

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

ARNOLD DALLIMORE (1911-1996): REFORMED  
EVANGELISCALISM AND THE SEARCH FOR A USABLE PAST

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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2014

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For Vicky

“Nowadays the present and the future are too terrifying to be escaped from, and if one bothers with history it is in order to find modern meanings there.”

George Orwell

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	10
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	16
The search for a usable past	
Method: Signposting the narrative	
2. <i>STATUS QUAESTIONIS</i> : THE DEBATE OVER CHRISTIAN HISTORY.....	24
Introduction: A twenty-first century illustration	
History wars: “Natural” vs. “supernatural” historiography	
The history of history writing: Historical background on historical thinking	
The supernaturalist perspective	
The naturalist perspective	
Arnold Dallimore, Harry S. Stout, and the writing of Whitefield	
<i>Tertium quid</i> : An alternative proposal	
Conclusion	
3. ARNOLD DALLIMORE: LIFE AND THE WRITING OF WHITEFIELD.....	74
“Fix my attention on things eternal”: Adolescence and conversion	
Arthur and Mabel	
Dallimore’s early life	
The call to ministry	
“Joy and Sorrow”: Toronto Baptist Seminary	
Mourning the death of Mabel	

An “Ordinary” Pastor

La Belle Provence

On the road in the Maritimes

Orangeville and meeting May

Surviving the Pastor Killer

Cottam: Years of construction and growth

“Integrity and dignity”: Dallimore as pastor

Dallimore’s philosophy of ministry

The birth of a denomination

Isolation and retirement

Pastor as historian: Writing the life of Whitefield

Love for church history

Poverty and providence: Writing as tent-making

Meeting the Doctor

Visiting the valleys of green

The struggles of writing

S. M. Houghton: The critic

John Wesley: Friend or fiend?

Praiseworthy reception

Whitefield and the Calvinist international

Final years and passing

“Without a struggle”

Conclusion: Dallimore, suffering and perseverance

“The goings of heaven upon the soul”: Following the call

“New strength”: Perseverance of the called through suffering

4. GEORGE WHITEFIELD ACCORDING TO ARNOLD DALLIMORE.....145

Whitefield and the power of celebrity

Of heroes and not liking them

Celebrity and hero

“That might hint of boasting”: Canadian anti-heroes

“Saw him as their champion”: Whitefield as celebrity

Dallimore on Whitefield’s celebrity

Celebrity and ego

Conclusion

Whitefield and the problem of slavery

“Yet to understand”: Twentieth-century historians on slavery

Dallimore on Whitefield and slavery

Conclusion

Whitefield and the question of revival

Revival and revivalism? Mapping two approaches

Dallimore on revival

Charismata and conversion

Whitefield, revival and the usable past

Dallimore’s Whitefield: Meeting historical standards

5. EDWARD IRVING AND CHARLES SPURGEON: ANACHRONISTIC AGENDAS.....226

The lesser biographies

Canadian charismatics

Canadian Baptist reactions

Edward Irving: Proto-charismatic?

“Instructions and warnings”: Irving and lessons from the past

Historical bias: Sources, charismata, Coleridge and the sinlessness of Christ

Source selection

Dallimore on the charismatics

Irving as forerunner

Coleridge and christology

Conclusion: Irving and the usable past

Charles Spurgeon: Remembered but forgotten

Reasons for writing: Links to the Dallimore past

*Spurgeon* and source material

The problem of the “forgotten Spurgeon”

Conclusion: Spurgeon the Calvinist preacher?

6. CHARLES AND SUSANNA: THE GOOD WESLEYS; JOHN WESLEY: THE BAD.....282

Charles Wesley: A heart set free

Charles Wesley’s charismatic conversion

Conversion hymn

Susanna Wesley: Mother of Methodism

Source material

Conclusion	
John Wesley the bad	
Conversion, Methodism, and theology	
Conversion: Genuine or not?	
John Wesley and the founding of Methodism	
The problem of perfection	
Conclusion	
7. CONCLUSION.....	329
Using Dallimore’s usable past	
Dallimore and the discipline of history	
Conclusion	
8. APPENDIX.....	341
A Preacher’s Sunday Night	
WORKS CITED.....	343

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was originally conceived in 2010 as a short, popular biography of Arnold Dallimore that was sidelined by the publisher due to a struggling economy. Since then it has undergone a number of transformations and has happily wound up as a doctoral dissertation focusing on problems in historiography. The process of metamorphosis has been carried along by many hands that deserve many thanks. Importantly, thanks are due to my *Doktorväter*, Profs. Adriaan Neele and Michael A. G. Haykin. Prof. Neele dutifully halved his time between Yale Divinity School and my own, the University of the Free State (Bloemfontein), while I wrote and he provided informative and encouraging direction for this study. He has been of great help and I am deeply privileged to have been his student. Prof. Haykin has been more than a supervisor to me, but a friend. As a personal acquaintance of Arnold Dallimore, he took care to ensure that I appropriately remembered Dallimore's legacy while being true to history. As well, an interview that Prof. Haykin conducted with Dr. Dallimore in the 1990s proved to be an indispensable source for chapter three. Any good in this study would not be what it is were it not for his guidance. I would also like to thank Prof. Dolf Britz of the University of the Free State for his input and support—especially for his helpful suggestion of following the chronology of Dallimore's published work to make this a proper intellectual history.

One of my earliest conversations about a book on Dallimore was with Tim Challies, the plan was for us to write it together. I am thankful to Tim for his willingness to allow me to embark on my own and for his own interest in Dallimore expressed through his popular blog Challies.com. I was initially contracted with Evangelical Press in England to

contribute a book on Dallimore for their Bitesize Biographies series. Though the book had to be dropped due to financial constraints, I am thankful to Roger Fay and David Woollin for their initial interest and encouraging words. At a key turning point in the book's history Pastor Clint Humfrey of Calgary, Alberta, encouraged me to turn the work I had already done on Dallimore into a doctoral dissertation. His advice was a watershed. Dr. Mark Jones of Vancouver, British Columbia, and also a Research Associate at the University of the Free State, helped me gain entrance into the university. To both of these Canadian pastors I am thankful for their help, but more importantly for their friendship.

Since the idea of a biography of Dallimore was first aired, the Dallimore family have been incredibly supportive. I am happy to count Cheryl Shuttleworth (née Dallimore) as my friend. She went to great lengths in securing many of the key sources about her parents for chapter three, and for arranging an interview with her mother. I was humbled to have spent time with Mrs. May Dallimore. She dutifully recounted much of her time serving with "Arn" in ministry, and patiently answered my neophyte questions. I am sorry that Paul Dallimore did not live to be able to read this study. He was a dutiful son who loved and admired his father. I am delighted at the thought of them together now. Rebecca Wagler has been a great source of support as she recalled stories about her grandfather as our growing families gathered for dinners. Though I offer some criticisms of Arnold's approach to history at certain points, my hope is that the Dallimore family as a whole will be happy with this finished product.

Iain H. Murray of the Banner of Truth Trust in Edinburgh kindly provided correspondence between Dallimore and his publisher and offered background detail on some important historical events, especially pertaining to Dallimore's relationships with

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and S. M. Houghton. Rev. Murray was an encouragement to Dallimore throughout his time working on Whitefield, and was someone whom Dallimore counted as a friend. I am happy to also have been a recipient of his help. Erroll Hulse of Leeds, England, and formerly of Banner of Truth, shared with me some great stories about his time spent with Dallimore in the UK. This provided perspective on Dallimore's views on charismatics that informed chapter four.

I am thankful to the Trustees of The Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College and to the Seminary's administrator, Deborah Michaud, for granting me access to Dallimore's records. I am also thankful to Rev. Lucien Atchale and the Peter McGregor Memorial Library at the Seminary for access to a number of volumes of *The Gospel Witness* magazine. As well I would like to thank the Heritage Library of Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge, Ontario, for access to *The Baptist Evangel*. I appreciate the help of Dr. Christian George of the Spurgeon Archive at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who provided some resources on Charles Spurgeon that helped me with chapter five. Dr. Nick Tucker of London, England, shared some helpful thoughts on Edward Irving's christology that helped give shape to parts of chapter five as well. Dr. Jared C. Hood kindly published portions of chapter two as an article in *Reformed Theological Review* and granted permission for it to be used in this thesis.

In the late summer of 2013 I joined with a number of colleagues for the first annual meeting of a society of pastor-historians at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where we shared our research interests for mutual edification. I am thankful to them for their suggestions and encouragement. I am especially thankful to Dr. G. Stephen Weaver

Jr., of Frankfort, Kentucky, also of this group, who has been a good friend and kindly took the time to read this manuscript.

Three churches have been of immense spiritual support to me as I laboured on this dissertation. The first, Grace Baptist Church of Essex, Ontario, was helped by Dallimore in her early days and count his legacy as part of her own. Rev. Richard Valade served with Dallimore while he was a student and kindly provided an interview with me that was used in parts of chapter two. Mark Nenadov of Grace Baptist digitized a number of Dallimore's sermons, scanned photographs, and tracked down a quote that were all used for this study. When I first embarked on a study of Dallimore I was a founding member of New City Baptist Church in downtown Toronto. This group regularly prayed for me and spurred me on in my studies. Her pastor, Rev. John Bell and his wife Jillian are close friends and alongside his spiritual care, John provided some resources. At the close of this study my family and I are now members of West Toronto Baptist Church. Rev. Justin Galotti and his wife Elisha are also close friends, and I am glad to have returned Justin's encouragement by pressing him to complete both of Dallimore's Whitefield volumes!

I would also like to acknowledge the help of others like Tim Cutts, Andrew Fulford, Crawford Gribben, Bobby Jamieson for keeping quiet about Esther, Thomas S. Kidd, Gary W. Long, Scott Masson, Greg McManus, Eugene McNamara and his dear wife Margaret, Larry L. Morton, the staff and students of Munster Bible College, Dennis Ngien and the Centre for Mentorship and Theological Reflection, James Pedlar, Michael John Plato who very kindly went over the manuscript, Roger V. Rydin, Richard Snoddy for his advice on breaking writer's block, Baiyu Song, Dale Spencer, Justin Taylor, Geoffrey Thomas, Austin Walker, Jeremy Walker and Loren Warkentin. They have

either provided resources, offered comments or general encouragement that went toward any good that might be found in this study. With due respect to all who have offered assistance, I bear the full responsibility of any errors or infelicities. I should also like to acknowledge Crema Coffee in the Junction, where I wrote large parts of this dissertation (their Americanos are excellent), and Crux Books who provided many of the resources I used.

