appointed rather than called by God in service. The people within the church received lifeless sermons rather than inspired, passionate pleas to follow God. Philosophers sought other ways to explain ultimate truth since the church was failing to do so. Whitefield and several others began a resurgence of the authority of God's Word in living and preaching by counteracting the effects of Enlightenment thought. Outside the Bible, major issues like sin, presuppositions, truth, and reason were not grounded in foundational ways leaving large gaps philosophically. Though Whitefield is not known as a philosopher, the English itinerant did challenge the notion of human authority with the authority of the revelation of God.

Though there is no direct line between Whitefield and Cornelius Van Til, the main proponent of presuppositional apologetics, but the English itinerant was launched into faith by holding the Word of God in high esteem. Both Whitefield and Van Til understood the Bible as the highest authority in the human experience. Philosophers in and around the Enlightenment period preferred human autonomy rather than giving any authority to God. The choice seemed to be binary: choose reason without God and logically progress to the end of life guided only by rationality or place authority in the hands of the ultimate creator that also delivers ultimate truth within the human experience. The presupposition of highest authority was critical to the preaching of Whitefield and the work of Van Til in presuppositional apologetics.

The model of text-driven preaching Whitefield utilized intertwined doctrine and theology in a topical manner. Whitefield often began a sermon with a single verse and referenced other verses topically infusing doctrine throughout. His overall understanding of the biblical text is readily apparent. The care of communicating the truth of the Bible in the context in which it was written is a fundamental position of text-driven preaching. Regularly within his sermons, Whitefield is found stringing Scripture together in understandable ways that thematically point to God as the ultimate source of authority and truth for humanity. Preaching, in the modern context, should resemble the same ideas in communicating about God, salvation, grace, and all other themes related to the story of God.

Insights for the Contemporary Church

The same view of the authority Scripture that Whitefield held should also be found in the context of the contemporary church. The Christian worldview is predicated upon the story of God in human history. The Lord created the earth and humanity to have fellowship and to be worshipped. Sin as found in the context of Genesis 3 truly turned the world upside down. Death and evil were introduced into the human heart creating a

chasm between God and man. Without divine intervention, humanity is left with life on earth and eternity without God. This event did not surprise God as a system of atonement for sin was provided with a sacrifice. As the people of God moved from obedience to disobedience, the Lord sent messengers to warn the people of impending doom if they continued to wander from the Lord. God also sent word that a Savior was coming to turn the world right side up again becoming the sufficient sacrifice for all humanity. Jesus was both the sacrifice and the teacher appointed to draw people towards the revelation of God and salvation. He chose twelve men to watch, teach, and share life with knowing that they were to play an integral role in furthering the good news of salvation. After the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit was imparted to the disciples as Christ ascended to heaven. Those on earth were left with the third person of the Godhead to guide, teach, and fill their hearts in order to continue turning the population of the world toward God. This same line of thought based on the story of God is what Whitefield carried with him in turning the culture from the Enlightenment back toward the ultimate truth of God. The task for the contemporary church remains the same.

Pastors of churches today should be leading the way living out the authority of the revelation of God in their personal life as well as the church. Glimpses of Whitefield's apologetic in this particular presupposition that are also similar to Van Til should be provided as the reason for following Christ. Evangelist preaching that pushes against current cultural trends that differ with the Bible must also be present. (Culture changer from Textual preaching). (Faithful study) (Knowing the culture)

Writing Evangelistically and Apologetically for Pastors

Pastors have a unique opportunity to influence culture with writing. Technology has made the task of communicating much more accessible and visible for the world. Whitefield capitalized on the rising popularity of print technology to publish pamphlets, advertisements, sermons, and his journals in order to influence the culture

toward the authority of God. For Pastors in the contemporary context, the internet is the easiest, most cost-efficient way to communicate with the world in print. First, blogs are available for anyone who desires to write and attempt to influence the world. Ministry leaders can create a platform in writing that has the ability to address many concerns, ideas, and explore thoughts publicly. The number of blog viewers will be directly proportionate to the amount of influence the Pastor has in the community and beyond. Influence, of course, is best gained organically in the context of the church, but it can also be gained online.

Influence can be gained online with the help of social media as well. Pastors learning to leverage their social media accounts with information that is helpful for others can also gain a crowd as followers and listeners. As the process moves forward, evangelism and apologetic dialogues can take place with people all over the world. Social media is just one more platform. Traditional mediums of writing are also still helpful.

Information is now accessed digitally with the eBooks. Reading has never been so accessible on tablets and cell phones no matter the geographical location. Producing books with new insights should be a part of sharing information to help readers do more. Evangelism and apologetics touch many areas of the Christian faith that need clarity in an ever-changing culture searching for a proper foundation. Writing helps others learn more efficiently and interact with ideas that can be helpful. Even if some church leaders are not effective writers, keeping a journal of ministry can be extremely helpful to those that follow in leadership. Whitefield's journals are tremendously insightful both to his culture and evangelical mindset.

