

# The Holy Spirit, *the Charismata*, and Signs and Wonders: Some Evangelical Perspectives from the Eighteenth Century<sup>1</sup>

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The emergence of Pentecostalism at the turn of the twentieth century, along with the rise of the Charismatic Movement in the 1960s and the more recent development of the Association of Vineyard Churches have ensured that the work of the Holy Spirit has been keenly debated within the

ranks of evangelical Christianity in the last century or so. The way in which this discussion has often been conducted, however, has caused many of its participants to be blind to the fact that this is *not* the first time in the history of the church that the activity of the Spirit has come under such intense and prolonged scrutiny. For instance, eighteenth-century evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic—heirs to the in-depth analysis of the Spirit’s work by the Puritans and with their interest in things pneumatological quickened by their experience

of revival—were involved in an extensive debate over such fundamental questions of pneumatology as the indwelling of the Spirit, the doctrine of assurance, the Spirit’s work in sanctification, and the experience of the Spirit’s power.<sup>2</sup> The study of a previous pneumatological debate like that in the eighteenth century is, of course, valuable in its own right. Examination of the eighteenth-century evangelical experience of and reflection on the work of the Holy Spirit, however, can also generate some fresh perspectives on current debates about the Spirit’s activity. For, as William DeArteaga has recently noted, there are definite parallels between the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century and renewal movements in the present day.<sup>3</sup>

## THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY REVIVAL

Before launching into a focused discussion of this aspect of eighteenth-century evangelical experience and reflection, a few words about the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival are in order. The revival began in the 1730s and found its center in the English-speaking world on both

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sides of the Atlantic. As it ran its course, thousands were swept into the kingdom of God. In New England alone, for instance, thirty to forty thousand were converted during the three-year period from 1740 to 1742. In England, the Arminian Methodists, those evangelicals adhering to the views and beliefs of John Wesley (1703–1791) and his brother Charles (1707–1788), grew from around 22,000 in 1767 to over 88,000 by 1800. Central to the revival was the leadership of a number of gifted and Spirit-anointed preachers. In New England there was Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), a brilliant theologian whose writings were characterized by a deep understanding of the human heart and a passion for God’s glory. Even a superficial perusal of his writings reveals a mind and heart permeated with the beauty and excellence of the Triune God, and a desire to communicate this beauty and excellence to his fellow human beings. In Great Britain, there was the Englishman George Whitefield (1714–1770), who, more than any other figure, epitomized the revival. Over the thirty-four years between his conversion in 1736 and his death, he preached around 18,000 sermons, and, in a day of laboriously slow travel, visited Scotland fifteen times, traversed the Atlantic thirteen times, and crisscrossed much of the English and Welsh countryside. A pioneer in open-air preaching, he often spoke to huge crowds of 10,000 or more. Alongside Whitefield, there were the Wesley brothers—John, an indefatigable evangelist like Whitefield, and Charles, “the supreme poet of love to Jesus” in this period of revival<sup>4</sup>—and the Welshmen Howel Harris (1714–1773) and Daniel Rowland (1711–1790), whose preaching and spirituality set the tone and character of the Welsh people for the next century and a half. As these men, and a host of others, opened their mouths to preach and to teach, the Spirit of God descended upon their hearers, enlightening and converting them, building them up and strengthening them, melting their hearts and setting them aflame for Christ.<sup>5</sup>

## **PHILIP DODDRIDGE AND HIS BIOGRAPHY OF COLONEL JAMES GARDINER**

Known to his friends as “the happy rake,” James Gardiner (1688–1745), a Scottish military officer and dragoon, was regarded by his friends as one of the most fortunate men alive during the second decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Tall, stately in his bearing, and gifted with a fine constitution, he had distinguished himself a number of times on the field of battle and seemed destined for a brilliant career. Although he had been raised by a mother who had taken great pains to “instruct him with great tenderness and affection in the principles of true Christianity,” Gardiner had long since rejected this childhood instruction.<sup>7</sup> Stationed in Paris during the 1710s as an aide-de-camp to the British ambassador, John Dalrymple (1673–1747), the second Earl of Stair, Gardiner went from one sexual encounter to another in an unbridled pursuit of pleasure. In the words of Philip Doddridge (1702–1751), the Dissenting minister who was later his close friend and biographer, “if not the whole business, at least the whole happiness of his life” consisted of these sordid affairs.<sup>8</sup> This immersion in a lifestyle of sex, seduction and lust, though, was not without some pangs of conscience. On one occasion, when some of his companions were congratulating him on the felicity of his way of life, a dog happened to enter the room in which they were seated, and Gardiner could not help but think to himself, “Oh that I were that dog!”<sup>9</sup> A few spuritive attempts to mend his ways always proved far too weak to resist the force of temptation. But, when he was thirty-one, Gardiner underwent a conversion so striking that Doddridge would later describe it with words such as “astonishing,” “remarkable,” “extraordinary,” and “amazing.”<sup>10</sup>

Towards the middle of July, 1719, Gardiner had spent an evening in the company of some friends, the party breaking up around eleven o’clock. Gardiner had a rendezvous with a married woman planned for midnight, and, not wanting to arrive early, he decided to kill the intervening hour by reading. Quite unintentionally, it was a religious

book that he picked up to read: *The Christian Soldier; or Heaven taken by storm* (1669) by the Puritan divine Thomas Watson (died c.1686). While he was reading, an unusual blaze of light suddenly fell upon the book, which at first he thought might have been caused by a nearby candle. Lifting up his eyes, though, he saw, to his utter astonishment, a vision of Christ. In the words of Doddridge:

There was before him, as it were, suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides with a glory; and [he] was impressed, as if a voice, or something equivalent to a voice had come to him, to this effect (for he was not confident as to the very words): “Oh sinner! did I suffer this for thee, and are these thy returns?” ... Struck with so amazing a phenomenon as this, there remained hardly any life in him; so that he sunk down in the arm-chair in which he sat, and continued, he knew not very exactly how long, insensible.<sup>11</sup>

When he opened his eyes, the vision had gone, but not the impression it had forever made upon his heart and life. He completely forgot his mid-night appointment.

He rose in a tumult of passions not to be conceived, and walked to and fro in his chamber, till he was ready to drop down, in unutterable astonishment and agony of heart, appearing to himself the vilest monster in the creation of God, who had all his lifetime been crucifying Christ afresh by his sins, and now saw, as he assuredly believed, by a miraculous vision, the horror of what he had done. With this was connected such a view, both of the majesty and goodness of God, as caused him to loathe and abhor himself, to repent as in dust and ashes. He immediately gave judgment against himself, that he was most justly worthy of eternal damnation.<sup>12</sup>

The rest of the night he spent meditating on God’s purity and goodness, his spurning of God’s

grace, and many of the providential escapes from death that he had experienced. His former lifestyle now appeared to him as utterly abhorrent, his sexual addiction was gone, and he was determined to spend the remainder of his time on earth in God’s service. Indeed, from this extraordinary conversion till he fell at the Battle of Prestonpans on September 21, 1745, fighting against the Jacobite army of Charles Edward Stuart (1720–1788), otherwise known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, his was an “exemplary and truly Christian life.”<sup>13</sup>