My extended family have not always understood my interests in church history, but have been cheering nonetheless. I am thankful for my sister Jane and her husband Joel McGonigal along with their children Avery and Brady. I am also thankful for my wife's twin Corinne, her husband Derek Love, and their children Brooklynn, Griffin and as yet un-named baby. Thanks for listening to me drone on about theology and history! My in-laws, Christopher and Yvette Rixon and sister-in-law Phillippa Rixon have been an added encouragement for which I am thankful. My late aunt Paula Clary should have been a Yeats scholar, but providence steered her to other pursuits. We shared a love of Irish history and literature, and I believe that a large part of who I am is due to her influence. My father Donald and my mother Jean Clary instilled in me a love for books and reading. They also taught me the value of doing what I love. I thank God for both of them.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my wife Vicky. I get overwhelmed with love when I think of how understanding she has been of my studies, and how patient she has been with me as she cared for our three precious and precocious children Jack, Molly, and Kate. She also dutifully read through the manuscript with a keen eye. The words of City and Colour's song "The Girl" well-capture how I felt at times as I hid away in my study banging out the words of this dissertation: "I wish I could do better by you/'cause

that's what you deserve/You sacrifice so much of your life/In order for this to work.”

You're my beautiful girl.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### The search for a usable past

The epigraph to this study, penned by George Orwell (1903-1950), is typical of the dystopian author's pessimistic view of the way that moderns use the past. A perennial concern of Orwell was the abuse of history by totalitarian governments as they scour the past for politically self-serving ends.<sup>1</sup> Near the end of his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, for example, Orwell's anti-hero Winston Smith has been brainwashed to mindlessly repeat the Party slogan, "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." This chilling refrain is certainly one example of a misuse of the past, but this does not mean that all uses of the past are guided by nefarious purposes.<sup>2</sup> Another example, well-worn cliché though it may be, comes from the pen of philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952): "Those who cannot learn from the past are condemned to repeat it."<sup>3</sup> Santayana rightly assumed that there is a positive use of the past in which history can be responsibly employed to impart wisdom to the present.

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<sup>1</sup> The quote is from George Orwell, "Arthur Koestler," in Sonia Brownell and Ian Angus, eds., *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell. Volume III: As I Please, 1943-1945* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), 237.

<sup>2</sup> Reflecting on Orwell's use of history, Ken Osborne writes, "The more I read [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*], the more it dawned on me that the novel is a profound meditation on the power of history." Ken Osborne, "'To the Past: Why We Need to Teach and Study History,'" in Ruth Sandwell, ed., *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 103.

<sup>3</sup> George Santayana, "The Life of Reason: Introduction and Reason in Common Sense: Critical Edition" in Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman, eds., *The Works of George Santayana, Volume VII, Book One* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011), 172.

The “search for a usable past” is rooted in the idea that since the past shapes the present, it can be used to inform and guide the present.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that the term was first used by American historian Van Wyck Brooks (1886–1963), but as a concept it has a much older vintage.<sup>5</sup> William J. Bouwsma quoted Johann von Goethe (1749–1832) as saying, “I hate everything that merely instructs me without augmenting or directly invigorating my activity.”<sup>6</sup> Bouwsma commented, “Historians are properly the servants of a public that needs historical perspective to understand itself and its values, and perhaps also to acknowledge its limitations and its guilt. Historians have an obligation, I believe, to meet public needs of this kind.”<sup>7</sup> Due to the fact that every community is shaped by its history, the memory of this history is needed for orientation and identity. Church historian Michael A. G. Haykin, taking Hebrews 13:7 as a model—“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (NIV)—placed the phrase “usable past” under the rubric of mentorship: what we learn from the inhabitants of the past will help to mould us into a better community today. He said, “[T]he past does indeed have significance for the present and...the historian has a duty to share his historical studies with a public wider

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<sup>4</sup> William J. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990); K. S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis, “The Cupboard of Yesterdays? Critical Perspectives on the Usable Past,” in Keith S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis, eds., *The Usable Past: Greek Metahistories* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 1-22.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Dayton Kohler, “Van Wyck Brooks: Traditionally American,” *College English* 2.7 (April 1941), 630.

<sup>6</sup> Bouwsma, *Usable Past*, 1. Bouwsma lifted this quote from Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” in R. J. Hollindale, trans., *Untimely Mediations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 59–123.

<sup>7</sup> Bouwsma, *Usable Past*, 1.

than the academic guild of historians and to help non-specialists see the way the light of the past can help illumine the present.”<sup>8</sup>

The goal of this thesis is to examine the way that this concept of a usable past informed the writings of the independent historian, Arnold A. Dallimore (1911-1998). His two-volume biography of the transatlantic revivalist George Whitefield (1714–1770) has had a significant impact both upon the historical academy and upon the church.<sup>9</sup> Dallimore also wrote a series of “lesser biographies” of varying degrees of quality on other figures from evangelical history. As a pastor Dallimore had strong theological convictions. He was an evangelical who embraced Reformed soteriology and Baptist ecclesiology and had a profoundly anti-charismatic bent. How did these theological perspectives shape the way he did history, both in terms of how he chose his subjects and how he interpreted them? And in what ways did Dallimore believe the past to be of value for the present? Dallimore’s biographical studies coincided with a renaissance of religious history in the Academy as historians like George M. Marsden, George A. Rawlyk, David Bebbington, Grant Wacker, David N. Hempton, Harry S. Stout, Stuart Piggin and Nathan O. Hatch began to issue a steady stream of monographs and articles that dealt with various aspects of evangelical Christian history.<sup>10</sup> While each would to

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<sup>8</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Reformers and Puritans as Spiritual Mentors: Hope is Kindled*, The Christian Mentor 2 (Kitchener, ON: Joshua Press, 2012). For a study of Haykin’s approach to history see Clint Humfrey, “Michael A. G. Haykin: historian of the Spirit,” in G. Stephen Weaver Jr. and Ian Hugh Clary, eds., *The Pure Flame of Devotion: The History of Christian Spirituality, Essays in Honour of Michael A. G. Haykin* (Kitchener, ON: Joshua Press, 2013), 503–514.

<sup>9</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, UK/Westchester, IL: Banner of Truth Trust/Cornerstone, 1970 and 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Representative works of each from this perspective are George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); George A. Rawlyk, *Ravished by the Spirit: Religious Revivals, Baptists, and Henry Alline* (Montreal, QC/Kingston, ON: McGill-Queens University Press, 1984); David Bebbington,

varying degree identify as Christian or even evangelical, they nevertheless adhered to the canons of scholarly research. They wrote “objective” history and rarely revealed their own religious commitments. However, Dallimore’s work was markedly different reflecting the historiographical perspective of historians like Iain H. Murray, John Thornbury, Faith Cook, Eifion Evans, and more generally Martyn Lloyd-Jones.<sup>11</sup> Historians of this outlook wrote intentionally to edify the reader in the Christian faith, were open about their religious commitments, and carefully discerned God’s providence in history, particularly when dealing with revival.

Thus this dissertation provides an intellectual history of Dallimore by locating him within his own historical and historiographical context, and evaluates the quality of his scholarship. The biographical portions demonstrate how his life and work intersected and how they shaped his writing of history. A study such as this is significant primarily due to the importance of Dallimore’s work on Whitefield which is cited by historians as an important contribution to Whitefield and related studies. The methods that he employed shaped his history writing and an examination of them helps us see where he fit within the larger debates of Christian historiography. As well, due to his relationship with

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*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Grant Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985); David Hempton, *Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion* (New York: Routledge, 1984); Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Stuart Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia: Spirit, Word and World* (Melbourne and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Works from this perspective include Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987); John Thornbury, *Five Pioneer Missionaries* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965); Faith Cook, *William Grimshaw of Haworth* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1997); Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985); D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Knowing the Times: Addresses Delivered on Various Occasions, 1942-1977* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2013). It is noteworthy that each of these is published by The Banner of Truth Trust.

British evangelicals, Dallimore provides a window into that movement in the mid-twentieth century and its subsequent influence in the twenty-first. As a founder of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches Dallimore also helps us understand twentieth-century Canadian Baptist history. As this is the only biographical and methodological study of Arnold Dallimore, it also fills a unique role in studies on the Christian reflection on history.

#### Method: Signposting the narrative

By examining each of Dallimore's biographies in the order that they were published this thesis creates an intellectual history of Dallimore's approach to history. The first volume of his Whitefield biography appeared in 1970, while the second was published ten years later. Then, in short succession came his lesser biographies on the lives of Edward Irving, Charles Spurgeon, Charles Wesley, and Susanna Wesley. Examining his biographies in chronological sequence provides an understanding of the development of his historiography.

This study of Dallimore as an historian also needs to be related to the broader discussion that religious historians have had over the relationship between faith commitments and the writing of history. Therefore, after this introduction, the second chapter *status quaestionis* traces the twentieth-century debate over how to do history as a Christian. It begins by summarizing the history of the debate, paying attention to source material relevant to this study, and concludes by placing Dallimore in the framework of the supernatural end of the historiographical spectrum. This sets the context for

Dallimore's own historiography. It also argues for a *tertium quid* that recognizes the validity of both approaches to history and gives a theologically-grounded rationale for this perspective.

The third chapter is effectively a biography of the biographer: it tells the life of Arnold Dallimore from his upbringing in London, Ontario, to his education under the Fundamentalist Baptist T.T. Shields (1873–1955) at Toronto Baptist Seminary, and his various pastoral charges. It also explains how Dallimore first became interested in writing a life of Whitefield, his research in Britain, his relationship with the British evangelical Martyn Lloyd-Jones and the Banner of Truth Trust, and how his major biography was received at a popular and scholarly level.

In many respects the fourth chapter is the most important to the thesis of this study: by looking more deeply at Dallimore's major biography of Whitefield, it studies how he worked as an historian. It evaluates the way Dallimore treated three important themes in Whitefield's life, themes that could suffer most at the hands of an ideological bias. These themes are: Whitefield as the first modern American celebrity, the issue of slavery, and the concept of revival. It is here that the strengths and weaknesses of Dallimore's work are best seen. While Dallimore wrote from a supernaturalist perspective, and openly sympathized with Whitefield and his Calvinism, he did not fully allow his religious commitments to cloud his judgment. Dallimore was critical of Whitefield, especially his use of slavery. While the work rightly fits in the category of filiopietistic history, it is not a full-blown hagiography.

The fifth chapter marks a transition to a study of Dallimore's lesser biographies. Due to their smaller size, and because less ground-breaking work was done in them, this

chapter and the next treat two biographies each. Focusing on the Romantic and early Victorian period, chapter five examines Dallimore's lives of Irving and Spurgeon, though the emphasis is weighted to the former. As a Canadian Baptist Dallimore was strongly anti-charismatic and viewed the growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Canada with suspicion. Arguing that Irving was the "forerunner of the Charismatic movement," Dallimore used him as a means of tracing the history of the Charismatic movement's questionable practices. Dallimore is at his most anachronistic in his biography of Irving, and his anti-charismaticism is strongly felt. Due to Dallimore's Reformed and Baptist sympathies, Charles Spurgeon fares much better than Irving. While his biography of the Victorian preacher is good as a standard introduction, it does little to further Spurgeon studies. It actually contributes to the problem of what some have called the "forgotten Spurgeon." We know much about the basic life story of the "prince of preachers," but know relatively little about his thought.