With many avenues to producing quality content readily available, pastors must take the opportunity to write and engage with culture in a way that intrigues the hearts of nonbelievers. Dialogue is critical, and even favored, rather than lecture alone. People in contemporary culture desire platforms to ask questions of believers in written form. The critical notion is to engage with the truth of Scripture and the love of Christ in

all forms of communication. Philosophically, communicating about various worldviews can be very beneficial. Applying Scripture with presuppositional ideas can help funnel thought directly toward the gospel. Readers can not only see a defense of Christianity, but they can also see reasons for trusting Christ in salvation.

Evangelistic and Apologetic Sermons for Pastors

There is no doubt that all Pastors should preach evangelistically. From the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) and the final mandate of Christ given to the Disciples (Acts 1:8), the role of Pastor ascribes to evangelistic preaching. Abilities in preaching evangelistically may vary, but the Lord equips all those that are called to do His work. Pastors should not shy away from presenting the gospel in sermon form within the church. Nonbelievers expect a thoughtful presentation of an invitation to join in on following Christ. Sermons that are evangelistic can flow directly to a presuppositional apologetic in defending the truth of Scripture.

Defending the Christian faith, or providing a reason for belief, should be a central portion of sermon delivery. Applying Scripture and proving a case for belief should be an easy function of the Pastor's communication. Persuasive arguments with ample evidence through the same biblical topics that Whitefield used are tenants of the Christian faith. Apologetics from the pulpit will greatly increase both the depth of thought and increase dialogue following the sermon for hearers for follow up at a later time.

Preaching in this way also helps believers become more at ease with sharing their faith with others in their contexts. Stories and examples of the experiences of the Pastor will help church members become more comfortable seeing how apologetics can work in everyday life. The more comfortable church members become with philosophy, apologetics, and evangelism, the more apt they are to continue engaging others where they are in seeking truth.

Finally, a healthy reliance on the Holy Spirit both taught by the Pastor and modeled for others to see is vital. Most church members understand that the Holy Spirit is a part of their lives, but they do not fully grasp the power of His presence in their lives. Whitefield modeled this in many sermons and letters for others to see and read. Growth in Christ increases dramatically when knowledge and obedience are applied together rather than seen as separate functions within the Christian life.

APPENDIX
THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES FOR THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity¹

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

III. Of the going down of Christ into Hell

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

¹Taken from E. J. Biknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1955). Emphasis original.

IV. Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

V. Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Numbers of the Canonical Books

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- The I Book of Samuel
- The II Book of Samuel

- The I Book of Kings
- The II Book of Kings
- The I Book of Chronicles
- The II Book of Chronicles
- The I Book of Esdras
- The II Book of Esdras
- The Book of Esther
- The Book of Job
- The Psalms
- The Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes or the Preacher
- Cantica or Songs of Solomon
- Four Prophets the Greater
- Twelve Prophets the Less

The other books, commonly called the Apocrypha, or deuterocanonical books, the Church reads (as St. *Jerome* says) for example of life and instruction of morals, but it does not apply them to establish any doctrine. These are:

- The III Book of Esdras
- The IV Book of Esdras
- The Book of Tobit
- Judith
- The rest of The Book of Esther
- The Book of Wisdom
- Ecclesiasticus, or the Son of Sirach
- Baruch
- The Son of The Three Children, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, omitted from Daniel because they are not found in the Hebrew

- The Prayer of Manasseh (omitted from 2 Chron.)
- I and II Books of the Maccabees.

VII. Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

VIII. Of the Three Creeds

The three Creeds, *Nicene Creed*, *Athanasius' Creed*, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

IX. Of Original or Birth-sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk); but it 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. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, *Φηρονμα σαρκος*,

which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And, although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

X. Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of *Adam* is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

XI. Of the justification of Adam

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

XII. Of Good Works

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgement: yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII. Of Works before Justification

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

XIV. Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary Works besides, over and above God's commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, when ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

XV. Of Christ alone without Sin

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things (sin only except), from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin (as Saint *John* saith), was not in him. But all we the rest, (although baptized, and born again in Christ), yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

XVI. Of Sin after Baptism

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and

amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XVII. Of Predestination and Election

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: then be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

XVIII. Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

XIX. Of the Church

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly- ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

XX. Of the Authority of the Church

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and Authority in controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

XXI. Of the Authority of General Councils

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by

them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

XXII. Of Purgatory

The Romish Doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

XXIII. Of Ministering in the Congregation

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

XXIV. Of speaking in the Congregation in such a tongue as the people understandeth

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.

XXV. Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: But they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint *Paul* saith.

XXVI. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacrament

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil has chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil then.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquire be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally being found guilty by just judgement, be deposed.

XXVII. Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened: but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

XXVIII. Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death. Insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up or worshipped.