Now, occasionally gracing the Evangelical Revival, which began in the mid-1730s, were scenes every bit as “extraordinary” as that which had attended the conversion of Gardiner. It is not surprising, therefore, that in Doddridge’s biography of Gardiner, which was written in 1747, two sections of the biography were devoted to this revival. Doddridge particularly mentions the Scottish revival at Cambuslang in February of 1742 and the preaching of William McCulloch (1691–1771), the minister of Cambuslang—at that time a rural parish a few miles to the southeast of Glasgow—which was instrumental in the inception of this revival. McCulloch was far from being an accomplished speaker. In the jargon then current, he was a yill- or ale-minister, a term that was used of ministers whose preaching was so dry that when their turn came to preach at the large outdoor communion gatherings then held once a year by the Scottish churches, many of the audience would leave to quench their thirst from nearby ale barrels provided for refreshment.<sup>14</sup> Yet it was under McCulloch’s preaching in mid-February, 1742 that, according to Doddridge, around one hundred and thirty people, most of whom had sat under McCulloch’s preaching for a number of years, “were awakened on a sudden to attend to it, as if it had been a new revelation brought down from heaven, and attested by as astonishing miracles as ever were wrought by Peter or Paul.”<sup>15</sup> In July of the same year, George Whitefield arrived at Cambuslang, where he was soon preaching to huge, receptive audiences. In August, for instance,

some 30,000 attended an outdoor communion service, where Whitefield preached a number of sermons over the course of a three-day weekend. Alexander Webster, a minister from Edinburgh, whose description of this event was read by many, including Doddridge,<sup>16</sup> wrote of some of the happenings of that weekend:

During the time of divine worship, profound reverence overspread every countenance. They hear as for eternity ... Thousands are melted into tears. Many cry out in the bitterness of their soul. Some ... from the stoutest man to the tenderest child, shake and tremble and a few fall down as dead. Nor does this happen only when men of warm address alarm them with the terrors of the law, but when the most deliberate preacher speaks of redeeming love.<sup>17</sup>

Doddridge also received an account of the Cambuslang revival from Gardiner, who regarded it as “a matter of eternal praise.”<sup>18</sup> Doddridge went on to say that Gardiner was of the same frame of mind when it came to “intelligence of a like kind from England; whether the clergy of the established church, or dissenting ministers, whether our own countrymen, or foreigners, were the instruments of it.”<sup>19</sup> Gardiner, Doddridge wrote, had particularly mentioned to him one minister—in the biography Doddridge leaves him unnamed—“who had been remarkably successful in his ministry,” but who had been ill-treated by some. Gardiner remarked: “I had rather be that despised persecuted man, to be an instrument in the hand of the Spirit, in converting so many souls, and building up so many in their holy faith, than I would be emperor of the whole world.”<sup>20</sup> Here Doddridge is actually quoting from a letter, still extant, which he had received from Gardiner in 1742. In this letter, dated November 16 and written to Doddridge from Ghent, in what was then the Austrian Netherlands, Gardiner mentioned that he had recently been the recipient of a letter from George Whitefield. He then proceeded to express

the very sentiments with regard to the Anglican evangelist that have just been cited from Gardiner’s biography.<sup>21</sup> Presumably Doddridge left Whitefield unnamed in his life of Gardiner for the basic reason that Whitefield was still living as he wrote.

In detailing Gardiner’s views towards the revival, Doddridge was also clearly indicating where his own sympathies lay. Doddridge himself had first written to Whitefield on December 12, 1738, and enquired as to whether he had any intentions of coming near Northampton, where Doddridge lived. Although the two had never met, Doddridge wrote that he would “gladly undertake a day’s journey to meet and confer” with Whitefield, so that he might, as he puts it, “light my lamp by yours and gain that assistance in my way heavenward which a knowledge of you will, I hope, give me.”<sup>22</sup> It appears that the two men met for the first time on May 23, 1739, when Whitefield preached in the open air to around 3,000 people at Northampton. In his *Journal* Whitefield mentions that prior to his preaching he had been “most courteously received by Dr. Doddridge.”<sup>23</sup> The following month Doddridge thanked God in his *Diary* for “adding to me the friendship of some excellent persons, among whom I must mention Mr. Whitefield and Colonel Gardiner.”<sup>24</sup>

Four years later, Doddridge preached for Whitefield at his Tabernacle in London, which caused quite a stir among his fellow Dissenters. For example, Isaac Watts (1674–1748), Doddridge’s mentor and friend, wrote to him and stated that he had been the recipient of “many questions” about Doddridge’s preaching or praying at the Tabernacle, and “of sinking the character of a Minister ... among the dissenters so low thereby.”<sup>25</sup> When Doddridge reciprocated by having Whitefield preach at his church in Northampton in October of that year, Watts and other Dissenters were deeply concerned.<sup>26</sup> Central to their concern was the fear that Doddridge’s support of the evangelist was simply aiding and abetting that chief of eighteenth-century phobias, “enthusiasm.”<sup>27</sup>

## “ENTHUSIASM” AND THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL

The *mentalité* of the eighteenth century, which gloried in reason, moderation and order, regarded “enthusiasm” in religion as a particularly unsavory phenomenon. To be charged with enthusiasm in this sphere was to be accused of claiming extraordinary revelations and powers from the Holy Spirit, though the word could be used more loosely to denote any kind of religious excitement.<sup>28</sup> John Locke (1632–1704), in his epoch-making work *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1689), used the word to denote the mindset of those who have “an Opinion of a greater familiarity with GOD, and nearer admittance to his Favour than is afforded to others,” and have thus persuaded themselves that they have an “immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the divine Spirit.”<sup>29</sup> Such a mindset, Locke was convinced, arises from “the Conceits of a warmed or over-weening Brain.”<sup>30</sup> Clearly dependent upon Locke, the lexicographer Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) defined enthusiasm as “a vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication.”<sup>31</sup> To all intents and purposes George Whitefield agreed. “The quintessence of enthusiasm,” he declared in a sermon first published in 1746, was “to pretend to be guided by the Spirit without the written word.” All inner impressions must be tried by “the unerring rule of God’s most holy word,” and if found incompatible, rejected as “diabolical and delusive.”<sup>32</sup> From personal experience Whitefield knew of the dangerous shoals of enthusiasm, for he later realized that in the first few years of his ministry he had been occasionally imprudent in relying on subjective impressions.<sup>33</sup>

However, if Whitefield and other leaders in the revival were wary of falling prey to enthusiasm, their critics were certain that they had succumbed. Two early criticisms can be taken as representative of the charges levelled against the revival and its participants throughout the eighteenth century. John Barker (1682–1762), an English Presbyterian

minister and correspondent of Doddridge, wrote to the latter on May 24, 1739 to tell him that he had heard Whitefield preaching in London in the open air and later also at Bath. Though he thought him sincere, Barker told Doddridge:

I still fancy that he is but a *weak* man—much too positive, says rash things, and is bold and enthusiastic. I am most heartily glad to hear of piety, prayer, reformation, and every thing that looks like faith and holiness, in the North or South, the East or the West, and that any *real* good is done anywhere to the souls of men, but whether these Methodists are in a right way, whether they are warrantable in all their conduct, whether poor people should be urged (through different persons, successively) *to pray from four in the morning till eleven at night*, is not clear to me; and I am less satisfied with the high pretences they make to the Divine influence. I think what Mr. Whitefield says and does comes but little short of an assumption of inspiration or infallibility.<sup>34</sup>

Joseph Butler (1692–1752), the bishop of Bristol, also criticized Whitefield and his fellow evangelist John Wesley for what he perceived to be enthusiasm. In an interview with Wesley on August 18, 1739, Butler accused both of the evangelists of “pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost,” which he found “a horrid thing—a very horrid thing.” Wesley denied this charge and stated that he sought only “what every Christian may receive and ought to expect and pray for.”<sup>35</sup>

If he had been present Whitefield would also have strongly disputed the accuracy of Butler’s accusation, for he was adamant that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as prophecy, *glossolalia*, and miraculous powers, had ceased with the passing of the apostles. In his sermon “The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers,” which Wesley helped him edit for publication in the summer of 1739, Whitefield declared that Christ’s promise of the Spirit

in John 7:37-39 has nothing to do with receiving power “to work miracles, or show outward signs and wonders.” Whitefield suggested that such signs and wonders occurred only when “some new revelation was to be established, as at the first settling of the Mosaic or gospel dispensation.” Indeed, he continued:

I cannot but suspect the spirit of those who insist upon a repetition of such miracles at this time. For the world being now become nominally Christian (though God knows, little of its power is left among us) there need not outward miracles, but only an inward cooperation of the Holy Spirit with the word, to prove that Jesus is the Messiah which was to come into the world.<sup>36</sup>