The sixth chapter returns to the early evangelical period where it becomes clear that Dallimore is again in familiar territory. His biographies of Charles and Susanna Wesley benefited from the research that he had done on Whitefield years earlier. His work on Charles Wesley is a helpful introduction and makes a number of historiographical interpretations. As his Whitefield biography functions in part as an apologetic against John Wesley, likewise Dallimore's work on Charles has elements of an anti-John perspective. Charles is clearly the good brother. Dallimore's anti-charismatic bias also appears in his interpretation of Charles' conversion. His biography of Susanna Wesley is similar to his work on Spurgeon; it succeeds as a basic introduction but does not carry the study of Susanna any further than it had already gone in Methodist studies up to this

point. Like his other biographies dealing with this period, this work also sets John Wesley in his context in order to demonstrate his poor character. Though Dallimore did not write a biography of him the third section of this chapter focuses on John Wesley. It explores the way Dallimore interpreted key aspects of Wesley's life and thought, particularly his conversion, his role as the founder of Methodism, and his doctrine of perfection. In this study of the three Wesleys two themes recur, namely Dallimore's non-standard interpretations of their respective conversion narratives, and his anti-charismaticism that shaped his historiography.

The conclusion culls the historiographical issues from the study of each of Dallimore's biographies and presents a perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of Dallimore as an historian. The related issue of what an historian is, and what is the function of history, is also addressed. Though he was not educated as an historian, and never practiced as a professional historian, I conclude that it is appropriate to call him an historian due to the nature of history as a discipline.

## CHAPTER 2

### *STATUS QUAESTIONIS:* THE DEBATE OVER CHRISTIAN HISTORY

#### **Introduction: A twenty-first century illustration**

Recent evangelical approaches to history are conflicted as the debate over the legacy of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) illustrates. In the book *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, edited by Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, scholars critically evaluated aspects of their subject's ministry and thought.<sup>12</sup> Iain H. Murray, a twentieth-century biographer of Lloyd-Jones, wrote a review-essay of the book for *Banner of Truth* magazine criticizing a number of the contributions specifically and evangelical historiography in general. Murray argued against Christians doing "scholarly" research with "neutral objectivity."<sup>13</sup> Historian Carl R. Trueman responded to Murray's "attack on historical method" and chastised him for conflating "neutrality" and "objectivity."<sup>14</sup> While neutrality is impossible, according to Trueman, objectivity "simply acknowledges the fact that history is a public discipline, the results of which can be assessed by public criteria." He argued: "History has its sphere of competence and its ambitions, and its methods and results should be understood accordingly."<sup>15</sup> The two Reformed historians

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<sup>12</sup> Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, eds., *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of "The Doctor"* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Iain H. Murray, "Engaging with Lloyd-Jones: A Review Article," *Banner of Truth* 585 (June 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Carl Trueman, "The Sin of Uzzah," *Reformation21* (July 10, 2012) <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2012/07/the-sin-of-uzzah.php> (Accessed December 5, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Trueman, "Sin of Uzzah." See also his discussion of objectivity and neutrality in Carl R. Trueman, *Histories and Fallacies: Problems Face in the Writing of History* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 27–28.

had engaged on the same subject in 2010, after Trueman published criticisms of “the Doctor” in a volume honouring the Anglo-Canadian theologian J. I. Packer.<sup>16</sup> In a review, Murray wrote that Trueman’s chapter had “serious inaccuracies” and misinterpreted the contentious events involving the infamous split between Packer and Lloyd-Jones.<sup>17</sup> Trueman responded in the e-zine *Reformation21*, focusing on Murray’s historical method as expressed in the latter’s two-volume biography *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*.<sup>18</sup> Of it, Trueman wrote, “[I]nstead of a genuine assessment of [Lloyd-Jones’] strengths and weaknesses which might have been of real value to the contemporary church, what we have is a personality cult, supported by a body of hagiography, and maintained by a defensive mentality, where all critics are dismissed as unworthy slanders and mediocre historians.” Specific to hagiography Trueman critiqued Murray for writing “a massive two volume biography of M[artyn] L[oyd-]J[ones] which contained virtually no criticism whatsoever.”<sup>19</sup>

This twenty-first century interchange is a microcosm of a larger discussion that was held in the twentieth century over how to write history as a Christian.<sup>20</sup> The question

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<sup>16</sup> Carl R. Trueman, “J. I. Packer: An English Nonconformist Perspective,” in Timothy George ed., *J. I. Packer and the Evangelical Future: The Impact of His Life and Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 115–129; Iain H. Murray, “J. I. Packer and the Evangelical Future—A Review by Iain H. Murray,” *Banner of Truth* (March 2010); Carl Trueman, “On the Gloucestershire Way of Identifying Sheep: A Response to Iain Murray,” *Reformation 21* (March 2010), accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/on-the-gloucestershire-way-of-identifying-sheep-a-response-to-iain-murray.php>.

<sup>17</sup> Iain H. Murray, “Review of *J. I. Packer and the Evangelical Future*,” *Master’s Seminary Journal* 21.2 (Fall 2010), 238.

<sup>18</sup> Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years, 1899-1939* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982); Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith, 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Trueman, “On the Gloucestershire Way of Identifying Sheep.”

<sup>20</sup> Such debates were also engaged outside of evangelical Christian circles. For instance see the discussion of Mormon historiography in Melvin T. Smith, “Faithful History/Secular Faith,” *Dialogue: A*

under review was, “Is there a Christian way to do history?” Evangelicals generally answer in the affirmative, but there are clearly two different paths that evangelicals take in answering thus. One, illustrated by Murray, argues that Christians must not adhere to the canons of academic neutrality to faithfully do history. The other, illustrated by Trueman, maintains that faithfulness to Christianity is not forfeited by “objective” historiography. This debate has direct bearing on Arnold Dallimore, the subject of this thesis. Though the dispute over the doing of Christian history is much larger than Dallimore, he was involved in one important portion of it, namely the interpretation of one of evangelical history’s most celebrated figures, George Whitefield. A survey of the larger debate is therefore important as the nature of the question and its conclusions impact the way Dallimore can be understood as an historian. This chapter summarizes the history and perspectives in the dispute over Christian history, explains how Dallimore fits into the discussion, and offers a third alternative to the opposing views.

### **History wars: “Natural” vs. “supernatural” historiography**

The debate illustrated in the introduction to this chapter is not just about how an historian’s work is publicly perceived, but has as much to do with how the historian understands his or her own vocation.<sup>21</sup> Historians are faced with many self-reflective

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*Journal of Mormon Thought* (December 1, 1983): 65–71. Smith spoke in weary tones of the Mormon debate saying, “I readily admit that the topic of ‘faithful history’ may gain more by praying for the demise of the debate than by trying to provide life-extending arguments or by seeking to resurrect it.” Smith, “Faithful History,” 65.

<sup>21</sup> For reflections on the historian and vocation see Arthur S. Link, “The Historian’s Vocation,” *Theology Today* 19 (April 1962): 75–89; Douglas A. Sweeney, “On the Vocation of Historians to the Priesthood of Believers, A Plea to Christians in the Academy,” in John Fea, Jay Green and Eric Miller, eds., *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian’s Vocation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 299–315.

questions. Is it appropriate for a professional historian to write for a popular audience and do so in a way that reveals their own faith commitments? Can an evangelical historian write for a scholarly audience without abandoning religious principles? Does Christian history require recognition of divine providence in the events of the past? This section considers the different ways that evangelicals in the twentieth century have sought to answer such questions.

The history of history writing: Historical background on historical thinking

Broad discussions about the relationship between Christianity and history have occupied church historians from the mid-twentieth century onwards. For instance, in the United States the Conference on Faith and History (CFH) began in 1968 as a loose gathering of Christian historians who met to discuss such issues, among other things.<sup>22</sup> Its journal *Fides et Historia* published conference proceedings, and in the early years focused largely on the relationship between faith and history. In its second volume one of the founders of the CFH, Charles J. Miller, asked the question “Is there a Christian approach to history?”<sup>23</sup> Citing the historian’s own personal philosophy that biases their scholarship, Miller answered in the affirmative: “As long as Christians are writing history, there is a Christian approach to history.”<sup>24</sup> Just as there can be a Communist approach to history, so too is there a Christian one. However, Miller admits, “There is no one Christian approach

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<sup>22</sup> D. G. Hart notes the discrepancy in accounts over when the CFH was born; some involved testify that it began in 1959. See D. G. Hart, “History in Search of Meaning: The Conference on Faith and History,” in Ronald A. Wells, ed., *History and the Christian Historian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 72.

<sup>23</sup> Charles J. Miller, “Is There a Christian Approach to History?” *Fides et Historia* 2.1 (1969): 3–15.

<sup>24</sup> Miller, “Christian Approach,” 4.

to history—there are many.”<sup>25</sup> Miller, who taught at Calvin College, was deeply shaped by Neo-Calvinism, a philosophical-theological outlook that takes its cues from the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) who famously put all of reality—including academic disciplines—under the lordship of Christ, and argued for a distinctly Christian and all-encompassing *Weltanschauung*.<sup>26</sup> Historian David W. Bebbington cited the Dutch-American theologian Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987) as popularizing Kuyper’s philosophy in America and this in turn had an impact on Christian historiography. Notre Dame’s George Marsden, who once taught history at Calvin College, spoke of the influence Van Til had on his own historical method including the idea “that the very facts of history differ for the Christian and the non-Christian historian.”<sup>27</sup> The influence of neo-Calvinism was so strong in discussions of historiography that D. G. Hart referred to the “Calvin College” stage in the history of the CFH. According to Hart, it spanned the years 1974-1984.<sup>28</sup>

On a smaller scale in Britain was the founding of the Historians’ Study Group in the early 1960s. Like the CFH, it was initially a casual group of Christian historians who met under the auspices of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. As Bebbington explained, “Although

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<sup>25</sup> Miller, “Christian Approach,” 12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Abraham Kuyper, *Pro Rege: Of, Het Koningschap Van Christus* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1911); A. Kuijper, *Calvinism: Six Stone-lectures* (Amsterdam/Pretoria: Hoveker & Wormster, [1899]).

<sup>27</sup> George M. Marsden, “The Spiritual Vision of History,” *Fides et Historia* 14.1 (1981), 56. See also C. Gregg Singer, “The Problem of Historical Interpretation,” in Gary North ed., *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective* (Vallecito: Ross House, 1976), 53-74; William VanDoodewaard, “Van Til and Singer: The Theological Interpretation of History,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 3.1 (January 2011): 339–362.

<sup>28</sup> Hart, “History in Search of Meaning,” 78–82. Sweeney also referred to the “Calvin College School of Historiography” that included Marsden, Frank Roberts, Ronald Wells, James Bratt, Harry Stout, Dale Van Kley, Joel Carpenter, Nathan Hatch and Mark Noll. See Douglas A. Sweeney, “Taking a Shot at Redemption: A Lutheran Considers the Calvin College School of Historiography,” *Books and Culture* 5 (May/June 1999): 43-45.

for many years the Historians' Study Group did little more than hold a couple of small gatherings a year, it fostered the idea that historical research and teaching could be a sphere for Christian enterprise."<sup>29</sup> Later the group morphed into the Christianity and History Forum that continues to meet to this day. Elsewhere similar fraternities arose, as in Australia with the Evangelical History Association that began in 1987. All of them wrote not only about church history, but also reflected on the discipline of history itself from a Christian viewpoint.