XXIX. Of the Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's
Supper

The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint *Augustine* saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ: yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather, to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

XXX. Of both kinds

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people. For both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

XXXI. Of the Oblation of Christ of Christ finished upon the Cross

The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

XXXII. Of the Marriage of Priests

Bishops, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God's Law either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from marriage. Therefore it is lawful also for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

XXXIII. Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

XXXIV. Of the Traditions of the Church

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgement, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

XXXV. Of the Homilies

The second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of *Edward* the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

Of the Names of the Homilies

1. Of the right Use of the Church
2. Against peril of Idolatry
3. Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches
4. Of good Works; first, of Fasting
5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness
6. Against Excess of Apparel
7. Of Prayer
8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer
9. That Common Prayer and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known

Tongue

10. Of the reverend estimation of God's Word
11. Of Alms-doing
12. Of the Nativity of Christ
13. Of the Passion of Christ
14. Of the Resurrection of Christ
15. Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ
16. Of the gifts of the Holy Ghost
17. For the Rogation of Days
18. Of the state of Matrimony
19. Of Repentance
20. Against Idleness
21. Against Rebellion

XXXVI. Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of
Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of *Edward* the Sixth, and confirmed at the

same time by authority of Parliament, both contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither bath it anything, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King *Edward* unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

XXXVII. Of the Civil Magistrates

The Queen's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of *England*, and over her dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the Queen's Majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by *Elizabeth* our Queen doth most plainly testify: But that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers.

The Bishop of *Rome* hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of *England*.

The laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.

XXXVIII. Of Christian men's Goods, which are not common

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXXIX. Of a Christian man's oath

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and *James* his Apostle: So we judge, that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, injustice, judgement, and truth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Works

- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1846.
- Descartes, René. *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*. Raleigh, NC: Generic NL Freebook Publisher. Ebook. Accessed November 20, 2017.
- _____. *The Passions of the Soul*. Translated by Stephen Voss. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989.
- _____. "The Passions of the Soul." In *Collected Works of Rene Descartes*. Locs 774-981. Hastings, England: Delphi Classics, 2017.
- Edwards, Jonathan. *Jonathan Edwards: On Revival*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1984.
- _____. *Letters and Personal Writings*. Edited by George S. Claghorn. *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*. Vol. 16 (1716). Accessed November 20, 2017. www.edwards.yale.edu.
- _____. *Religious Affections*. Edited by Paul Ramsey. *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*. Vol. 2 (1754). Accessed November 20, 2017. www.edwards.yale.edu.
- _____. *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*. Edited by William E. Anderson. *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*. Vol. 6, 1714. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.edwards.yale.edu.
- _____. *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*. Edited by Wilson H. Kinnach. *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*. Vol. 10, 1720. Accessed November 20, 2017. www.edwards.yale.edu.
- Hume, David. *The Natural History of Religion*. Raleigh, NC: Generic NL Freebook Publisher. Ebook. Accessed November 20, 2017.
- _____. "Of Miracles." In *Hume On Miracles*, edited by Stanley Tweyman, 1-20. Key Issues 11. Dulles, VA: Thoemmes Press, 1996.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*. Translated by Werner S. Pluher. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009.

- Locke, John. "Of Enthusiasm." In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 505. London: J. F. Dove, 1828.
- _____. "Of Faith and Reason, and Their Distinct Provinces." In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 498-503. London: J. F. Dove, 1828.
- _____. "Of Identity and Diversity." In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 215-41. London: J. F. Dove, 1828.
- _____. "Of Our Knowledge of the Existence of God." In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 450-57. London: J. F. Dove, 1828.
- _____. "Of Power." In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 150-84. London: J. F. Dove, 1828.
- _____. "The Second Treatise of Civil Government." In *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, edited by Isaac Kramnick, 395-404. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.
- Wesley, John. "All the World Is My Parish." In *Journal of John Wesley*, edited by Percy Livingstone Parker, 73-74. Chicago: Moody Press, 1951. Accessed January 10, 2018. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.i.html>.
- _____. "March 4, 1738." In *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*, 1:261. London: Conference Office 14, 1809.
- Whitefield, George. *George Whitefield's Journals*. London: Banner of Truth, 1965.
- _____. "Abraham's Offering Up His Son Isaac." In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:82-95. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. "All Men's Place." In *Eighteen Sermons by the Late Rev. George Whitefield*. 345-72. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1771.
- _____. "The Benefits of an Early Piety." In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:204-14. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. "Blind Bartimeus." In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:453-66. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. "Britain's Mercies and Britain's Duty." In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:123-38. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. "The Care of the Soul Urged as the One Thing Needful." In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:7-26. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. "Christ the Believer's Husband." In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:109-22. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. "Christ the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and

Redemption.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:213-29. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Christ the Best Husband.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:215-41. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Christ the Only Preservative against a Reprobate Spirit.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:301-13. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Christ the Only Rest for the Weary and Heavy Laden.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:355-65. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Christ the Support of the Tempted.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:334-45. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Christians, Temples of the Living God.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:288-300. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Conversion of Zaccheus.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:74-88. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Day of Small Things.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:368-86. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Duty of Searching the Scriptures.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:105-14. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Eternity of Hell’s Torments.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:441-52. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “An Exhortation to the People of God Not to Be Discouraged in Their Way, by the Scoffs and Contempt of Wicked Men.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:362-67. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Extent and Reasonableness of Self-Denial.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:476-87. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Folly and Danger of Not Being Righteous Enough.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:168-85. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Folly and Danger of Parting with Christ for the Pleasures and Profits of Life.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:366-83. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Gospel Supper.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:44-59. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*,

edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:314-25. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Holy Spirit Convicting the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:153-68. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of Believers.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:115-28. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Of Justification by Christ.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:239-49. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Knowledge of Jesus Christ the Best Knowledge.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:230-38. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. *Letters of George Whitefield, for the Period 1734-1742*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976.