The only major group of individuals in the English-speaking Protestant world at that time who insisted upon the “repetition” of the miracles which occurred in the early church were the French Prophets. This group had its origins among the Protestants of southern France. Following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, these Protestants had been savagely persecuted by the French Roman Catholic state. In this crucible of persecution a movement had arisen replete with visions, prophecies, *glossolalia*, and trances, in which young people were especially prominent. The summer of 1706 saw the appearance of three prophets from this movement in London. Within the space of a couple of years there were close to four hundred French Prophets, as they came to be called, and their charismatic manifestations had caused considerable public interest and consternation among the churches in the English capital. A turning-point for the movement, though, came in the summer of 1708 when it was prophesied that one of their number who had died, Thomas Emes, would be resurrected on May 25 from his grave in Bunhill Fields, the burying-ground for London Nonconformists. When the predicted resurrection failed to transpire, the French Prophets became increasingly withdrawn and quiescent.<sup>37</sup>

With the beginning of the Evangelical Revival in the mid-1730s, however, the voices of the French Prophets once again were heard in Great Britain as they sought to win recruits for their own movement from among those involved in the revival.<sup>38</sup> It is plain from the text cited above that Whitefield would not have at all been impressed with the claim of the French Prophets to possess the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. From his perspective, genuine manifestations of these gifts occurred only to authenticate the giving of fresh revelation. “The world being now become nominally Christian”—that is, the “world” having intellectually accepted the truth of Christianity—the Spirit’s work was circumscribed to making this intellectual commitment a reality in heart and life. Even from the vantage-point of the eighteenth century, there seems to be a certain theological *naïveté* in Whitefield’s remark that the world which he knew was “nominally Christian.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, in arguing for a cessationist position with regard to the gifts, Whitefield was simply affirming what had come to be a theological axiom for most eighteenth-century, English-speaking Protestants.<sup>40</sup> Doddridge, for instance, in his response to a deistic attack on Christianity by Henry Dodwell (died 1784), plainly stated:

It is of great importance ... to recollect ... that many things in Scripture, which relate to the operations of the Spirit of God on the mind, have a reference to those extraordinary gifts, which were peculiar to the apostles, and in which we of these later ages have no further concern, than as the general knowledge of them may establish our regard to the writings of those eminent servants of Christ, who were wisely and graciously distinguished by their divine Master, by such extraordinary endowments, to fit them for the extraordinary office they sustained.<sup>41</sup>

It should be noted, however, that John Wesley questioned this axiom, for he was thoroughly convinced that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit

definitely continued beyond the close of the New Testament era. Christian literature from the second and third centuries, Wesley maintained, contains clear evidence for the existence of these gifts. It was only when Constantine came to imperial power in the first quarter of the fourth century and began to favor the church that these gifts started to disappear. In a sermon on 1 Corinthians 12:31, which first appeared in the July and August 1787 issues of *The Arminian Magazine*, Wesley declared:

It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian, and from a vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause thereby heaped riches, and power, and honour, upon the Christians in general; but in particular upon the Christian clergy. From this time they almost ceased; very few instances of the kind were found. The cause of this was not (as has been vulgarly supposed) “because there was no more occasion for them,” because all the world was become Christian. This is a miserable mistake: not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was: “the love of many”—almost of all Christians, so called—was “waxed cold.” The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ than the other heathens.... This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian church—because the Christians were turned heathens again, and had only a dead form left.<sup>42</sup>

These reflections on the history of the gifts in the early church are not necessarily the best source for actually discovering what happened in these early centuries.<sup>43</sup> Notwithstanding, this is an important text, for Wesley succinctly rejects the reason posited by Whitefield for the cessation of the gifts. In no uncertain terms he labels it a “mis-

erable” misconception. Wesley grants that there did occur a cessation of the gifts, but he located it in the middle of the fourth century and not, as Whitefield and most other eighteenth-century, English-speaking Protestants were wont to do, at the end of the first. Wesley finds the reason for the cessation of these gifts in the words of Matthew 24:12: the love of the church “waxed cold,” that is, her love for God and the charismatic presence of his Spirit decreased in proportion as her material wealth and temporal influence increased. Moreover, Wesley tempers his assertion with regard to the cessation of the gifts with the adverb “almost.” The Methodist leader is not prepared to assert dogmatically that genuine occurrences of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit cannot be found in the history of the church after the fourth century. In fact, the reason which he gives for their disappearance leaves open, in principle, the possibility of their being found in any age of the church. Where God is loved and the charismatic presence of his Spirit relished as in the pre-Constantinian church, there the gifts *might* be found.<sup>44</sup>

A similar allowance for the occurrence of extraordinary charismatic phenomena in the history of the church appears in another of Wesley’s sermons, “The Nature of Enthusiasm,” which was first published in 1750. Speaking of those who expect to be directed by God through “visions or dreams,” the Methodist leader did not “deny that God has, of old times, manifested His will in this manner; or, that He can do so now: Nay, I believe He does, in some very rare instances.”<sup>45</sup> Yet, he went on to emphasize, pride and “warm imagination” frequently mislead people into ascribing visions, dreams, and mental impressions to God’s authorship, which, when closely examined, are found to bear no divine imprint. Wesley knows of only one fitting description for such behavior: it is “pure enthusiasm.”<sup>46</sup> Earlier in the sermon Wesley had specified other types of individuals whom he also considered to be guilty of this eighteenth-century bugbear. For instance, those who imagine “themselves to be endued with a power of working

miracles, of healing the sick by a word or a touch, of restoring sight to the blind” are all clear-cut enthusiasts, as are those who think they have the power to raise the dead, “a notorious instance of which,” Wesley adds, “is still fresh in our own history.”<sup>47</sup> This “notorious instance” is probably the failed prediction of the resurrection of the French Prophet Thomas Emes.

Thus, both Whitefield and Wesley insisted that it was completely inappropriate to view Methodism as a species of enthusiasm. Public opinion, though, thought otherwise, and the charge of enthusiasm was regularly hurled at those committed to the revival. One reason for this was the fact that there were some in the leadership of the revival who did lay claim to miraculous powers of the Spirit. For instance, George Bell (died 1807), a former corporal in the Life Guards who was converted in 1758, was involved in the healing of a woman with painful lumps in one of her breasts in 1761, a healing that Wesley continued to endorse as genuine many years later.<sup>48</sup> Soon Bell claimed that he and a coterie of London Methodists possessed the power to heal the sick regularly, and they proceeded to attempt to give sight to the blind and to raise the dead. Bell himself also believed that he possessed broad prophetic powers, including the gift of the discernment of spirits. These he sought to exercise in 1762 when he predicted the end of the world on February 28, 1763. At this point Wesley stepped in, disowned Bell as a Methodist, and denounced his prediction as fraudulent. He defended his actions with regard to Bell: “The reproach of Christ I am willing bear; but not the reproach of Enthusiasm if I can help it.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, for many years afterwards the memory of the Bell affair continued to confirm people’s suspicions that the Methodists were *bona fide* enthusiasts.<sup>50</sup>

Nor were matters helped by the fact that eighteenth-century evangelicals opposed deistic trends of thinking by emphasizing that the indwelling of the believer by the Holy Spirit was an affective experience. As Whitefield declared: to “say we may have God’s Spirit without feeling it ...

is, in reality, to deny the thing itself.”<sup>51</sup> When the Spirit of God takes up residence in a person’s life, his presence has an impact on the entire personality; the mind, the will, the emotions—and even on occasion the body—are touched and affected. For instance, in a description not atypical of certain periods of the revival, Howel Harris, who has been described as “the greatest Welshman of the eighteenth century,”<sup>52</sup> informed Whitefield in March, 1743 of what God the Holy Spirit was doing through the preaching of his fellow evangelist and countryman, Daniel Rowland.