As will be seen in the next section, supernatural history was a prevalent method for Christians since the founding of the religion and was a common perspective for historians in the twentieth century. Books written from this view were often popular biographies or denominational histories written with the intent of encouraging readers in the Christian faith or as a "branch of denominational apologetics." Such biography, like the early church biographies, lent themselves to hagiography, or their subjects were manipulated "to fit the preconceptions of...biographers so that their twentieth-century priorities could bask in the glow of [historical] authority."<sup>30</sup> According to Bebbington, change started in the 1940s when scholars began to examine theology in an intellectual context. For instance, Harald Lindström's 1946 book *Wesley and Sanctification* was an intellectual study of John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfectionism.<sup>31</sup> Timothy L. Smith (1924-

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<sup>29</sup> David W. Bebbington, "The Evangelical Discovery of History," in Peter D. Clarke and Charlotte Methuen, eds., *The Church on Its Past: Papers Read at the 2011 Summer Meeting and the 2012 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society*, Studies in Church History 49 (Woodbridge, UK: Published for The Ecclesiastical Historical Society by The Boydell Press, 2013), 344.

<sup>30</sup> Bebbington, "Evangelical Discovery," 334–335.

<sup>31</sup> Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation* (London: Epworth Press, 1946).

1997), who wrote the foreword for a later edition of Lindström's book,<sup>32</sup> and who is often cited as a paragon of evangelical historiography, took social conditions into consideration in his seminal work on social reform. A Nazarene pastor in Boston and professor of history at Johns Hopkins University, Smith was one of the first to gain respect for American evangelical historians in the academy. His doctoral dissertation, submitted to Harvard University, and for which he received the Brewer Prize from the American Society of Church History, was published as *Revivalism and Social Reform*.<sup>33</sup> In it, he studied the positive effect evangelicals had on poverty and slavery, an approach that was at that time largely unheard of in studies of American history. As important as this book has become, Smith considered his history of the formative years of the Church of the Nazarene his greatest scholarly achievement.<sup>34</sup>

In Britain, Sir Herbert Butterfield (1900-1979) led the way for Christian reflection on history. Butterfield was Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and eventually became Vice-Chancellor of the university, Regius Professor of Modern History, and editor of the influential *Cambridge Historical Journal*. He was also a committed Protestant. Butterfield wrote a number of books on historiography including his important *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931)—a critique of the assumption of progress in history—and his work reflecting on faith and the historical profession, *Christianity and History*

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<sup>32</sup> Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Francis Asbury Publishing Co., 1984).

<sup>33</sup> Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (New York/Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1957).

<sup>34</sup> Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years, Volume 1* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962). See Floyd T. Cunningham, "Common Ground: The Perspectives of Timothy L. Smith on American Religious History," *Fides et Historia* 44.2 (Summer/Fall 2012): 21–55.

(1949).<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, he criticized the idea of progress in the first book, and advocated for providence in the second.

All of this helped set the stage for evangelicals to contemplate their own history, and explore the methods used in their vocation in the late twentieth century. Before the 1960s evangelicals were indisposed to serious reflection on history, due in large part to their reluctance to explore the life of the mind, favouring evangelistic pursuits instead.<sup>36</sup> Many evangelicals were also premillennial—in Bebbington’s discussion of this, it appears that he refers to the rapture theology of Dispensationalism—and believed that scholarly pursuits were a waste of time if the second coming was imminent.<sup>37</sup> However, as the discussions about Christian historiography developed, whether in conference lectures, or in the pages of bulletins and journals, the discussions became more specific and acrimonious, so much so that *Books & Culture* dedicated much of their May/June 1999 edition to what they called the “history wars.”<sup>38</sup> With this historical sketch in mind, the following sections outline the two main ways that evangelical historians have approached historiography.

### **The supernaturalist perspective**

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<sup>35</sup> Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931); Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1950).

<sup>36</sup> Mark Noll traced the history of “the evangelical mind” in Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 59–148.

<sup>37</sup> Bebbington, “Evangelical Discovery,” 331. Noll argued that rapture theology also had a “bad influence” on the evangelical mind, particularly as it created a party spirit within evangelicalism. Noll, *Scandal*, 143.

<sup>38</sup> See *Books & Culture: A Christian Review* 5.3 (May/June 1999).

Reflecting the historical illustration regarding Martyn Lloyd-Jones above, Henry Warder Bowden explains that there are “two distinctive attitudes” that church historians have about their field of study, and that most find themselves spread along a spectrum between the two. On the one hand there are those who see church history as a “subsection of theology,” and, on the other, those who see it as a “branch of the humanities.”<sup>39</sup> The first group “expect to find providential significance in past experience” and try to locate the intervention of God in “support of a favored movement.” The second studies the past “as an aspect of human behavior” and focuses on the sociological conditions that shape religion.<sup>40</sup> “From this perspective,” Bowden noted, “a reluctance to explain events by means of divine agency is a theoretical prerequisite for history.”<sup>41</sup> At the extreme end of this latter perspective is a secular view of history and while not going that far, Christians find themselves using the toolkit of the academy in similar ways. Bowden spoke of Christianity in general, and his spectrum easily includes Christians of all denominational affiliations, including evangelicals and Roman Catholics.<sup>42</sup>

On one end of Bowden’s spectrum is the supernaturalist perspective that uses divine intervention as a part of the interpretation of historical events. This “providentialist history” is so-called because of its use of divine providence as an historical tool.

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<sup>39</sup> Henry Warder Bowden, “Ends and Means in Church History,” *Church History* 54.1 (March 1985), 76.

<sup>40</sup> Bowden, “Ends and Means,” 76.

<sup>41</sup> Bowden, “Ends and Means,” 77.

<sup>42</sup> For a Roman Catholic critique of natural historiography see Christopher Shannon, “After Monographs: A Critique of Christian Scholarship as a Professional Practice,” in John Fea, Jay Green, and Eric Miller, eds., *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian’s Vocation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 168–186. A standard Catholic critique of providential history is Hugh F. Kearney, “Christianity and the Study of History,” *The Downside Review* 67 (1949): 62–73.

Providence is best understood as God’s sovereign will that directs history.<sup>43</sup> In a sense, R. G. Collingwood was right when he claimed: “Any history written on Christian principles will be of necessity universal, providential, apocalyptic, and periodized.”<sup>44</sup> All orthodox Christians recognize God’s providence over history—both generally and particularly—but providential history as a technical term seeks to determine how God has moved in the specific events of history. It is less about admitting God’s providence, and more about how it should be interpreted.

Supernatural historiography has a long pedigree in the Judeo-Christian tradition, beginning with the Hebrew Bible and Christian scriptures.<sup>45</sup> The biblical example set a precedent for doing history that was the dominant model from the early church to the seventeenth century. A noteworthy providential historian from the patristic period is Eusebius of Caesarea (*ca.* 260-*ca.* 340) whose *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*ca.* 325) outlined how God raised up and protected the church from its birth to the time of Constantine (*ca.* 275-337). The other major patristic work of history was Augustine of Hippo’s (354-430) *De civitate Dei* (416-422) that not only sought to defend Christians against pagan accusers, but also to show God’s sovereign providence over history.<sup>46</sup> This method of

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 122.

<sup>44</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 49, cited in Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3. For an exposition of Collingwood’s quote, see Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 3–4.

<sup>45</sup> For example, in the Hebrew bible, Psalm 135:6 says, “The LORD does whatever pleases him/in the heavens and on the earth/in the seas and all their depths”; and in the New Testament, Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (NIV).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Paul L. Maier, ed., *Eusebius: The Church History, a New Translation with Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999); R. W. Dyson, ed., *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). An indispensable study of patristic historiography is Glenn F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Historians:*

history was common up to the seventeenth century where we see a similar pattern of scholarship in the works of the French bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) who wrote *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* in 1681, a work that spanned from creation to Charlemagne. Catholic historian Patrick J. Barry calls it “a work of apologetics...[a] demonstration of Providence from history.”<sup>47</sup> Bossuet’s Irish complement Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) published *Annales veteris testamenti* (1650) and *Annalium pars posterior* (1654), a chronology of the world from creation, which he famously dated at 4004 BC. Ussher’s providential history was part of an eschatologically driven apologetic for the Protestant church in light of the rise of the antichrist within the papacy.<sup>48</sup> In the American colonies the Puritan Cotton Mather (1663-1728) wrote *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), which, as the title suggests, celebrated the great works of Christ in America.<sup>49</sup>

Yet things began to change for historiography at this period as well. With the development of textual criticism by Renaissance humanists, and new discoveries in the

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*Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986). For Augustine’s philosophy of history in *De civitate Dei* see Robert A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Matthew Levering, “Linear and Participatory History: Augustine’s *City of God*,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 5.2 (September 2011): 175–196.

<sup>47</sup> Patrick J. Barry, “Bossuet’s *Discourse on Universal History*,” in Peter Guilday, ed., *The Catholic Philosophy of History: Papers of the American Catholic Historical Association* (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1936), 155–159.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 60. See also Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and Theology, 1550-1682*, Rev. ed., *Studies in Christian History and Thought* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008). For aspects of Ussher’s reception of patristic theology see Ian Hugh Clary, “‘The Conduit to Conveigh Life’: James Ussher’s *Immanuel* and Patristic christology,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 30.2 (Autumn 2012): 160-176.

<sup>49</sup> Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: or, the Ecclesiastical history of New-England, from Its First Planting in the Year 1620, unto the Year of our Lord, 1698* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1702). For Mather’s historiographical approach see David Levin, *Cotton Mather: The Young Life of the Lord’s Remembrancer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 250–269.

sciences, came a growing secular approach to history.<sup>50</sup> By the 1700s “[s]ome historians were about to assume no less of a task than to give meaning to the multitude of mundane events whose significance hitherto had been provided by Divine Providence.”<sup>51</sup> Such answers included patterns of progress or cycles of life that infused meaning into history. Mormon historian Brian Q. Cannon tracked the slow demise of providential history through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it did not experience a renaissance until the 1940s.<sup>52</sup> During the Enlightenment, one of the strongest critics of providential history was Voltaire (1694-1778), who attacked its use by historians who defended the divine right of kings, seen most bluntly in Bossuet’s work.<sup>53</sup> This was also the period that saw the scrutinizing of miracles, further casting aspersions on providence. There was a brief period of revival for supernatural historiography in the nineteenth century due to the work of François René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) and historicist Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), as well as the American historian George Bancroft (1800-1891).<sup>54</sup> Yet industrialization, materialism, class conflict, higher criticism, and Darwinian evolution reduced the need for faith and fuelled scepticism about the miraculous, so that God’s role

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<sup>50</sup> Ernest Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 185, 196.

<sup>51</sup> Breisach, *Historiography*, 199.