_____. “Letter CCCCLVIII.” In *Letters of George Whitefield: For the Period 1734-1742*. 442-43. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976.

_____. “Letter CCCCLVIII.” In *Letters of George Whitefield: For the Period 1734-1742*. 5-7. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976.

_____. “The Lord Our Righteousness.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:262-80. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:187-99. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Marks of True Conversion.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:384-401. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Marriage of Cana.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:89-104. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Method of Grace.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:423-40. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “The Necessity and Benefits of Religious Society.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:152-67. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “A Penitent Heart, the Best New Year’s Gift.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:27-43. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

_____. “Persecution Every Christian’s Lot.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:347-61. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

- _____. “The Pharisee and the Publican.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:60-73. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “The Potter and the Clay.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:242-61. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “On Regeneration.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:275-87. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “The Resurrection of Lazarus.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:129-52. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “Saul’s Conversion.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 2:169-86. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:45-63. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:139-51. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “Walking with God.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:64-81. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “Walking with God.” In *The Works of Reverend George Whitefield*, Vol. 5. London: Messrs. Kincaid Creech, 1772.
- _____. “What Think Ye of Christ” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:402-21. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “The Wise and Foolish Virgins.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:422-40. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- _____. “Worldly Business No Plea for the Neglect of Religion.” In *The Sermons of George Whitefield*, edited by Lee Gatiss, 1:346-54. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Secondary Works

Articles

- Aquilina, Aaron. “Reprogramming Destiny: Kant’s ‘What Is Enlightenment?’, Evolution, and Posthumanism.” *Reprogramarea Destinului. Eseul Lui Kant, Ce Este Iluminismul?* *Evoluție Și Postumanism* 6, no. 1 (December 2016): 130–48.
- Bahnsen, Greg L. “The Crucial Concept of Self-Deception in Presuppositional Apologetics.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 57, no. 1 (1995): 1-32.

- Becker, George. "Pietism's Confrontation with Enlightenment Rationalism: An Examination of the Relation between Ascetic Protestantism and Science." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 2 (June 1991): 139–58.
- Beeke, Joel R. "Reformed Orthodoxy in North America." *Puritan Reformed Journal* 6, no. 1 (January 2014): 63–97.
- Bennett, Bill. "The Secret of Preaching with Power." In *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, 55-74. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010.
- Brassfield, Shoshana. "Never Let the Passions Be Your Guide: Descartes and the Role of the Passions." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (April 2012): 459–77.
- Breen, T.H., and Timothy Hall. "Structuring Provincial Imagination: The Rhetoric and Experience of Social Change in Eighteenth-Century New England." *American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (December 1998): 1411-39.
- Chambers, Carl. "The Sermons of George Whitefield." *Churchman* 126, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 82-84.
- Cowan, Steven. Introduction to *Five Views of Apologetics*, ed. Steven Cowan, 7-20. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Dennison, William D. "Analytic Philosophy and Van Til's Epistemology." *Westminster Theological Journal* 57, no. 1 (1995): 33-56.
- Elliot, R. "A Summary of Gospel Doctrine Taught by Mr. Whitefield." In *Selected Sermons of George Whitefield: With an Account of His Life*, 51-74. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1990.
- Elwell, Walter A., ed. "Baptism, Infant." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 132-34. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- _____. "Believers' Baptism." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 131-32. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- _____. "Deism." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 329-30. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- _____. "Evangelism." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 410-11. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- _____. "Puritanism." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 972-75. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- _____. "Quietism." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 976-77. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

- Engel, Katherine Carté. "Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation." *Journal of Church & State* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 380–81.
- Forgione, Luca. "Kant and Natural Kind Terms." *Theoria* 31, no. 1 (January 2016): 55–72.
- Frame, John M. "Presuppositional Apologetics." In *Five Views on Apologetics*, 207–31. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- _____. "Van Til and the Ligonier Apologetic." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 47, no. 2 (September 1985): 279–99.
- Geisler, Norman. "Enlightenment." In *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 213. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.
- _____. "Epistemology." In *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 215. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.
- _____. "Natural Theology." In *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 521. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.
- _____. "Ontology." In *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 564–65. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.
- _____. "Presuppositional Apologetics." In *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 607. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.
- Grenda, Christopher S. "Thinking Historically about Diversity: Religion, the Enlightenment, and the Construction of Civic Culture in Early America." *Journal of Church and State* 48, no. 3 (2006): 567–600.
- Hardman, Keith J. "The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers: A Shifting Story." *Church History* 83, no. 1 (March 2014): 213–16.
- Harper, Leland. "Epistemic Deism Revisited." *International Journal for Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 51–63.
- Hatfield, James Taft, and George Whitefield. "A Letter from George Whitefield to Count Zinzendorf." *Methodist Review* 79 (November 1897): 913–19.
- Hoffecker, W. Andrew. "Enlightenments and Awakenings: The Beginning of Modern Culture Wars." In *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought*, 240–80. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007.
- Hood, Jared C. "‘I Never Read Calvin’: George Whitefield, a Calvinist Untimely Born." *Churchman* 125, no 1 (Spring 2011): 7–20.