I was last Sunday at the Ordinance with Brother Rowlands where I saw, felt and heard such things as I cant sent on Paper any Idea of. The Power that continues with Him is uncommon. Such crying out and Heart breaking groans, Silent Weeping and Holy Joy, and shouts of Rejoicing I never saw ... Tis very common when He preaches for Scores to fall down by the Power of the Lord, pierced and wounded or overcom’d by the Love of God and Sights of the Beauty and Excellency of Jesus, and lie on the Ground ... Some lye there for Hours. Some praising and admiring Jesus, free Grace, Distinguishing Grace, others wanting the words to utter.<sup>53</sup>

In 1759 similar scenes took place in Cambridgeshire under the preaching of John Berridge (1716–1793), the eccentric, evangelical vicar of the village of Everton. An account of these scenes has been preserved in the pages of John Wesley’s *Journal*. Four, possibly five eyewitnesses, including Berridge and a certain John Walsh,<sup>54</sup> sent Wesley reports of the revival at Everton, which Wesley then brought together into a single account. For instance, Walsh wrote to Wesley that on the afternoon of Sunday, July 14, Berridge was compelled to preach in the open air due to the large number of people who had come to hear him. As Berridge preached—and Walsh says nothing about the content of the sermon—a number of people who “were ... pricked to the heart were affected in an astonishing man-



ner.” One man, he reported to Wesley,

would have dropped [to the ground], but others, catching him in their arms, did, indeed prop him up, but were so far from keeping him still that he caused all of them to totter and tremble. His own shaking exceeded that of a cloth in the wind. It seemed as if the Lord came upon him like a giant, taking him by the neck and shaking all his bones in pieces.... Another roared and screamed in a more dreadful agony than ever I heard before.... I saw one who lay two or three hours in the open air, and, being then carried into the house continued insensible another hour, as if actually dead. The first sign of life she showed was a rapture of praise intermixed with a small, joyous laughter.<sup>55</sup>

Given the mindset of the eighteenth century, it is not surprising that such emotional and physical manifestations were regarded as sheer madness by many contemporary observers. Thomas Morgan (1729–1799), a Welsh Calvinistic minister who in 1763 became the pastor of the Congregationalist church in Morley, West Yorkshire, was scandalized by similar displays of emotion that he witnessed in North Wales in 1762. “To all true and serious Christians,” he wrote to a friend, the Welsh Methodists “are stark mad, and given up to a spirit of delusion, to the great disgrace and scandal of Christianity.”<sup>56</sup>

Wesley’s life-long approval of such displays of emotion also contributed to the charge of enthusiasm. While he was well aware of the possibility of over-valuing such manifestations, he felt that it was just as dangerous “to regard them too little, to condemn them altogether; to imagine they had nothing of God in them, and were a hindrance to his work.”<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, as early as 1739, Whitefield had come to a somewhat different perspective. It was

tempting God to require such signs. That there is something of God in it I doubt not; but the devil, I believe, does interpose. I think it will encour-

age the French Prophets, take people from the written word, and make them depend on visions, convulsions, etc., more than on the promises and precepts of the Gospel.<sup>58</sup>

Whitefield does not deny that some of these manifestations could issue from God. Yet, he is rightly convinced that such manifestations can easily become the focus of attention and interest rather than the Scriptures, the unalloyed revelation of God.

### **JONATHAN EDWARDS, THE “THEOLOGIAN OF REVIVAL”**

The most incisive eighteenth-century perspective on these unusual displays of physical and emotional behaviour comes from the pen of Jonathan Edwards, whom Martyn Lloyd-Jones has identified as the “theologian of revival.”<sup>59</sup> Between the years 1736 and 1748 Edwards wrote a series of works defending the fact that the revivals that took place in New England during the 1730s and 1740s were indeed the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>60</sup> Edwards, however, was not uncritical of the extremism and excesses which had accompanied these revivals. His criticism is most trenchant in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), in which the American theologian wrestles with such fundamental questions as: What is the nature of true Christian experience? What place do the “affections” have in the Christian life? What are the marks that distinguish a genuine work of the Spirit from religious “enthusiasm”?

The extremism at which Edwards is taking aim in this work is evident in some of the assertions of James Davenport (1716–1757), a Congregationalist minister from Southhold, Long Island, and Davenport’s friend, Andrew Croswell (1709–1785), the pastor of a Congregationalist church in Groton, Connecticut. At the height of the revival in New England in the early 1740s, both of these men assured individuals who either fell to the ground, or experienced bodily tremors, or saw visions during the preaching of God’s Word that

such experiences were a sure sign of the Spirit's converting work. In Crosswell's words, only those who have had such "divine Manifestations... know what true Holiness means."<sup>61</sup> He asserted that "God never works powerfully, but men cry out disorder; for God's order differs vastly from their nice and delicate apprehensions" of him.<sup>62</sup> Davenport, for his part, claimed to have the ability to distinguish who was among the elect of God, a "gift" that he especially sought to exercise when he called into question the spiritual state of certain ministers who had refused to allow him to preach from their pulpits. Prominent also in Davenport's ministry was a devotion to loud, boisterous singing. While vibrant singing has regularly been a mark of movements of revival in the history of the church, some of the lyrics written by Davenport were cause for deep concern. For instance, in *A Song of Praise for Joy in the Holy Ghost* (1742), Davenport wrote the following of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's life:

This makes me Abba Father cry,  
With confidence of soul.  
It makes me cry, My Lord, My God,  
And that without control.<sup>63</sup>

To profess the loss of self-control as the work of the Spirit of God was worrisome to both advocates and critics of the revival.<sup>64</sup>

Although both Davenport later confessed that he had been wrong in much of what he had said and done, he and Crosswell had helped to spark a "wild-fire" spirit, which in many places made havoc of the revival. Moreover, they had furnished anti-revival forces with ammunition for their attacks. These forces were captained by Charles Chauncy (1705–1787), co-pastor of the most prestigious Congregationalist church in Boston, who could say of Davenport in particular: "he is the *wildest Enthusiast* I ever saw."<sup>65</sup> Edwards himself was convinced that Davenport did more "towards giving Satan and those opposers [of the revival] an advantage against the work than any other person."<sup>66</sup>

Now, among other things, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* tackles head-on the assertion by both Davenport and Crosswell that the experience of unusual bodily phenomena is unmistakable evidence of conversion. "Great effects on the body," Edwards maintains, "certainly are no sure evidences" that "the affections" which give rise to them come from the Spirit of God, "for we see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is in no way concerned."<sup>67</sup> Moreover, as Edwards observed on another occasion:

The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as, *the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters*, in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men in many ways, and communicate himself no more than when he acts upon an inanimate creature.<sup>68</sup>

The Holy Spirit can produce effects in many things, both animate and inanimate, to which he does not communicate or impart his nature. Thus, in Genesis 1:2, it is stated that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of waters, but in doing so he did not impart his nature to the waters. In other words, a person may well be the subject of powerful spiritual experiences and not actually be indwelt by the Spirit. On the other hand, Edwards knows of no reason why "a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint."<sup>69</sup> Indeed, there are a number of Scriptural texts which indicate that "true divine discoveries, or ideas of God's glory, when given in a great degree have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to overbear the body."<sup>70</sup> Edwards refers his readers at this point to passages like Psalm 119:120, where the Psalmist expressly states that his "flesh trembleth for fear" of God, or Revelation 1:17, where, at the vision of the Risen Christ, the Apostle John "fell at his feet as dead."<sup>71</sup> Those who say that God cannot or will not "give the

like clear and affecting ideas and apprehensions of the same real glory and majesty of his nature” in his day, Edwards considers “very bold and daring.”<sup>72</sup>