<sup>52</sup> Brian Q. Cannon, “Providential History: The Need for Continuing Revelation,” in Roy A. Prete ed., *Window of Faith: Latter-day Saint Perspectives on World History* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 142–160. I cite the online version of Cannon’s essay in this dissertation: <http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/window-faith-latter-day-saint-perspectives-world-history/22-providential-history-need-conti>.

<sup>53</sup> For Voltaire’s criticism of Bossuet’s providential history see Karen O’Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 51–53.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. François René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du christianisme, ou Beautés de la Religion Chrétienne* (Paris: Chez Migneret, 1802); Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers (New York: Routledge, 2010); George Bancroft, *History of the United States of America, from the Discovery of the American Continent*, 10 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1854–1878).

in history was discredited.<sup>55</sup> It is noteworthy that as the historical profession was established in this nineteenth-century context, supernatural history began to wane. Ironically, with the rise of Marxist historiography in the early twentieth century, and the *Annales* School in France, Christian historians found an intellectual environment where they could again ground their view of history in faith. This was not because Marxists or the *Annales* advocated for a Christian reading of history per se, but because they offered models of doing history from open presuppositions. Cannon referred to a number of European philosophers and theologians at this period, such as Nikolai Berdyaev, H. G. Wood, and John MacMurray, who “eloquently pled for a reappraisal of God’s role in history.”<sup>56</sup>

Probably the most significant British historian to adhere to a form of providential historiography was Herbert Butterfield. In his *Christianity and History* he dedicated a chapter to exploring “providence and historical process.”<sup>57</sup> In the opening sentence of the chapter he wrote, “In a sense everything with which we deal when we are discussing Christianity and history...must be a commentary on the ways of Providence.”<sup>58</sup> Butterfield distinguished three levels of historical thinking that use different methods of analysis. The first two—biographical and narrative—are subsumed under what he called “technical history” and can be performed without reference to the third, which is

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<sup>55</sup> Cannon, “Providential History.”

<sup>56</sup> Cannon, “Providential History.”

<sup>57</sup> Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 93-112. Studies include C. T. McIntire, *Herbert Butterfield: Historian as Dissenter* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Robert Clouse, “Herbert Butterfield” in Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds., *Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 519-529; William A. Speck, “Herbert Butterfield: The Legacy of a Christian Historian,” in Frank Roberts and George M. Marsden, eds., *A Christian View of History?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 99.

<sup>58</sup> Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 93.

providence.<sup>59</sup> What marks out the third is the personal commitment of the historian. In a stark statement about providence and the historian's own religious perspective he said, "I am unable to see how a man can find the hand of God in secular history, unless he has first found that he has an assurance of it in his personal experience. If it is objected that God is revealed in history through Christ, I cannot think that this can be true for the mere external observer, who puts on the thinking-cap of the ordinary historical student. It only becomes effective for those who have carried the narrative to intimate regions inside themselves, where certain of the issues are brought home to human beings."<sup>60</sup>

Immediately after this statement, Butterfield chastised those historians "who say that everything in history can be explained without bringing God into the argument": such "would be doing no more than walking around in a circle."<sup>61</sup> In bold words he wrote, "There is no such self-contained intellectual system as would forbid a man who was an historian to believe that God Himself is a factor in history."<sup>62</sup> Keith Sewell thus rightly argued that providence was a belief basic to Butterfield's historiography, not mere rhetorical flourish.<sup>63</sup> This is not to say, however, that Butterfield's providentialism is the same as that of later evangelical historians like Murray or Dallimore. Providence was his presupposition as an historian, but he wrote his own historical works with little reference to the hand of God in particular events. He said, "I could not go to people and say that if they studied nearly two thousand years of European history this would be bound to make

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. C. T. McIntire, *Herbert Butterfield: Historian as Dissenter* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 263.

<sup>60</sup> Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 107.

<sup>61</sup> Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 107.

<sup>62</sup> Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 108.

<sup>63</sup> Keith Sewell, *Herbert Butterfield and the Interpretation of History* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 94–95.

them Christian; I could not say that such a stretch of history would prove to any impartial person that Providence underlies the whole human drama.” One can study history, but “all this will not show you God in history if you have not found God in your daily life.”<sup>64</sup>

Butterfield’s equal in America was the Baptist historian Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1968), Sterling Professor of Missions and Oriental History at Yale University.<sup>65</sup> Both a church historian and an historian of mission, he wrote multi-volume works in each field that have had lasting influence.<sup>66</sup> In 1948 he was elected as the president of the American Historical Association, and at the end of his term dedicated his presidential address to the question of “The Christian Understanding of History.”<sup>67</sup> He wrote of the necessarily subjective element to history writing, saying, “History cannot be written without some basis of selection, whether artificial and purely subjective or inherent in man’s story.” Thus the historian “is confronted with the necessity of acting on some principle of selection, even though it be arbitrary, and is haunted by the persistent hope that a framework and meaning can be found which possess objective reality.”<sup>68</sup> Then, to ground history in something objective, instead of arbitrary, he proposed a return to the Christian understanding of history:

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<sup>64</sup> Herbert Butterfield, *Writings on Christianity and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 11.

<sup>65</sup> Richard W. Pointer, “Kenneth Scott Latourette,” in Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds., *Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 411-430.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1: Beginnings to 1500*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1975); Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 2: Reformation to Present*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1975).

<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, “The Christian Understanding of History,” *The American Historical Review* 54.2 (January 1949), 261.

<sup>68</sup> Latourette, “Christian Understanding,” 261.

May I make bold under these circumstances to invite your consideration to one of the oldest interpretations of history, the one which bears the name Christian? I do so realizing that many now regard it as quite outmoded, as associated with a stage of thinking which mankind is discarding, and as being held only by those who are victims of what is indulgently denominated social lag. I do so as one who accepts the Christian understanding of history and is more and more attracted by what he believes to be the accuracy of its insight. But it is not as an advocate, as one in the long succession of those who would seek to justify the ways of God to men, that I would once more draw your attention to it. I would, rather, raise with you the question of whether the Christian understanding of history may not offer the clue to the mystery which fascinates so many of our best minds.<sup>69</sup>

He then explained what he meant by “the Christian understanding of history.” While recognizing that there may be different Christian approaches, he argued for a view where different Christian perspectives achieve common assent. For Latourette, the Christian understanding of history is found under the universally-held belief in God as creator and ruler of the universe. “This means,” wrote Latourette, “that man lives and history takes place in a universe, that all of reality is one and under the control of God, and that the human drama is part and parcel of the far larger unity of God’s creation.”<sup>70</sup> At the heart of this understanding is not “a set of ideas but a person,” namely Jesus of Nazareth who is the full disclosure of God in history.<sup>71</sup> History is teleological and under the guide of God’s sovereign hand. He said that “[t]he course of history is God’s search for man... God’s grace, the love which man does not deserve and cannot earn, respects man’s free will and endeavours to reach man through the incarnation, the cross, and the Holy Spirit. Here, to the Christian, is the meaning of history and its unifying core.”<sup>72</sup> Latourette outlined a number of practical applications that this should elicit for the historian, not the

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<sup>69</sup> Latourette, “Christian Understanding,” 262.

<sup>70</sup> Latourette, “Christian Understanding,” 263.

<sup>71</sup> Latourette, “Christian Understanding,” 264.

<sup>72</sup> Latourette, “Christian Understanding,” 265.

least is that to have God's view of history, one must focus attention on events that would normally be ignored. Latourette's ground-breaking focus on Christian mission is an illustration of this practical principle.<sup>73</sup>

In America there was also a protracted debate between members of the Conference on Faith and History over the nature of Christian historiography, in particular the Lutheran historian John Warwick Montgomery's philosophy of history as outlined in his two books *Where Is History Going?* and *History and Christianity*.<sup>74</sup> Both books were less about history, properly speaking, and more evidential apologetic treatments of historical issues such as the reliability of the bible or the veracity of the resurrection. The debate was sparked in 1970 by a review of Montgomery's first book by Ronald J. VanderMolen published in *Fides et Historia* at the editor's request.<sup>75</sup> Montgomery wanted to determine the meaning of history to help historians understand the purpose of their profession. He did so by critiquing a number of historical perspectives and putting forth a Christian approach to the past. For VanderMolen, Montgomery made "dubious assertions regarding historical scholarship."<sup>76</sup> His concern was Montgomery's rejection of the subjective, interpretive stance of the historian in light of objective historical facts.<sup>77</sup> In the words of Hart, he "objected to Montgomery's wooden epistemology, which, to VanderMolen, failed to recognize the subjective aspects of Christian faith as well as the interpretive

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<sup>73</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols. (New York: Harper, 1937–1947).

<sup>74</sup> John Warwick Montgomery, *Where Is History Going? Essays in Support of the Historical Truth of the Christian Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1969); John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972).

<sup>75</sup> Ronald J. VanderMolen, "The Christian Historian: Apologist or Seeker?" *Fides et Historia* 3.1 (Fall 1970): 41–56.

<sup>76</sup> VanderMolen, "Christian Historian," 42.

<sup>77</sup> VanderMolen, "Christian Historian," 47.

nature of historical scholarship.”<sup>78</sup> As Hart said of the entire debate, “The crux of the matter had to do with the reliability or epistemic certainty provided by historical studies.”<sup>79</sup> Montgomery accused modern historians of denying the reality of past facts; VanderMolen defended them by arguing that historians do, generally, believe in the reliability of the past: “I can accept Montgomery’s view of the reality of past facts, but find his criticism of historians quite out of line.”<sup>80</sup> Germaine to this study, VanderMolen also took issue with Montgomery’s notion “that progress can be identified in the historical process and that God’s intentions can be discovered in historical events.”<sup>81</sup> Montgomery responded, not to VanderMolen, but to William A. Speck, who had written an essay critiquing Herbert Butterfield’s attempt to trace the Christian influence on history, which Speck thought failed.<sup>82</sup> Though Speck had critiqued Butterfield for an inadequate consistency in his attempt to do history from a Christian perspective, Montgomery and his co-author James R. Moore did not believe Butterfield went far enough. Butterfield had, according to all three disputants, undermined his Christian commitment when he sought to write “technical history”—by this, they mean objective, or natural history; though Montgomery and Moore accused Speck of not ultimately believing that Butterfield was wrong in his approach to technical history. For them, “Butterfield somehow believes he can have historical objectivity with its description and explanation of tangible evidence and still retain ‘religious orthodoxy, moral absolutes,

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<sup>78</sup> Hart, “History in Search of Meaning,” 77.

<sup>79</sup> Hart, “History in Search of Meaning,” 77.

<sup>80</sup> VanderMolen, “Church Historian,” 48.

<sup>81</sup> VanderMolen, “Church Historian,” 49.