- _____. “The Methodical George Whitefield: A ‘Most Excellent Systematic Divine?’” *Churchman* 126, no. 4 (December 1, 2012): 311–22.
- _____. “Whitefield: The Heart of an Evangelist.” *Reformed Theological Review* 69, no. 3 (December 1, 2010): 164–79.
- Hoselton, Ryan P. “‘A System of Holiness’: Andrew Fuller’s Evangelical Calvinistic Theology of Virtue.” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 6, no. 2 (July 2014): 123–45.
- Johnson, Anna Marie. “Ecumenist and Controversialist: The Dual Legacy of Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf.” *The Journal of Religious History* 38, no. 2 (June 2014): 241–62.
- Johnson, John J. “Is Cornelius Van Til’s Apologetic Method Christian, or Merely Theistic?” *Evangelical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (July 2003): 257.
- Johnson, Phillip, “The Write for The People of God.” In *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, Burk Parson, ed., locs. 1175-1315. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. Ebook.
- Jones, David Ceri. “‘So Much Idolized by Some, and Railed at by Others’: Towards Understanding George Whitefield.” *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 5 (2013): 3–29.
- Kohl, Markus. “Kant and ‘Ought Implies Can.’” *Philosophical Quarterly* 65, no. 261 (October 2015): 690–710.
- Krabbendam, Henry. “Cornelius Van Til: The Methodological Objective of a Biblical Apologetics.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 57, no. 1 (1995): 125–44.
- Krijnen, Christian. “Teleology in Kant’s Philosophy of Culture and History: A Problem for the Architectonic of Reason.” *Value Inquiry Book Series* 299 (March 15, 2017): 115–32.
- Lamp, Jeffrey S. “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: A Model for Evangelical Theology?” *Evangelical Theological Society Papers; ETS-4654*, 1994. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://www.tren.com>.
- Lannen, Andrew C. “Liberty and Slavery in Colonial America: The Case of Georgia, 1732-1770.” *Historian* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 32–55.
- Lecerf, Auguste. “Why Should Evangelical Theology be Calvinistic?” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (October 1939): 327–35.
- Long, Charles H. “Study of Religion in the United States of America: Its Past and Its Future.” *Religious Studies and Theology* 5, no. 3 (September 1985): 30–44.
- Luther, Martin. “Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.” In *Luther’s Works*, translated by Charles M. Jacobs and E. Theodore Bachmann, Vol. 35. Philadelphia:

Fortress, 1960.

MacArthur, John. "Man's Radical Corruption." In *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, Burk Parson, ed., locs. 248-67. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. Ebook.

Mahaffey, Jerome Dean. "George Whitefield's Homiletic Art: Neo-Sophism in the Great Awakening." *Homiletic* 31, no. 1 (June 1, 2006): 11–22.

Mathews, Ned L. "The Disciplines of a Text-Driven Preacher." In *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, 75-98. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010.

McCullough, Peter. "'Anglicanism' and the Origins of the Church of England." *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 16, no. 3 (September 2014): 319–334.

Miller, Derrick R. "Alexander Volck's Anti-Moravian Polemics as Enlightenment Anxieties." *Journal of Moravian History* 14, no. 2 (September 2014): 103–18.

Mudd, Sasha. "Rethinking the Priority of Practical Reason in Kant." *European Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (March 2016): 78–102.

Muller, Richard A. "Philip Doddridge and the Formulation of Calvinistic Theology in an Era of Rationalism and Deconfessionalization." In *Religion, Politics and Dissent, 1660-1832: Essays in Honour of James E. Bradley*, 65–84. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010.

Nellen, Henk. "Minimal Religion, Deism and Socinianism: On Grotius's Motives for Writing *De Veritate*." *Grotiana* 33, no. 1 (January 2012): 25–57.

Noll, Mark A. "The Great Awakening Peaks." *Christian History* 9, no. 4 (November 1990): 46.

O'Brien, Susan. "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755." *American Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (October 1986): 811.

Oliphint, Kenneth Scott. "Jonathan Edwards: Reformed Apologist." *Westminster Theological Journal* 57, no. 1 (1995): 165-86.

_____. "Unbelievers and the Knowledge of God: Biblical Warrant for a Presuppositional Apologetic." *Modern Reformation* 7 (January 1, 1998): 13-16.

Olson, Carl E. "What Is Deism?" *Catholic Answer* 29, no. 4 (October 9, 2015): 35.

Otto, Randall. "Renewing Our Mind: Reformed Epistemology and the Task of Apologetics." *Evangelical Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (April 4, 2016): 111–25.