Not only could Edwards quote Scripture in support of his appreciation of such phenomena, but he could also turn to the experience of his wife Sarah (1710–1758). In *Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New-England* (1743), Edwards had devoted a section of this book to detailing, without naming her, his wife’s experiences.<sup>73</sup> From 1736 on Sarah had frequently had “extraordinary views of divine things,” which had deprived her body of “all ability to stand or speak.” For instance, on one occasion Sarah was given an “extraordinary sense of the awful majesty, greatness, and holiness of God,” which, her husband tells us, took away her bodily strength. Another time, it was “an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ” that caused her body to faint. On yet another occasion, “a sense of the glory of the Holy Spirit, as the great Comforter, was such as to overwhelm both soul and body.”<sup>74</sup> Her husband was at pains to point out that Sarah’s experiences were never “attended with any enthusiastic disposition to follow impulses, or any supposed prophetic revelations.” Edwards is ever insistent that the Spirit of God always leads those whom he indwells to view the Scriptures as “the great and standing rule for the direction of his church in all religious matters, and all concerns of their soul, in all ages.”<sup>75</sup> Enthusiasts, on the other hand, “depreciate this written rule, and set up the light within or some other rule above it.”<sup>76</sup> Sarah’s experiences were also accompanied by “an increase of humility and meekness,” “a gentleness, and benevolence of spirit,” and “a great alteration” for the better with regard to her former weaknesses and failings.<sup>77</sup> Without the presence of these God-centered affections, the physical manifestations would have been of no spiritual value. Little wonder that Edwards can burst out at the conclusion of his account of Sarah’s experience:

Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, and beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction!<sup>78</sup>

One of Edwards’ final works devoted to the subject of revival was *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and visible Union of God’s People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time* (henceforth referred to as the *Humble Attempt*). This treatise was inspired by information that Edwards received in 1745 about prayer meetings for revival which had been started by a number of Scottish evangelical ministers, including William McCulloch of Cambuslang. In order to implement a similar “concert of prayer” in New England, Edwards gave a sermon in February, 1747 on Zechariah 8:20–22, in which he sought to demonstrate how the text supported a call for believers to meet together to pray for revival. Within the year a revised and greatly expanded version of this sermon was published as the *Humble Attempt*.

The treatise opens with a number of observations on Zechariah 8:20–22. Edwards argues that this passage predicts a time when “there shall be given much of a spirit of prayer to God’s people, in many places, disposing them to come into an express agreement, unitedly to pray to God in an extraordinary manner, that he would appear for the help of his church, and in mercy to mankind, and pour out his Spirit, revive his work, and advance his spiritual kingdom in the world, as he has promised.”<sup>79</sup> In order to hasten this glorious time, Edwards infers that God’s people in the American colonies should gather together and, with “extraordinary, speedy, fervent and constant prayer,” pray for those “great effusions of the Holy Spirit” which will dramatically advance the king-

dom of Christ.<sup>80</sup> In the second part of the treatise Edwards provides a number of reasons as to why Christians should participate in this concert of prayer. Our Lord Jesus, for example, shed his blood and his tears, and poured out his prayers in order to secure the presence and power of his blessed Spirit for his people.

The sum of the blessings Christ sought, by what he did and suffered in the work of redemption, was the Holy Spirit....The Holy Spirit, in his indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy, or in one word, of all the spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: and is also the sum of all perfection, glory and eternal joy, that he purchased for them in another world.<sup>81</sup>

Edwards rightly concludes: “If ... this is what Jesus Christ, our great Redeemer and the head of the church, did so much desire, and set his heart upon, from all eternity, and which he did and suffered so much for, offering up ‘strong crying and tears’ [Heb 5:7], and his precious blood to obtain it; surely his disciples and members should also earnestly seek it, and be much and earnest in prayer for it.”<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the Scriptures are full of commands, incentives and illustrations regarding prayer for the Holy Spirit. For instance, there is the encouragement given to believers in Luke 11:13: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” As Edwards read these words of Christ, prayer for the Holy Spirit is one request that God the Father is especially delighted to answer in the affirmative.<sup>83</sup> Or one might consider the example of the early disciples who devoted themselves to “united fervent prayer and supplication ... till the Spirit came down in a wonderful manner upon them,” as it is related in Acts 1–2.<sup>84</sup> In essence, the *Humble Attempt*, like Edwards’ various other works which relate to the revival, seeks to develop and recommend a “fullblown theology of radical dependence on the Spirit.”<sup>85</sup>

## THE CALVINISTIC BAPTISTS OF ENGLAND

The *Humble Attempt* bore its greatest fruit more than twenty-five years after the death of Edwards. In the spring of 1784 an English Calvinistic Baptist pastor by the name of John Ryland, Jr. (1723–1825) received a copy of the *Humble Attempt*, which had been sent to him by John Erskine (1721–1803), a Scottish Presbyterian minister. When Erskine was in his twenties he had been present at the revival at Cambuslang. Later he had entered into correspondence with Edwards, and had imbibed many of the theological perspectives of the American divine. Erskine’s correspondence with Ryland appears to have begun in 1780 and lasted till the former’s death in 1803. Erskine sent the Baptist pastor not only letters, but also on occasion bundles of fascinating books and tracts which he was seeking to promote. So it was in April, 1784 that Erskine mailed to Ryland a copy of Edward’s *Humble Attempt*.

Ryland and his pastoral colleagues—notably Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and John Sutcliff (1752–1814)—were so deeply impacted by the force of Edwards’ argumentation in the *Humble Attempt* that a concert of prayer was begun that very year in the English Midlands by the association of churches to which they belonged, the Northamptonshire Association.<sup>86</sup> This prayer movement had profound consequences for the Calvinistic Baptists in England. Many of their congregations were revitalized after decades of stagnation or even decline, and numerous new works were begun. Moreover, it was among these Northamptonshire Baptists that the modern missionary movement was born, as the Baptist Missionary Society was founded in 1792 and William Carey (1761–1834) sent to India as the Society’s first missionary.

In the early years of the Evangelical Revival Howel Harris had once compared the Non-conformist denominations, which would have included the Calvinistic Baptists, and his friend Whitefield: “whilst they are in their warm rooms, he ventures his life for God.”<sup>87</sup> As Geoffrey F. Nut-

tall has pointed out, this telling contrast can be given both a spatial and a spiritual interpretation. By and large eighteenth-century Nonconformist ministers stayed within their meeting-houses to proclaim the Word of God, whilst the early Methodists who had been impacted by the revival took the gospel into the open air, into the highways and byways. To be sure, there were legal restrictions that sought to confine Nonconformist preaching to the meeting-house. For many Nonconformist pastors, however, obedience to these laws was as much grounded in a spiritual “settledness” as in a desire to be law-abiding citizens. All too many of the Nonconformist pastors whom Harris knew well were content to live on past experience and displayed little hunger for the presence and power of God in their lives.<sup>88</sup>

By the 1780s and 1790s the situation was markedly different. There was now a growing openness to the revival amongst the Nonconformists, including the Calvinistic Baptists. And Edwards’ works on revival had played a vital role in the change of perspective. The revival which came to the Calvinistic Baptist denomination between the 1780s and the 1820s did so with remarkably few of the unusual manifestations which occurred in the early years of the Evangelical Revival. And in continuity with most other eighteenth-century evangelicals, there was of course no seeking the so-called extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. For example, in a sermon that John Ryland preached on 1 Corinthians 14:8 in 1813, he unequivocally declared regarding the abuse of *glossolalia* in the first-century church of Corinth that “no one is *now* in danger of falling into precisely the same mistake, because the gift of tongues has long ceased.”<sup>89</sup> Like George Whitefield, Ryland believed that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were given to the Church in the apostolic age in order to validate the initial preaching of the gospel. Such gifts were bestowed “for the purpose of attesting the truth, at its first publication.”<sup>90</sup> Ryland regularly drew a contrast between the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and his “ordinary influences.” As he stated in

a sermon entitled “The Love of the Spirit”, which was based on Romans 15:30:

The ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit are of far more importance to the individuals who partake of them, than his extraordinary gifts; that is, it is better to be a saint than a prophet; better to be made holy, than to be inspired; better to be directed into the love of God, than into the knowledge of futurity. Herein the blessed Spirit communicates himself in his own proper nature, as the Spirit of holiness.<sup>91</sup>

Why did Ryland believe that the “ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit” are of greater import than “his extraordinary gifts”? The former impart personal holiness, and it is only those who have experience of these “sanctifying influences” of the Spirit who can have any legitimate assurance of eternal life. Those who are indwelt by the sanctifying Spirit are “sealed to the day of redemption” and stamped for an eternity in heaven. The “extraordinary gifts” of the Spirit, on the other hand, give no such assurance, for there is no inseparable connection between the gifts and holiness. In other words, the presence of the fruit of the Spirit is evidence of salvation, whereas that of his gifts is not.