<sup>82</sup> William A. Speck, “Herbert Butterfield on the Christian and Historical Study,” *Fides et Historia* 4 (Fall 1971): 50-70; John Warwick Montgomery and James R. Moore, “The Speck in Butterfield’s Eye, A Reply to William Speck,” *Fides et Historia* 4 (Fall 1971): 71–77.

and...a spiritual interpretation of life.”<sup>83</sup> For the authors, there is to be no wedge between technical history and Christian commitment, they are one and the same. Speck offered a short reply in a subsequent article, chastising his opponents’ tone and asking, “How can [Butterfield’s] methodology or any truly historical methodology confirm Christian belief?”<sup>84</sup> If historians, even Christian historians, are divided over materials in Christian scripture, how can they be sure of their position? Nine responses in all were published by defenders and opponents of Montgomery. Hart commented on the conclusion of the debate and its impact on the changing nature of CFH:

Perhaps the desultory nature of this debate revealed that the aims of the conference were considerably different from the uses to which evangelical seminary faculty put the study of history. Or perhaps the decision by conference membership to affiliate with the A[merican] H[istorical] A[ssociation] made Montgomery’s apologetics an embarrassment. Whatever the explanation, the close of this debate seems to have marked a change in the CFH, from an organization open to interests of the neo-evangelical seminary leadership, to one that would focus on the teaching of history at colleges and universities.<sup>85</sup>

The debate over Christian history has carried into the twenty-first century. Steven Keillor, who teaches history at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, is a fellow of the McLaurin Institute, and writes on historical issues pertaining to the state of Minnesota, has attempted to revive providential history for professional historians. In his 2007 book *God’s Judgments: Interpreting History and the Christian Faith*, Keillor argued for the judgement of God as an interpretive lens on the past.<sup>86</sup> Based on readings from the Old

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<sup>83</sup> Montgomery and Moore, “Speck in Butterfield’s Eye,” 73–74.

<sup>84</sup> William A. Speck, “A Reply to John Warwick Montgomery and James R. Moore,” *Fides et Historia* 5 (Fall 1972 and Spring 1973), 108.

<sup>85</sup> Hart, “History in Search of Meaning,” 78.

<sup>86</sup> Steven J. Keillor, *God’s Judgments: Interpreting History and the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

and New Testaments, he explained that God continues to judge nations for their sins, and that historians who fail to recognize this in their work are ignoring the bible's own testimony to history. For instance, Keillor took two chapters to explain that the American Civil War was God's judgment against the United States for the institution of slavery.<sup>87</sup> Thus Keillor used God's judgments, as revealed in scripture and theology, to cast his own judgment on the past. In a largely favourable preface to the book, Mark Noll said that though Keillor did not fully convince, "he has made me think, and think hard."<sup>88</sup> Reflecting Noll's opinion, other evangelical historians have expressed a cautious admiration for the book. As a work of American history, it offered careful interpretations of the past, but his providentialism did not ultimately persuade. Glenn E. Sanders, in *Fides et Historia*, said that evangelical historians should not ignore Keillor's work, and that it offers a "rich discussion" of the ways that Christian historians can do history. However, the book is long on theological reflection but short on historical analysis. At the very least, *God's Judgments* offers an opportunity for believing historians to reflect on what things can be said in a profession that largely neglects Christian interpretations.<sup>89</sup>

Butterfield, Latourette, the Conference on Faith and History and Keillor are just a handful of examples of twentieth-century Christian historians who wrestled over their profession. While such professional historians were concerned about Christian historiography, popular historians were as well. A key example of the supernaturalist approach to church history is the Calvinist historian Iain Murray—whom we have seen

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<sup>87</sup> Keillor, *God's Judgments*, 119–153.

<sup>88</sup> Mark Noll, "Preface," in Keillor, *God's Judgments*, 10.

<sup>89</sup> Glenn E. Sanders, "Review of *God's Judgments*," *Fides et Historia* 39.2 (Summer/Fall 2007), 111-112. See also the essays dedicated to reviewing it in *Books & Culture* 13.4 (July/August 2007).

already in the introduction to this chapter—and the Banner of Truth Trust. Murray is now retired as editorial director of the Banner of Truth, a ministry that was first located in London, and is now in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Trust hosts annual pastors’ conferences in Britain and the United States, and publishes a magazine and books in the Puritan and Reformed tradition—many, indeed, are reprints of classic Reformation, Puritan, and Evangelical works.<sup>90</sup> As a biographer, Murray is well-known for his two-volume biography of Lloyd-Jones, which was criticized by Carl Trueman as noted above, and his biography of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), “America’s theologian,” among many others.<sup>91</sup> Andrew Atherstone described Murray’s historical output, in particular his various biographies, as “biblically faithful, pastorally applied and spiritually edifying.”<sup>92</sup> Or, as Bebbington described him, “Iain Murray...believed that history books ought to subserve the twin causes of advancing spiritual religion and promoting Reformed orthodoxy.”<sup>93</sup> Mark Noll, in a review of *Revival and Revivalism*, wrote that Murray’s “history is an explicit subdiscipline of theology.”<sup>94</sup>

As we have seen, Murray took issue with evangelical historians who adhered to objective neutrality when writing history and his historiography is reflected by contributors to the *Banner of Truth* magazine. Atherstone helpfully surveyed the book-

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<sup>90</sup> For problems relating to the selective nature of such reprints and its effect on defining movements like Puritanism see Ian Hugh Clary, “Hot Protestants: A Taxonomy of English Puritanism,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 2.1 (2010), 42–43.

<sup>91</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987).

<sup>92</sup> Andrew Atherstone, “Hagiography and History,” in *Truth at Any Cost: Papers Read at the 2012 Westminster Conference* (Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Tentmaker Publications, 2013), 43.

<sup>93</sup> Bebbington, “Evangelical Discovery,” 349.

<sup>94</sup> Mark Noll, “How We Remember Revivals: The Virtues and Vices of Tribal History,” *Christianity Today* 39.5 (April 24, 1995), 31. This is a review of Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994).

review contents of the publication over a twenty-year period highlighting the negative opinions of various reviewers on works of professional history. For example, Baptist historian Robert W. Oliver, in his review of Euan Cameron's *The European Reformation*, wrote that it was "essential reading" and "strongly recommended" due to its emphasis on the Reformation as a theological movement, but then commented, "Ultimately, of course, the secular historian misses the one factor without which the Reformation cannot be understood, the activity of the Holy Spirit. Unless the Reformation is seen as a mighty intervention by God in the affairs of Europe it will never be understood."<sup>95</sup>

A key statement of Murray's approach to history is seen in his review-essay of *Evangelicalism*, a book of papers from a conference at the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals at Wheaton College.<sup>96</sup> Though admitting the importance of the subject-matter of the book, and the weight of authors who contributed to it—including John Walsh, Harry S. Stout, Ian Rennie, and David Wells—Murray wrote, "This reviewer regrets to say that, with one major exception, we read the contributors to this work with mounting disappointment and concern."<sup>97</sup> His apprehension was expressed in various historical disagreements he had with the contributors. For instance, he chastised Noll's remarks that there was evangelical growth after the American War for Independence. Murray disagreed saying that evangelical writers of that period complained "that the War lowered spiritual interests and standards, and far from it

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<sup>95</sup> Robert W. Oliver, "Review of Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*," *Banner of Truth* 474 (March 2003), 27; cited in Atherstone, "Hagiography and History," 45. Cameron's work was recently updated as Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>96</sup> Mark Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles and Beyond, 1700-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>97</sup> Iain H. Murray, "Explaining Evangelical History," *Banner of Truth* 370 (July 1994), 8.

introducing a change for the better, when it was over (c. 1781), no general change was known until the beginning of the Second Great Awakening in 1798-1800.”<sup>98</sup>

His primary concern, however, was over the various historians’ arguments that eighteenth-century evangelical “successes” were not “affected by the truth and by the power of the Holy Spirit, but how they and their successes were *conditioned* by the cultural framework in which they lived.”<sup>99</sup> Murray was not alone in such concern. Douglas A. Sweeney wrote in *Books & Culture* in 1999 that the “Calvin College School” (that includes Marsden, Noll, etc.) “had denied the importance of Scripture—or better, the explicit use of Scripture—in fleshing out Christian perspectives.” Though he recognized their effort to “allay the fears of secular colleagues,” Sweeney said that “it seems the Calvin School has decided to minimize the importance of the only thing that makes Christian scholarship singular at all.”<sup>100</sup> In even stronger terms, and reflecting the work of Walter Wink and Stanley Hauerwas, Richard C. Goode claimed that “Marsden’s honest and well-intended attempt to accommodate the Christian faith to the standards of the academy unavoidably detracts from the genius of the Christian message and serves the powers-that-be.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Murray, “Explaining Evangelical History,” 10.

<sup>99</sup> Murray, “Explaining Evangelical History,” 8. Emphasis his.

<sup>100</sup> Sweeney, “Taking a Shot at Redemption,” 43-45.

<sup>101</sup> Richard C. Goode, “The Radical Idea of Christian Scholarship: Plea for a Scandalous Historiography,” in Warren Lewis and Hans Rollmann, eds., *Restoring the First-Century Church in the Twenty-First Century: Essays on the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement, In Honor of Don Haymes* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 228. Cf. Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998); Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom? How the Church is to Behave if Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 133-152.

Sharing these sentiments, and citing biblical precedent, Murray surmised: “[W]hat historians could do to the book of Acts if they determined to re-interpret its events without reference to God.”<sup>102</sup> If Luke the gospel-writer adhered to the scholarly detachment encouraged by *Evangelicalism*, the book of Acts would be a different book altogether. The issue for Murray was not so much about historical method as it was about theological worldview. Evangelicals should not think that moderated belief, that is, history written so as not to give offense to non-Christians, could win a sympathetic hearing from an unregenerate world. He quoted from the editors’ afterword to *Evangelicalism* where they describe their philosophy of history. They openly admit that as modern evangelical historians they “have accepted the standards of the professional guild as the framework for their writing. They have, at least for professional purposes, abandoned the providentialism that characterized most early histories of evangelicals.”<sup>103</sup>

Murray then commented:

If the price to be paid by evangelicals in order to hold positions in secular universities, or to be published by non-evangelical publishers, is to cease to write Christian history primarily in terms of *redemption*, then it is too high. Recent decades have made clear that no evangelical can hold a theological post in a British university *and* be forthright in upholding an inspired Bible. Now we are getting the same lesson with respect to the teaching of history. The pressure to dilute biblical truths in order to gain wider influence is as old as human nature... Whatever apparent temporary gains there may be, surrender to pressure from the unregenerate mind has always led to the down-grade of true evangelical faith.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> David Bebbington, *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1990), 186. William Speck, in a review of C. T. McIntire’s book on historiography, likewise said that the naturalist perspective was an “abandonment of a discernable religious role.” William A. Speck, “What Should be the Role of Christian Historians?” *Fides et Historia* 8.1 (Fall 1975), 76.

<sup>103</sup> Noll, Bebbington, and Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism*, 411.

<sup>104</sup> Murray, “Explaining Evangelical History,” 13–14. Emphasis his.