- Packer, James I. "The Spirit with the Word: The Reformational Revivalism of George Whitefield." In *Bible, the Reformation and the Church*, 166–89. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Pals, Daniel L. "Several Christologies of the Great Awakening." *Anglican Theological Review* 72, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 412.
- Parr, Jessica M. "Plotting Piety: Religious Spaces and the Mapping of George Whitefield's World." *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 8, no. 2 (2016): 120–34.
- Pearson, Samuel C. "Enlightenment Influence on Protestant Thought in Early National America." *Encounter* 38, no. 3 (1977): 193–212.
- Rainger, Katherine. "History and Theology: A Conversation with Richard Hooker." *St Mark's Review* 229 (September 2014): 80–89.
- Randall, Ian M. "Christ Comes to the Heart: Moravian Influence on the Shaping of Evangelical Spirituality." *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 6, no. 3 (May 2006): 5–23.
- Reid, Alvin L., and Theological Research Exchange Network. "From Northampton to New Delhi: The Impact of Modern Awakenings in the West on World Missions." *Evangelical Theological Society Papers; ETS-0458*. Portland, OR: Theological Research Exchange Network, 2005. Accessed November 3, 2017. <http://www.tren.com>.
- Rice, Cynthia A. "The First American Great Awakening: Lessons Learned and What Can Be Done to Foster a Habitat for the Next Great Awakening." *International Congregational Journal* 9, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 103–17.
- Rostbøll, Christian F. "Kant, Freedom as Independence, and Democracy." *Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (July 2016): 792–805.
- Sampson, Tyler Davis. "Scripture, Tradition, and Ressourcement: Toward an Anglican Fundamental Liturgical Theology." *Anglican Theological Review* 96, no. 2 (2014): 305–22.
- Schickel, Joel A. "Descartes on the Identity of Passion and Action." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 19, no. 6 (December 2011): 1067–84.
- Schlossberg, Herbert. "How Great Awakenings Happen." *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life*, no. 106 (October 2000): 46–51.
- Shaddix, Jim. "A History of Text-Driven Preaching." In *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, 37–54. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010.
- Smith, John Howard. "The First Great Awakening: Redefining Religion in British America, 1725–1775." *Church History* (June 2016): 389–91.

- Steele, Richard B. "John Wesley's Synthesis of the Revival Practices of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Nicholas von Zinzendorf." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 154–72.
- Stout, Harry S. "Religion, Communications, and the Career of George Whitefield." In *Communication and Change in American Religious History*, 108–25. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Taylor, William. "Inventing George Whitefield: Race, Revivalism, and the Making of a Religious Icon." *Journal of Southern History* 82, no. 3 (August 2016): 658–59.
- Thompson, Mark D. "The Origin of the Thirty-Nine Articles." *Churchman* 125, no. 1 (2011): 37–50.
- Tomasi, Gabriele. "Self-Knowledge as Religious Experience. On an Aspect of Kant's Conception of the Vocation of Human Beings." *Anuario Filosofico* 48, no. 3 (September 2015): 515–41.
- Turner, David L. "Cornelius Van Til and Romans 1:18-21: A Study in the Epistemology of Presuppositional Apologetics." *Grace Theological Journal* 2, no. 1 (1981): 45–58.
- Van Til, Cornelius. "An Introduction to Systematic Theology," Classroom Syllabus: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1949: 9.
- Ware, Owen. "Skepticism in Kant's Groundwork." *European Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 2 (June 2016): 375–96.
- Welsh, Clement W. "Note on the Meaning of 'Deism.'" *Anglican Theological Review* 38, no. 2 (April 1956): 160–5.
- Winegar, Reed. "Kant's Criticisms of Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23, no. 5 (September 2015): 888–910.
- Witt, William G. "Anglican Reflections on Justification by Faith." *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 1 (2013): 57–80.
- Wood, A. Skevington, "The Eighteenth Century Methodist Revival Reconsidered." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 53 (July 1981): 130-48.
- Wright, David. "What Is 'Presuppositional' Apologetics?" *Answers* Oct-Dec 2007, December 1, 2007: 90.

Books

- Audi, Robert. *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2010.

- Bahnsen, Greg L. *Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended*. Edited by Joel McDurmon. Powder Springs, GA: The American Vision Press; Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2008.
- Baxter, Richard. *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, vol. 3. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854.
- Belden, Albert D. *George Whitefield, the Awakener: A Modern Study of the Evangelical Revival*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953.
- Boa, Kenneth D., and Robert M. Bowman Jr. *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*. 2nd ed. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005.
- Bock, Darrell L., Graham A. Cole, and Michael A. G. Haykin. *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Bulman, William J. *Anglican Enlightenment: Orientalism, Religion and Politics in England and Its Empire, 1648-1715*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Campbell-Jack, W. C., Gavin McGrath, and C. Stephen Evans, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Coleman, Robert E. *The Heart of the Gospel: The Theology behind the Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011.
- Collins, Francis S. *Belief: Readings on the Reason for Faith*. New York: Harper One, 2010.
- Colson, Charles W. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999.
- Cowan, Steven, ed. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. 3rd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
- Dallimore, Arnold A. *George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century*. Reprint, Westchester, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- _____. *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*. 2 vols. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1970.
- Darwall, Stephen. *The British Moralists and The Internal "Ought": 1640-1740*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Dennison, James T. Jr., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: 1552-1566*, Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010.
- Dulles, Avery Robert Cardinal. *A History of Apologetics*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005.
- Dupré, Louis. *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Fish, Bruce, and Becky Durost Fish. *George Whitefield: Pioneering Evangelist*. Urichsville, OH: Barbour Books, 2000.
- Frame, John M. *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief*. Edited by Joseph E. Torres. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2015.
- _____. *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2015.
- _____. *John Frame's Selected Shorter Writings*. Vol. 1. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007.
- Gee, Henry, and William John Hardy. *Documents Illustrative of English Church History: Compiled from Original Sources*. London: Macmillan and Co, 1896.
- Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Apologetics*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*. Vol. 2. *The Reformation to The Present Day*. New York: Harper One, 2010.
- Gunton, Colin. *Enlightenment and Alienation: An Essay Towards a Trinitarian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Hammond, Geordan, and David Ceri Jones, eds. *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Hardy, Edwin Noah. *George Whitefield: The Matchless Soul Winner*. New York: American Tract Society, 1938.
- Haykin, Michael A. G., Robert Davis Smart, and Ian Hugh Clary. *Pentecostal Outpourings: Revival and the Reformed Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016.
- Haykin, Michael A. G., and Kenneth J. Stewart, eds. *The Emergence of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*. Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2008.
- Hoffecker, W. Andrew, ed. *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of*