As for the unusual manifestations witnessed during the early years of the Evangelical Revival, Baptists like Ryland were quite willing to acknowledge their genuineness. However, they were not at all convinced that they were necessary for the advance of God’s kingdom. Ryland’s close friend, the so-called “father of modern missions,” William Carey (1761–1834), wrote a marvellous letter to his sister Mary in 1789 that discussed these manifestations. Evidently she was wrestling with assurance of salvation, and he asked her:

Do you doubt because you have not seen visions, heard voices, or felt impulses? This I know is what many Christians place dependence upon. But suppose that you have felt nothing of all this, there is no reason for you to despair; and if

you have been favoured with repeated instances of this nature this is no proof of your Christianity. I apprehend that too many place too much confidence in things of this nature and make a shining light, an audible voice, or the sudden application of a passage of Scripture an evidence of their being the children of God. But where is the part of God's Word that informs us of any such evidence of religion as these are? Or if a person had no other evidence than such, would you, could you encourage him to depend or take comfort from this? That these are extraordinary interpositions of Divine Power upon extraordinary occasions I don't deny but 'tis God and not us that must judge of the emergency of our case; and even if he does interpose in a singular way, 'tis the matter and not the manner of his interposition that we ought to depend upon, and that not as an evidence of grace but as a Divine support in the path of duty. No doubt but the tempter is aware of the taste of the age and therefore endeavours to seduce us by things miraculous to which the mind of man is much prone, and while we thus listen to his devices and limit the Holy One of Israel we distress ourselves and dishonour him. But we have a more sure word of Prophecy whereunto we do well that we take heed.<sup>92</sup>

Carey did not deny that such unusual phenomena as "a shining light"—may well be an allusion to Gardiner's conversion, an account that Carey knew well—or "an audible voice" could be from God. But such occurrences were given according to God's sovereignty, and not man's desire. Moreover, these experiences were no proof that the subject of them genuinely knew God. "Real religion," Carey went on to emphasize in the letter, consisted of things quite different: "repentance, faith, obedience, submission, zeal and consolation."

Yet it bears remembering that late eighteenth-century Calvinistic Baptists like Ryland and Carey, nurtured on the writings of Jonathan Edwards, had a great hunger and desire for the Spirit's presence and power, as the following text

bears witness. It was written by Ryland in 1792, at the height of the French Revolution, as part of a circular letter sent out by the Northamptonshire Association to its member churches.

Surely the state both of the world, and of church, calls loudly upon us all to persist in wrestling instantly with God, for greater effusions of his Holy Spirit.... Let us not cease crying mightily unto the Lord, "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high" [Isaiah 32:15]; then the wilderness shall become as a fruitful field, and the desert like the garden of God. Yes, beloved, the Scriptures cannot be broken. Jesus must reign universally. All nations shall own him. All people shall serve him. His kingdom shall be extended, not by human might, or power, but by the effusion of His Holy Spirit [cf. Zechariah 4:6].<sup>93</sup>

This text is redolent with the pneumatological thought of Jonathan Edwards, especially in its emphasis on patient but diligent prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and its optimism regarding the irresistible advance of Jesus' kingdom throughout the world by the power of the outpoured Spirit. Such are the signs and wonders that Ryland and Carey, genuine heirs of Edwards and the Evangelical Revival that he promoted, longed to see.

### THREE LESSONS

What then do we learn from our evangelical forebears in the eighteenth-century with regard to this issue of "signs and wonders"? First, eighteenth-century evangelicals by and large limited what they described as the "extraordinary" gifts of the Spirit—gifts such as speaking in tongues, miraculous healings, prophecy—to the apostolic era. Yet, they longed for, and *were granted*, the experience of the Spirit's power in revival, and this to such a depth that the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century has acquired an almost paradigmatic quality. The only Protestant group in the Anglophone world at that time that did press

for a full restoration of all the apostolic gifts were the French Prophets, a rather insignificant sect whose major role in the revivals was to act as an object-lesson of fanaticism.

Second, there did occur a variety of unusual physical and emotional manifestations in many areas touched by this revival, such as uncontrollable trembling and weeping, jumping, falling to the ground, striking dreams and visions. Evangelicals displayed a range of responses to these manifestations, but never rejected them *in toto*. In fact, these manifestations were instrumental in prompting the New England divine Jonathan Edwards to write an entire series of works defending the revival, in which he sought to elucidate the Spirit's work in such a way that the unique aspects of the Spirit's activity in the apostolic era were safeguarded "without unnecessarily limiting the Spirit's mysterious work in regeneration and sanctification."<sup>94</sup>

Third, it was these writings of Edwards that God used to revitalize the Calvinistic Baptists and in the process initiate the modern missionary movement, by means of which evangelical Christianity was spread to the four corners of the earth. This dissemination of the gospel was certainly not achieved by mere human might or determination. It was nothing less than a wondrous work of the Spirit. As William Carey had once remarked: "If a temple is raised for God in the heathen world, it will not be "by might, nor by power," nor by the authority of the magistrate, or the eloquence of the orator; "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech 4:6).<sup>95</sup> In other words, we must recognize the Spirit's power in the full range of his activities throughout the history of the church, and not confine him within the limits of what some today call "signs and wonders."

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>An earlier and somewhat shorter version of this article appeared in *The Baptist Review of Theology*, 3, no. 2 (1993): 4-27. It, in turn, had its origin in an address given at a conference sponsored by Central Baptist Seminary, Toronto, in the fall of 1992 as part of a

response to the so-called Toronto Blessing.

<sup>2</sup>Timothy L. Smith, "Foreword" to Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), n.p. Cf. the remark of Alan C. Clifford, "The Christian Mind of Philip Doddridge (1702–1751): The Gospel According to an Evangelical Congregationalist," *Evangelical Quarterly* 56 (1984): 236: "With the advent of the Methodist revival, attention became focused on the doctrine and work of the Holy Spirit." See also Ronald Reeve, "John Wesley, Charles Simeon, and the Evangelical Revival," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 2 (1956): 203-14, *passim*. For eighteenth-century evangelical reflection on (1) the indwelling Spirit, see Thomas Templeton Taylor, "The Spirit of the Awakening: The Pneumatology of New England's Great Awakening in Historical and Theological Context" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988), *passim*; (2) the doctrine of assurance, see Arthur S. Yates, *The Doctrine of Assurance With Special Reference to John Wesley* (London: Epworth, 1952); David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (1989 ed.; repr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 42-50; (3) the sanctifying Spirit, see Timothy L. Smith, "George Whitefield and Wesleyan Perfectionism," *The Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19, no. 1 (1984): 63-85; *idem*, "Whitefield and Wesley on Righteousness by Grace," *TSF Bulletin* 9, no. 4 (1986): 5-8; (4) and for the power of the Spirit, see R. Tudur Jones, "The Evangelical Revival in Wales: A Study in Spirituality" *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity* (ed. in James P. Mackey; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 237-67.

<sup>3</sup>*Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1992). 29.

<sup>4</sup>James I. Packer, *God In Our Midst: Seeking and Receiving Ongoing Revival* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1987), 18.

<sup>5</sup>See a letter that Howel Harris wrote to George Whitefield in 1743 (cited in Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985], 243).