This providential approach to history is well-illustrated by Murray's biography of Edwards, written from a clearly evangelical, even Calvinist, perspective. In the introduction to the book Murray wrote, "Whether or not a biographer of Jonathan Edwards reveals his personal standpoint at the outset makes little difference, for inevitably it will soon be apparent."<sup>105</sup> He wrote of the "anti-supernatural animus" that characterized many modern biographies of Edwards, especially that by Ola E. Winslow and Perry Miller.<sup>106</sup> Murray was plain that his own biography was a "popular account of Edwards," and that a definitive study has yet to be published. Throughout the five-hundred pages Murray's own theological outlook is apparent. He not only sympathized with his subject, but with Edwards' theology. He was also open about the role of providence in the life of Edwards. Speaking of the change that a person underwent after experiencing the effects of revival, Murray said: "This change came from God himself and yet God worked through his own Word."<sup>107</sup> Such statements, though not replete, are not uncommon.

Murray's biography has been criticized for engaging in hagiography, painting an unrealistic portrait of Edwards as though the eighteenth-century pastor had no faults. As we saw in the introduction, Trueman accused Murray of hagiography in the latter's biography of Lloyd-Jones. Of the Edwards biography, Stephen J. Stein, an editor of the Yale edition of Edwards' *Works* wrote, "[Murray] continually allows his affection for his subject to color his language. In some instances he sidesteps difficult, uncomplimentary

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<sup>105</sup> Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, ix.

<sup>106</sup> Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, xxix. Cf. Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards: 1703–1758* (New York: MacMillan, 1941); Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: William Sloan & Associates, 1949).

<sup>107</sup> Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, 130.

dimensions of the story; he persists, for example, in calling Edwards's slave a 'servant.'<sup>108</sup> Allen C. Guelzo more explicitly said that "Murray's *Edwards* is not so much a biography as it is a hagiography, calling to mind not Jonathan Edwards of Northampton but Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel."<sup>109</sup> This was fine for Murray who, in his aptly-titled book *Heroes*, wrote, "True Christian biography should therefore concentrate on what is edifying and for the praise of Christ."<sup>110</sup> Yet there are problems with hagiography, as outlined in three ways by Murray's critic, Carl Trueman. First, hagiography lacks historical accuracy and tends to ignore the desultory parts of a subject's character in order to preserve reputation. Thus it is untrustworthy history writing. Second, it runs the danger of seeing the world in Manichean terms of black and white, good versus bad, and fails to understand the complexities of the human condition. As Trueman says, "Hagiography may inspire but too often it tells us less about what actually happened and more about the personal tastes of the author."<sup>111</sup> The bible does not fall into this trap, as it clearly portrays its "heroes" with all of their foibles—one only has to think of David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). Third, hagiographies offer models for behaviour that no one can live up to, and prove to discourage rather than encourage. Rather, a person who struggles with sin is actually relatable to an audience

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<sup>108</sup> Stephen J. Stein, "Review of *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*," *Church History* 59.4 (December 1990), 565. Cf. Stephen J. Stein, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 15: Notes on Scripture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>109</sup> Allen C. Guelzo, "Review of *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*," *Fides et Historia* 21.2 (June 1989), 81. The word hagiography is also used of Murray in George M. Marsden, "The Quest for the Historical Edwards: The Challenge of Biography," in David William King and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Moments, Global Horizons* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>110</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Heroes* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2009), xi.

<sup>111</sup> Carl R. Trueman, "Writing on Athanasius: A General Note on Hagiography," *Reformation21* (June 2, 2011), accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2011/06/writing-on-athanasius-a-genera.php>.

who suffers the same struggles. As Trueman said, “I understand a man divided against himself.”<sup>112</sup> Atherstone added a fourth problem to Trueman’s list, that hagiography often shapes the subject’s life to fit with the culture and lessons that the biographer wants to portray, instead of letting the figures of history speak for themselves from within their own culture.<sup>113</sup> Thus the concerns of the subject in their own day are often missed.

### **The naturalist perspective**

The second perspective, what can be called the “naturalist view,”—or more technically “methodological naturalism”<sup>114</sup>—avoids appealing to the supernatural for explanations of historical causes. Rather, it looks to social and cultural factors to determine the meaning of past events. As Bowden explained, historians of this standpoint “adhered to uniform procedures and standard conceptions of causal relationships.”<sup>115</sup> If providence is primarily a study about the work of God over the course of time, history “is a discipline that seeks to explain the character and behaviour of humans as they lived through time.”<sup>116</sup> The twentieth century saw the use of social sciences as a growing trend in the broader academic world, and, as Bebbington said, “Some of the best work on religion in the modern world was achieved by applying sociological methods.”<sup>117</sup> Such methods

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<sup>112</sup> Trueman, “Writing on Athanasius.”

<sup>113</sup> Atherstone, “Hagiography and History,” 54.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Timothy Larsen, “Evangelicals, the Academy, and the Discipline of History,” in Todd C. Ream, Jerry Pattengale, and David L. Riggs, eds., *Beyond Integration? Inter/Disciplinary Possibilities for the Future of Christian Higher Education* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2012), 110.

<sup>115</sup> Bowden, “Ends and Means,” 74.

<sup>116</sup> John Fea, *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 68.

<sup>117</sup> Bebbington, “Evangelical Discovery,” 354.

include the use of statistics, economic theories, or understudied demographics like the Primitive Methodists who had a significant impact on trade unions. Evangelical historians also began to study women's issues, race, and the rise and fall of nations.<sup>118</sup>

Christian historians of both the providential and objective perspectives believe that God sovereignly controls history. The contested issue is not about the fact of providence, but whether it is appropriate to interpret it *as historians*. The naturalist historian answers no, it is not. Providence can be distinguished in two types: general and particular. Evangelical historians of both sides believe in both types. The debate is not about general providence, as its acknowledgement does not require comment. Rather, it is about particular providence—can it be said that God did such-and-such at a specific time? Bebbington put it starkly: “Belief in particular providences seems incompatible with the conviction that there is a general providence.”<sup>119</sup> If the whole process of human history is directed by providence, why is there a need for particular providence? Added to that, Bebbington argued, is the problem of interpretation: “How can we discern what is happening?” God's ways are complex and mysterious and “[c]laims to understand God's dealings with men seem bold or even ridiculous.”<sup>120</sup> Can God be at work in opposing events? Bebbington cited the example of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. While Elizabethan England celebrated it as a sign of God's providence, the Catholic Spaniards also believed that God had directed them to invade the heretical English. Which side was right?

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<sup>118</sup> Bebbington, “Evangelical Discovery,” 355–361.

<sup>119</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 66.

<sup>120</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 66.

With the issue of whether historians should discern divine intervention is that of academic acceptance. The recourse to natural explanations for past events is, in large part, because the academy does not allow for “God-talk,” especially in the discipline of history. As Bebbington explained, “If [the historian] makes plain his religious commitment in his writing, will he not be excluding it from general notice and certainly from academic attention? The canons of ordinary historical scholarship have not permitted references to God for nearly 200 years.”<sup>121</sup> This poses a problem for the Christian historian who wants his or her work to be accepted beyond the walls of the church or seminary. Evangelical historiography has a number of exemplary advocates of the naturalist view—what has been called “the new evangelical historiography”<sup>122</sup>—who are active in, and respected by the academy. Such historians include Marsden, Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and Harry Stout in the United States,<sup>123</sup> as well as Bebbington in Britain, and the late George Rawlyk in Canada. Though they are self-professing evangelicals, they teach at major research universities, and publish with academic presses. Their historical method is well summed up in the afterword to the book *Evangelicalism* already quoted above. The contributors expressed themselves as “a cadre of professional historians” who had “accepted the standards of the professional guild as the framework of their writing. They have, at least for professional purposes, abandoned the providentialism that characterized most earlier histories.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 186.

<sup>122</sup> Leonard I. Sweet, “Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: The New Evangelical Historiography,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56.3 (Autumn 1988): 397–416.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Maxie Burch, *The Evangelical Historians: The Historiography of George Marsden, Nathan Hatch and Mark Noll* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996).

<sup>124</sup> Noll, Bebbington and Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism*, 411–412.

George Marsden is, in the words of James A. Patterson, “the pioneering dean of evangelical historiography.”<sup>125</sup> In the afterword to *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Marsden explained the task of the Christian historian. He asked whether Christianity should be viewed through the lens of “cultural development” (the naturalist view) or through the lens of scripture (the supernaturalist view). He sided with the former, though he did not see that as compromising his Christian conviction. Appealing to the Incarnation of the Son of God, where Christ’s humanity was not compromised by his divinity, “so the reality of God’s other work in history, going well beyond what we might explain as natural phenomena, is not compromised by the fact that it is culturally defined.”<sup>126</sup> Marsden argued that his work is a “study of things visible” and thus uses “the modern mode of explanation” and “natural historical causation.” This would not militate against believing that God is active in history. Rather, for Marsden, it is the theologian’s task to determine such things, not the historian’s. “The Christian historian takes an opposite, although complimentary, approach.” The historian is to concentrate on observable cultural forces and provide material that the theologian can use “to help distinguish God’s genuine work.”<sup>127</sup> The historian knows that God works in history, but “outside of biblical revelation” does not know “his precise purposes in permitting particular historical developments.”<sup>128</sup> In *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*

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<sup>125</sup> James A. Patterson, “The Study of History,” in David S. Dockery, ed., *Faith and Learning: A Handbook for Christian Higher Education* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 231.

<sup>126</sup> George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, New Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 259.

<sup>127</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 260.

<sup>128</sup> George M. Marsden, “A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History,” in George M. Marsden and Frank Roberts, eds., *A Christian View of History?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 38.

he wrote, “As scholars we are forced to deal with only those aspects of the picture for which human abilities are competent.”<sup>129</sup>

Marsden reflects a view of discerning the purposes of God that was articulated by the Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) who distinguished between *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus*. In fact, according to Luther, the hidden will of God lies beyond the scope not only of the historian, but of the theologian as well. In *Bondage of the Will* Luther discussed the hidden will of God as something that “is not to be inquired into, but to be reverently adored, as by far the most awesome secret of the Divine Majesty. He has kept it to Himself and forbidden us to know it; and it is much more worthy of reverence than an infinite number of Corycian caverns!”<sup>130</sup> Luther put it more bluntly in the earlier *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518): “That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened [Rom. 1:20].”<sup>131</sup> The German Reformer echoed God’s words to the prophet in Isaiah 55:8-9:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,”  
declares the LORD.  
As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts (NIV).

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<sup>129</sup> George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 95.

<sup>130</sup> Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, ed., J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1957), 169.

<sup>131</sup> Martin Luther, “Heidelberg Disputation,” in Timothy F. Lull, ed., *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 16.