- Western Thought*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007.
- Hoffer, Peter Charles. *When Benjamin Franklin Met the Reverend Whitefield: Enlightenment, Revival, and the Power of the Printed Word*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.
- Holifield, E. Brooks. *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Kidd, Thomas S. *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.
- _____. *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Kreeft, Peter, and Ronald K. Tacelli. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Lawson, Steven J. *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield*. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2014.
- Lewis, C. S., and Kathleen Norris. *Mere Christianity*. Revised ed. San Francisco: Harper One, 2015.
- Lewis, Gordon R. *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.
- Livingston, James C. *Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II*. New York: Macmillan, 1971.
- Maddock, Ian J. *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011.
- Mansfield, Stephen. *Forgotten Founding Father: The Heroic Legacy of George Whitefield*. Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing, 2001.
- Markos, Louis. *Apologetics for the Twenty-First Century*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Markos, Louis, Norman L. Geisler, and Chad V. Meister. *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith*. Edited by Norman Geisler. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.
- McLoughlin, William G. *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977*. Chicago History of American Religion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Nash, Ronald H. *Faith and Reason*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- _____. *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas*. Grand

- Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Naugle Jr, David K. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Newton, Isaac. *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*. London: J. Darby and T. Browne, 1733.
- Nicholi, Armand. *The Question of God: C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life*. 3rd ed. New York: Free Press, 2003.
- Noll, Mark A. *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004.
- Noll, Mark A., Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden. *The Search for Christian America*. Expanded ed. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard Publishers, 1989.
- Parsons, Burk, ed. *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. Ebook.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
- Philip, Robert. *The Life and Times of George Whitefield*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2007.
- Picton, Hervé. *A Short History of the Church of England from the Reformation to the Present Day*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.
- Piper, John. *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.
- Plantinga, Alvin, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds. *Faith And Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.
- Pollock, John. *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1972.
- Radest, Howard. *The Devil and Secular Humanism: The Children of the Enlightenment*. New York: Praeger, 1990.
- Reymond, Robert L. *Faith's Reasons for Believing: An Apologetic Antidote to Mindless Christianity*. Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2008.
- Ryle, J. C. *A Sketch of the Life and Labors of George Whitefield*. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1854.
- _____. *Select Sermons of George Whitefield: With an Account of His Life*. Edinburgh:

Banner of Truth, 1958.

Scougal, Henry. *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d. Accessed November 5, 2017, www.ccel.org.

Shaw, Mark R. *Global Awakening: How 20th-Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.

Sire, James W. *Eating the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004.

_____. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Smith, John Howard. *The First Great Awakening: Redefining Religion in British America, 1725-1775*. Lanham, MD: Fredrick Dickinson University Press, 2015.

Sproul, R. C., John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley. *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Stout, Harry S. *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

Sweet, William Warren. *The Story of Religion in America*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1975.

Thorsen, Donald A. D. *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

Tracy, Joseph. *The Great Awakening: A History of Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield*. N.p.: Counted Faithful, 2014. Ebook.

Van Til, Cornelius Van. *Christian Theistic Evidences*. Edited by K. Scott Oliphint. 2nd ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2016.

_____. *A Survey of Christian Epistemology*. N.p.: Den Dulk Foundation, 1969.

Winiarski, Douglas Leo, and Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture. *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Young, B. W. *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke*. 1st ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Zacharias, Ravi. *Can Man Live Without God*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004.

_____. *Why Jesus: Rediscovering His Truth in an Age of Mass Marketed Spirituality*.

New York: FaithWords, 2012.