<sup>6</sup>Philip Doddridge, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of the Honourable Col. James Gardiner* 22 (*The*

*Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge* [Leeds, 1803], IV, 19). Further references to this work will cite it as *Life of the Honourable Col. James Gardiner* and further identify these references according to paragraph numbers. The complete story of Gardiner's conversion may be found in *Life of the Honourable Col. James Gardiner* 30-37 (*Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge*, IV, 24-29). A brief account of Gardiner's life and conversion may be found in F. W. B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain 1696-1845* (St. Leonards on Sea: Budd & Gillatt, 1959), 16-21.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 9, IV, 11.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 22, IV, 19.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 23, IV, 19.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 28, 29, 36, IV, 22, 23, 27.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 32, IV, 25.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 33, IV, 25.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 35, IV, 27. While Doddridge clearly regarded Gardiner's conversion as most unusual, he did mention that he was aware of at least one other like it. He did not name the individual, who was still living at the time when Doddridge wrote his biography of Gardiner in 1747. He merely stated that the individual of whom he was speaking was "one of the brightest living ornaments" of the Church of England, a man who has both an "exemplary life" and a "zealous ministry" (Ibid., 36, IV, 27-28). The man in question was George Thomson (1698-1782), vicar of St. Gennys, a windswept village in North Cornwall perched atop the cliffs overlooking the Atlantic. For a couple of years after his coming to St. Gennys Thomson had lived a careless life, characterized by "debaucheries" and similar in many ways to that of Gardiner before the latter's conversion. Yet, in 1733 or 1734, Thomson was awakened from his benighted state by a dream, which was repeated three times in one night with ever-increasing terror. In the first instance of the dream, he was told: "This day month, at six in the afternoon, you must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of the dreadful abuse of all your talents, and the injuries done the souls committed to your care." Thomson woke in alarm, but soon shrugged off the dream with the thought, "Glad I am it was no more than a dream; I am no old woman

to mind dreams," and promptly fell back asleep. The dream was repeated "with greater circumstances of terror," and Thomson awoke again, this time deeply shaken. After much tossing and agitation, he was able to go back to sleep once more, only to be awakened after the dream had been repeated yet a third time. Thomson, now "filled with horror" and convinced that he had but a month to live, called together his friends and the leading individuals in the parish. He recounted his dream to them, told them to find someone to fill his place, and to return to conduct his funeral in a month. He then shut himself up in his home and for two weeks was "in the depth of despair," since he was persuaded that it was not consistent with God's honor for him to forgive one who had brought such dishonor upon his holy name. After a fortnight of distress, however, Thomson was led to Romans 3, where he "clearly saw that God could be glorified in his salvation, through the propitiation of Christ's most precious blood." Thomson returned to his pulpit and began to preach those doctrines which would soon be the hallmark of the Evangelical Revival: the atoning death of Christ and the imputation of his righteousness, the necessity of the new birth, and the absolute need of the Holy Spirit's power and presence to begin and carry on a saving change in heart and life. For the full account of Thomson's conversion, see I. Davidson, "Some Account of the Rev. George Thomson," *The Evangelical Magazine* 9 (1800): 221-25. This account consists of a letter written by Davidson in 1772. For a good study of Thomson's ministry, see G. C. B. Davies, *The Early Cornish Evangelicals 1735-1760. A Study of Walker of Truro and Others* (London: S.P.C.K., 1951), 30-34, 37-52.

<sup>14</sup>Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 160.

<sup>15</sup>Doddridge, *Life of the Honourable Col. James Gardiner* 135, IV, 88.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 135, IV, 88.

<sup>17</sup>Cited in Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1980), 2:128. For further details and discussion of



- this revival, see especially Arthur Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Banner of Truth, 1971); Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, *passim*.
- <sup>18</sup>Doddridge, *Life of the Honourable Col. James Gardiner* 135, IV, 88. See also Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge (1702–1751)* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1979), 147.
- <sup>19</sup>Doddridge, *Life of the Honourable Col. James Gardiner*, 136, IV, 88.
- <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 136, IV, 89.
- <sup>21</sup>Nuttall, *Calendar*, 161.
- <sup>22</sup>Graham C.G. Thomas, "George Whitefield and Friends: The Correspondence of Some Early Methodists," *The National Library of Wales Journal* 27 (1991–92), 65.
- <sup>23</sup>*George Whitefield's Journals* (London: Banner of Truth, 1960), 273. For Doddridge's sympathies with the leaders in the revival, see especially Alan C. Clifford, "Philip Doddridge and the Oxford Methodists," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 42 (1979), 75–80. As W. R. Ward puts it: by the 1740's Doddridge "was a Methodist in the sense of an adherent of the movement of revival and reform" (*The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 348).
- <sup>24</sup>*The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge* (ed. John Doddridge Humphreys; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), V, 401.
- <sup>25</sup>Nuttall, *Calendar*, 183. On Watts's relationship to Whitefield, see K. L. Parry, "Isaac Watts and 18th Century Dissent," *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* 16 (1949–1951), 21–22; David G. Fountain, *Isaac Watts Remembered* (Worthing: Henry E. Walter, 1974), 92–94.
- <sup>26</sup>See Clifford, "Philip Doddridge and the Oxford Methodists", 77–78; Malcolm Deacon, *Philip Doddridge of Northampton 1702–1751* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Libraries, 1980), 88.
- <sup>27</sup>See especially the letters of Nathaniel Neal to Doddridge, dated October 11 and 15, 1743: *The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge* (ed. John Doddridge Humphreys; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), IV, 241–81.
- <sup>28</sup>Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast. John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1989), 276.
- <sup>29</sup>*An Essay concerning Human Understanding* 4.19.5 (ed. Peter H. Nidditch [1975 ed.; repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984], 699).
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.19.7, 699.
- <sup>31</sup>*A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), s.v. "Enthusiasm."
- <sup>32</sup>"Walking with God" in *Select Sermons of George Whitefield* (London: Banner of Truth, 1958), 104. For the position of John Wesley, the other key figure in the Evangelical Revival, with respect to enthusiasm, see Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 275–78, 334–42, 539–40; Lowell O. Ferrel, "John Wesley and the Enthusiasts," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 23, no. 1 and no. 2 (Spring–Fall 1988): 180–87.
- <sup>33</sup>Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield. The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (1970 ed.; repr. Westchester, Illinois: Cornerstone Books, 1979), 1:540; Christopher J. L. Bennett, "The Great Awakening of 1740 and the Problem of Phenomena" in *Perfecting the Church Below* (London: Westminster Conference, 1990), 73.
- <sup>34</sup>*Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge* (ed. John Doddridge Humphreys; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), III, 381.
- <sup>35</sup>*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (ed. Nehemiah Curnock; 1911 ed.; repr.; London: Epworth, 1960), II, 256–57, n.1.
- <sup>36</sup>*Sermons on Important Subjects* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1833), 432. For the historical circumstances surrounding the publication of this sermon, see Timothy L. Smith, "Whitefield and Wesley on Righteousness by Grace," *TSF Bulletin* 9, no.4 (1986), 6–7.
- <sup>37</sup>For studies of the French Prophets, see Hillel Schwartz, *Knaves, Fools, Madmen, and that Subtle Effluvium: A Study of the Opposition to the French Prophets in England, 1706–1710* (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1978); *idem*, *The French Prophets. The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Clarke Garrett, *Spirit Possession and Popular Religion: From the Camisards to*

*the Shakers* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), *passim*.

<sup>38</sup>For contacts between the French Prophets and those involved in the Evangelical Revival, see Schwartz, *French Prophets*, 202-208; Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, 79-85.

<sup>39</sup>For brief discussions of Whitefield's perspective on the gifts of the Spirit, see Victor Budgen, *The Charismatics and the Word of God. A biblical and historical perspective on the charismatic movement* (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1985), 162-63; Taylor, "Spirit of the Awakening," 299, 317-18.

<sup>40</sup>Robert Bruce Mullin, "Horace Bushnell and the Question of Miracles," *Church History* 58 (1989), 461. In the previous century, the Puritans—except for such left-wing groups as the Quakers—had maintained a similar position. See Garth B. Wilson, "The Puritan Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: A Critical Investigation of a Crucial Chapter in the History of Protestant Theology" (Unpublished Th.D. thesis, Knox College, The Toronto School of Theology, 1978), 296-300; J. I. Packer, "John Owen on Spiritual Gifts" in his *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1990), 219-30.