Dissertations and Theses

- Choi, Peter Y. "George Whitefield, the Imperial Itinerant: Religion, Economics, and Politics in the Era of the Great Awakening." Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2014.
- Cotney, Alan Wayne. "Persuasive Elements in the Preaching of George Whitefield." D.Min. project, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014.
- Greenway, Adam Wade, "The Integration of Apologetics and Evangelism in the Ministry of Reuben Archer Torrey." Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.
- Freeman, Travis Allen. "Preaching to Provide a Worldview Change: Tim Keller's Use of Presuppositional Apologetics in Preaching." Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.
- Kim, Ki-Jong. "Changing Concepts of Revival Demonstrated in the Public Ministries of George Whitefield and Charles Finney." Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2002.
- Lambert, Franklin Talley. "Selling Religion in the Consumer Revolution: George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1745." Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1990.
- Li, Jimmy. "Jesus the Presuppositional Apologist: Implications for Apologetics from Luke 20." Th.M. thesis, Master's Seminary, 2012.
- Mahaffey, Jerome Dean. "The Formation of American Community: George Whitefield, Rhetoric, Religion, and Political Thought in the Great Awakening." Ph.D. diss., The University of Memphis, 2000.
- McKnight, Timothy Ray. "George Whitefield's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism." Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003.
- McVicker, Willard Blaine. "A Study of the Contemplative Life of George Whitefield in the Context of Eighteenth Century Society." D.Min. project, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999.
- Ristau, Scott. "Neo-Aristotelean Rhetorical Criticism of Sermons from The Great Awakening." M.S. thesis, South Dakota State University, 2011.
- Riddlesbarger, Kim. "A Survey And Critique Of Reformed Apologetics." M.A. thesis, Simon Greenleaf School of Law, 1981.

White, Eugene Edmond. "The Preaching of George Whitehead during the Great Awakening in America." Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College, 1947.

Videos

Kidd, Thomas. *George Whitefield: Lessons from Eighteenth Century's Greatest Evangelist*. Gheens Lecture Series. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014. Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://vimeo.com/93374328>.

Internet

Haykin, Michael A. G. "'A Flame of Pure and Holy Fire': The Life and Ministry of George Whitefield – Southern." *Southern Equip*, May 7, 2015. Accessed November 2, 2014. <http://equip.sbts.edu/publications/towers/a-flame-of-pure-and-holy-fire-the-life-and-ministry-of-george-whitefield/>.

"George Whitefield, a Model for Today's Pastors – Southern." *Southern Equip*, October 1, 2014. Accessed November 3, 2014. <http://equip.sbts.edu/article/george-whitefield-a-model-for-todays-pastors/>.

Piper, John. "I Will Not Be a Velvet-Mouthed Preacher!" *Desiring God*. Accessed December 13, 2014. <http://www.desiringgod.org/biographies/i-will-not-be-a-velvet-mouthed-preacher>.

Whitefield, George. "All Men's Place." *The Reformed Reader*. 1999. Accessed August 14, 2017. <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbs/whitefield/mens.place.htm>

ABSTRACT

GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S PREACHING: AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Joseph Michael Delph, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Chair: Dr. Adam W. Greenway

This dissertation examines the preaching ministry of George Whitefield as a precursor to presuppositional apologetics in relation to the cultural shift of the Enlightenment. The presupposition of the authority of the Word of God is the concept that bridges Whitefield's preaching and presuppositional apologetics. Chapter 1 presents the research questions narrowing the topic. This section also presents background information as well as methodology of this work.

Chapter 2 describes the biographical information of Whitefield. The cultural influences marked his life from an early age, but it was the influence of John and Charles Wesley that guided his faith.

Chapter 3 outlines the thought of the Enlightenment period. Specifically, rationalism as a means to discerning and living by truth. Philosophical influences such as Locke, Newton, Hume, Descartes, and Kant are overviewed. The First Great Awakening was the result of many cultural and theological ideas boiling over simultaneously. People were craving truth, direction, and a sense of authority. The Awakening highlighted the movement of the Holy Spirit theologically and a resurgence of biblical truth culturally. The work of John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards is also detailed in regards to their efforts to combat rationalism as sole priority in worldview thinking.

Chapter 4 highlights the apologetic within the polemic of Whitefield. His Calvinistic theology is identified and connected to the Articles of faith for the Church of

England. This leads to the idea of presuppositional apologetics found within his preaching. Cornelius Van Til, the father of presuppositional apologetics, is also overviewed to show the distinct connection between Whitefield's thoughts in holding a high view of Scripture and what becomes presuppositional apologetics.

Chapter 5 examines the sermons of Whitefield for specific content related to evangelical pushback against Enlightenment thought. Key propositions of the Enlightenment regarding authority, morality, and ultimate truth are answered within the preaching of Whitefield. Each are examined thoroughly.

Chapter 6 presents a conclusion regarding the apologetic of Whitefield in his preaching towards the Enlightenment. It reveals connections between the presupposition of the authority of the revelation of God and his polemic. Other connections between the reformer John Calvin and the father of presuppositional apologetics, Cornelius Van Til, are also noted.

VITA

Joseph Michael Delph

EDUCATION

B.A., Bryan College, 2003
M.A., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004
M.A., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010
M.Div., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

ORGANIZATIONS

Evangelical Theological Society

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Bible Faculty, Bluegrass Baptist School, Lexington, Kentucky, 2014-17

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Minister of Youth, Clearwater Baptist Church, Athens, Tennessee, 2000-02
Associate Pastor of Youth and Education, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Knoxville,
Tennessee, 2005-07
Associate Pastor of Youth and Activities, First Baptist Church, Sebring,
Florida, 2007-12
Senior Associate Pastor of Students, Porter Memorial Baptist Church,
Lexington, Kentucky, 2012-