<sup>41</sup>*Three Letters to the Author of a late Pamphlet, entitled Christianity not founded on Argument (The Miscellaneous Works of Philip Doddridge* [London: William Ball, 1839], 1161). See also Doddridge's *A Course of Lectures on the Principal Subjects in Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity* (*Miscellaneous Works*, 397).

<sup>42</sup>"The More Excellent Way" [*The Works of John Wesley* (ed. Albert C. Outler; Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 3:263-64]. For the following discussion of Wesley's position on the gifts of the Spirit, I am indebted to Lycurgus M. Starkey, Jr., *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology* (New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 73-77; Ted A Campbell, "John Wesley's Conceptions and Uses of Christian Antiquity" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1984), 194-204; *idem*, "John Wesley and Conyers Middleton on Divine Intervention in History," *Church History* 55 (1986): 39-49. Popular Pentecostal historiography has frequently misrepresented Wesley's "open" position on the gifts by

depicting him as a forerunner of Pentecostalism. Undoubtedly, Pentecostalism emerged from a theological matrix that owed its shape and structure to the theology of Wesley. But it is one thing to admit this indebtedness of Pentecostalism to Wesley's theology; it is quite another thing to argue that Wesley was a proto-Pentecostal.

<sup>43</sup>Campbell, "Divine Intervention in History", 48.

<sup>44</sup>See also his statement in his response to an anti-Methodist tract written by William Warburton (1698-1779), the Bishop of Gloucester: *A Letter to the Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Gloucester* II.16 (*The Works of John Wesley*, volume 11: *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* [ed. Gerald R. Cragg; Oxford: Clarendon, 1975], 514-15).

<sup>45</sup>"The Nature of Enthusiasm" 21 [*Wesley's Standard Sermons* (ed. Edward H. Sugden; 4th ed.; London: Epworth, 1956), II, 95-96].

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 21 (*Standard Sermons*, II, 96).

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 18 (*Standard Sermons*, II, 93).

<sup>48</sup>Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 338; see also *idem*, "Doctors, Demons and Early Methodist Healing" in *The Church and Healing* (ed. W. J. Sheils; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 149.

<sup>49</sup>Cited in Susie I. Tucker, *Enthusiasm: A Study in Semantic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 34.

<sup>50</sup>For the details of the Bell affair, see L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, Founder of the Methodists* (5th ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880), II, 433-44, 460-62; Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 338-41.

<sup>51</sup>"Indwelling of the Spirit" (*Sermons*, 433).

<sup>52</sup>Jones, "Evangelical Revival in Wales," 238.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 251-52.

<sup>54</sup>John Walsh was a converted deist. For a few details regarding his life, see *The Works of John Wesley. Volume 26: Letters, II: 1740-1755* (ed. Frank Baker; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 616, n.1.

<sup>55</sup>*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (ed. Nehemiah Curnock; London: Epworth, 1913), IV, 336. For a good discussion of these events at Everton, see Nigel R. Pibworth, *The Gospel Pedlar: The Story of John Ber-*

- ridge and the Eighteenth-Century Revival (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical, 1987), 49-70.
- <sup>56</sup>Jones, "Evangelical Revival in Wales," 251.
- <sup>57</sup>*Journal* (November 25, 1759), IV, 359. See also the comments on Wesley's position in this regard by Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, 83, 87-89.
- <sup>58</sup>Cited Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:328.
- <sup>59</sup>"Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival" in his *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 361.
- <sup>60</sup>For fuller discussion of these works, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards: The Holy Spirit in Revival* (Durham: Evangelical Press, 2005).
- <sup>61</sup>Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, 115.
- <sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>63</sup>Taylor, "Spirit of the Awakening," 325.
- <sup>64</sup>For a discussion of the role of Davenport and Croswell in the Evangelical Revival, see Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, 114-15, 119-26; Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 223-29; Taylor, "Spirit of the Awakening," 322-31; Robert E. Cray, Jr., "More Light on a New Light: James Davenport's Religious Legacy, Eastern Long Island, 1740-1840," *New York History*, 73 (1992): 5-27.
- <sup>65</sup>*A Letter from a Gentleman in Boston, to Mr. George Wishart, One of the Ministers of Edinburgh, Concerning the State of Religion in New-England in The Great Awakening. Documents on the Revival of Religion, 1740-1745* (ed. Richard L. Bushman; New York: Atheneum, 1970), 121.
- <sup>66</sup>Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, 225.
- <sup>67</sup>*The Religious Affections* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986), 59.
- <sup>68</sup>*A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (1834 ed.; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), 2:13.
- <sup>69</sup>*Religious Affections*, 60.
- <sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.
- <sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 62.
- <sup>73</sup>*Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1:376-78.
- <sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:376, 377.
- <sup>75</sup>*The of a Work of the Spirit of God in Jonathan Edwards on Revival* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 113-14.
- <sup>76</sup>*Distinguishing Marks*, 114).
- <sup>77</sup>*Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1:376, 378.
- <sup>78</sup>*Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1:378.
- <sup>79</sup>Stephen J. Stein, ed., *Humble Attempt in The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1977), 5:317.
- <sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 5:320.
- <sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 5:341.
- <sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 5:344.
- <sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 5:347-48.
- <sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 5:356.
- <sup>85</sup>Richard Lovelace, "Pneumatological Issues in American Presbyterianism" *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986): 345-46.
- <sup>86</sup>For further discussion of the circumstances surrounding this prayer movement, see Ernest A. Payne, *The Prayer Call of 1784* (London: Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1941); Michael A. G. Haykin, "John Sutcliff and the Concert of Prayer," *Reformation and Revival Journal* 1, no.3 (1992): 65-88; *idem*, "'A Habitation of God, Through the Spirit': John Sutcliff (1752-1814) and the Revitalization of the Calvinistic Baptists in the Late Eighteenth Century," *The Baptist Quarterly* 34 (1991-1992): 309-11.
- <sup>87</sup>Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Howel Harris 1714-1773. The Last Enthusiast* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1965), 46.
- <sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>89</sup>*The Necessity of the Trumpet's giving a certain Sound* (Bristol, 1813), 4.
- <sup>90</sup>"The Design of Spiritual Gifts" in *Pastoral Memorials: Selected from the Manuscripts of the Late Revd. John Ryland* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1828), II, 67.
- <sup>91</sup>"The Love of the Spirit," II, 42. See also Ryland's remarks in a sermon that he delivered in 1802 at the ordination of Thomas Morgan (1776-1857): *The Difficulties of the Christian Ministry, and the Means of surmounting (sic) them: with the Obedience of Churches to their Pastors explained and enforced* (Birmingham, 1802), 18-19. Also see his "The Desirableness of a Spiritual Taste" in *Pastoral Memorials: Selected from*

*the Manuscripts of the Late Revd. John Ryland* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1826], I, 118); *idem*, “Remarks on the Quarterly Review” in *Pastoral Memorials*, II, 348; “Remarks upon the Notion of Extraordinary Impulses and Impressions on the Imagination” in *Pastoral Memorials*, II, 417-19.

<sup>92</sup>Letter to Mary Carey, December 14, 1789 (Baptist Missionary Society Archives, Angus Library, Regent’s Park College, Oxford). Some of the punctuation has been added to make this section of the letter read better.

<sup>93</sup>*Godly Zeal, Described and Recommended* (Nottingham, 1792), 1-2, 15. See also Richard Lovelace, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Evangelical Tradition”, *Pneuma* 7 (1985): 115. On Ryland’s pneumatology, see Michael A. G. Haykin, ““The Sum of All Good’: John Ryland, Jr. and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” *Churchman* 103 (1989): 332-53.

<sup>94</sup>Taylor, “Spirit of the Awakening”, 290.

<sup>95</sup>*An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792 ed.; repr.; Didcot, Oxfordshire: Baptist Missionary Society, 1991), 103.