Instead of contrasting the historian with the theologian, then, Timothy Larsen's distinction is better. He argued that to speak to the hidden things of God (to use Luther's terminology) "is to confuse the work of an academic historian with the ministry of the prophet."<sup>132</sup> The outworking of particular providence can only be known if God reveals them, as he does in scripture. Thus the prophet, or those who were divinely inspired by scripture, has the right to interpret providence. At best historians' attempts to understand God's ways in the world are provisional. As John Fea, chair of the history department at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, said, it is "difficult to know what God was doing on a more macro or universal level in human history."<sup>133</sup> Therefore Christian historians should approach the past attuned to God's "transcendent mystery" coupled with a "healthy dose of humility."<sup>134</sup>

As Iain Murray's providential history is well-illustrated by his biography of Edwards, so too is Marsden's objective history exemplified by his *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* published by Yale University Press on the tercentenary of Edwards' birth.<sup>135</sup> In the introduction to the book Marsden wrote, "I have tried to tell the story of Edwards and his family with relatively few interpretive intrusions. I hope that I have done this in a way that is, as much as possible, objective in the sense of fair-minded and true to the evidence."<sup>136</sup> This follows his earlier stated concern about Christian history in general: "If Christian motives are obtrusive, or if a hidden Christian agenda is uncovered,

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<sup>132</sup> Larsen, "Evangelicals," 110.

<sup>133</sup> Fea, *Why Study History?*, 81.

<sup>134</sup> Fea, *Why Study History?*, 81.

<sup>135</sup> George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>136</sup> Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 5.

Christian and non-Christian historians alike usually agree that it is bad history.”<sup>137</sup>

Though, as objective as Marsden’s work is, Murray wrote a favourable review of his biography of Edwards in *Banner of Truth*. He recognized it as the definitive life of Edwards that Murray hoped for in the introduction to his own biography, and he also recognized Marsden’s “fundamental sympathy” with his subject. Murray observed that Marsden “moves from sympathy to advocacy” and could even call him an “apologist for the Christian faith as well as a biographer.”<sup>138</sup>

What then are the limits of naturalist historiography for evangelicals? In 2011 Mark Noll wrote an essay examining and critiquing the philosophy of history outlined in F. H. Bradley’s essay, “The Presuppositions of Critical History” that argued against the possibility of divine intervention, including the incarnation and resurrection of Christ.<sup>139</sup> In his essay Noll offered a balance to those historians—he mentioned Bruce Kuklick and Van Harvey in particular<sup>140</sup>—who want to take historical objectivity to such a degree as to exclude supernaturalism tout court. Noll began by critiquing Bradley along three lines. First, he argued that Bradley conflated the rules of critical history with those of natural science, though the two are not identical; second, where there is commonality between critical history and natural science, Bradley failed to note the limits of the latter; third, Bradley’s critical history was not critical at the right places, especially in his failure to

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<sup>137</sup> George M. Marsden, “Common Sense and the Spiritual Vision of History,” in C. T. McIntire and Ronald A. Wells, eds., *History and Historical Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 56.

<sup>138</sup> Iain H. Murray, “Jonathan Edwards: A Life,” *Banner of Truth* 481 (October 2003), 16.

<sup>139</sup> Mark A. Noll, “Coming to terms as a Christian historian with F. H. Bradley,” *Fides et Historia* 43.2 (Summer–Fall 2011): 18–29.

<sup>140</sup> Noll cited Bruce Kuklick, “Reflections on Religion, Historical Progress, and Professional Historians,” in Donald A. Yerxa, ed., *British Abolitionism and the Question of Moral Progress in History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012) and Van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

recognize the complexity of doing history and the validity of metaphysical concerns, including his own metaphysical assumptions.<sup>141</sup> Noll then offered an alternative critical history that took into account the possibility of divine intervention in the world. It is here that Noll reflected the limits that evangelical naturalist historiography is willing to go without needing to abandon faith commitments. Interestingly, Noll appealed to the traditional Christian doctrines of creation, providence, and incarnation, “Christian superstructures” that offer a reason for beginning intellectual inquiry with the supernatural acts of God, and a general picture of reality in which God is both outside of time and inside the world.<sup>142</sup> He distinguished between God’s transcendence and immanence—when the former is in view, “supernatural categories are appropriate,” yet with the latter, “natural categories are appropriate.”<sup>143</sup> This reflects Fea’s chapter on “Christian resources for the study of the past,” where he explained the importance of humanity’s creation in the image of God, the reality of human sin, and the incarnation as an approach to the past.<sup>144</sup> It also reflected Marsden’s discussion of “the positive contributions of theological context,” such as creation, the incarnation, the Holy Spirit, and the human condition.<sup>145</sup> All of this demonstrates that methodological naturalism does not require an absolute rejection of supernatural perspectives in the study of the past. Before looking into how an objective historian can utilize the tools provided by faith, one more twentieth-century dispute over history writing is in order.

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<sup>141</sup> Noll, “Coming to terms,” 23–27.

<sup>142</sup> Noll, “Coming to terms,” 28.

<sup>143</sup> Noll, “Coming to terms,” 28.

<sup>144</sup> Fea, *Why Study History?*, 84–108.

<sup>145</sup> Marsden, *Outrageous Idea*, 83–100. See also Larsen, “Evangelicals,” 113–115.

### **Arnold Dallimore, Harry Stout, and the writing of Whitefield**

The differences over supernatural and natural historiography were well-illustrated in the debate that involved Arnold Dallimore and the interpretation of George Whitefield. In 1991 Harry S. Stout of Yale University published a study of Whitefield called *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*. Reactions to the book fit into the overall debate that we have been tracing, and illustrate it with crystal clarity. Stout is a deservedly respected scholar of colonial and revolutionary America, and *Divine Dramatist* is a noteworthy addition to Whitefield studies and has become a standard interpretation. In an essay for *Books & Culture* Stout explained his self-perception as an historian, and his historical methodology.<sup>146</sup> Before publishing the book he saw himself as existing comfortably within the two worlds of “professional” and “Christian” historian. He wrote “in disinterested terms” about American Puritan theology, leaving it up to the reader if he or she wanted to share such beliefs. He explained his method in some detail and it is worth quoting at length:

As a scholar writing intellectual history, my vantage point was that of “objectivity,” subject to the canons of “scientific evidence” shared by most professional historians. Observing the rules of objectivity does not imply that historians have no faith, nor does it imply neutrality to all subjects. It refers rather to a methodology and a tone. The methodology stresses rigorous recovery of all relevant facts, no matter where they lead. “Truth,” in proximate terms, is the goal of most professional historians. Such truth makes no claims to complete objectivity or divine inspiration. It rests on the level of secondary causes that all reasonable scholars would see and understand. Of course, there would be differences among historians, but differing opinions would always be rooted in “facts” that described the past “as it really happened.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Harry S. Stout, “Biography as Battleground,” *Books & Culture* (July/August 1996), accessed December 19, 2013, <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/1996/julaug/6b4009.html>.

<sup>147</sup> Stout, “Biography as Battleground.”

The historian was to be interested in secondary causes, not providence, and should pursue those causes “regardless of what it does to the image or reputation of his sources.” This was the approach that he brought to *Divine Dramatist*. He wanted to portray Whitefield as “a respectable—and respected—part of the academy’s legacy as well as the church’s.” He wanted to “bridge the gap” between what Christians saw in Whitefield, and what the historical profession saw. “Recognizing that Whitefield’s historical significance was not in intellectual or theological history, I couched the biography in social and cultural history.”<sup>148</sup>

The book, while recognizing Whitefield as a great orator, argued that he was more than that; he was “Anglo-America’s first modern celebrity,” and the “prototypical culture hero.”<sup>149</sup> Stout was “convinced that Whitefield lived his life almost exclusively for public performance.”<sup>150</sup> Whitefield’s success as an evangelist largely had to do with his theatrical ability to hold a crowd: “Given Whitefield’s unprecedented success in marketing religion to the eighteenth century, we have to wonder what techniques he employed. My search for an answer took me to the most unexpected and ironic source: the eighteenth-century English stage.”<sup>151</sup> Stout said that Whitefield had an early affinity for the stage, and as a result of this influence, he “became an actor-preacher” who “produced a new philosophy of preaching” that “adopted the assumptions of the actor.”<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Stout, “Biography as Battleground.”

<sup>149</sup> Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*, Library of Religious Biography (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), xiii, xiv.

<sup>150</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xv.

<sup>151</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xviii.

<sup>152</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xix.

Stout saw in Whitefield the birth of revivalism that was “predictable and highly subjective.” And instead of being a pious evangelist concerned about the eternal destiny of the lost, “Whitefield wanted to be a star, and the particular egotistical self-promotion he displayed in his career was very much in the manner of the great actor.”<sup>153</sup> Whitefield was a mass-marketer, a “self-promoter with sure business instincts,” who exploited the “emerging world of print journalism to promote his tours.”<sup>154</sup> He did not care whether he was adored or vilified, so long as he was receiving popular attention. Stout saw in Whitefield the “protomodern figure,” who exploited new media and the marketplace mentality, and he “anticipates modern evangelists, particularly those in the ‘electronic church.’”<sup>155</sup> Stout did, however, realize that his approach carried with it the possibility of anachronism and that the analogy between Whitefield and the theatre could be pressed too far. He also admitted that much of modern evangelicalism would be unrecognizable to Whitefield; it remains, however, that the evangelist was a dramatist extraordinaire.

All of this stands in marked contrast to Arnold Dallimore’s account of Whitefield’s character. In his biography, that will be studied in greater depth in chapter three, Dallimore wrote: “[Whitefield’s] popularity, however, could have brought him the widest of esteem had that been his aim. With a little compromise here and a little accommodation of his message there, with care not to stand too strongly for anything and not to offend anyone, he could have enjoyed almost unbroken good will and could have avoided entirely the life of conflict.”<sup>156</sup> Dallimore quoted Whitefield, writing to a

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<sup>153</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xxi.

<sup>154</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xxii.

<sup>155</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xxiii.

<sup>156</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:134.

correspondent, deflecting attention given to him, saying, “You have my person too much in admiration. If you look to the instrument less and to God more, it will be better.”<sup>157</sup>

Stout categorized Dallimore’s two-volume *George Whitefield* as “filiopietistic” historiography, written by a “Calvinist admirer of Whitefield.”<sup>158</sup> Filiopietistic history writing is not properly academic, but written to encourage laity with the example of the best elements of a subject’s character. Stout filled this description out in an essay he wrote on the friendship of Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin saying, “The Whitefield emerging in filiopietistic Calvinist and Methodist biographies is a timeless man, located on a continuum of faith and revival stretching from Abraham and Moses through Paul and Luther to the present.”<sup>159</sup> Stout contrasted this with his own approach: “In exploring Whitefield’s career and character I adopted other, less saintly, interpretive lenses—lenses that Franklin may well have used to understand his evangelical friend.”<sup>160</sup> In this regard Dallimore was as concerned to entreat his readers to follow the good qualities in the life of Whitefield as he was to give an account of his life. While Dallimore wrote with obvious admiration for Whitefield, it is not fair to say that he succumbed to full-blown hagiography. As Geoffrey Nuttall said in his review of the first volume, “His book was ‘written, that ye may believe’; but he does not idolize Whitefield, and he draws on such sources as the *Gloucester Journal* and *Gloucestershire Notes & Queries* as well as on

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<sup>157</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:402.

<sup>158</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 289.

<sup>159</sup> Harry S. Stout, “George Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin: Thoughts on a Peculiar Friendship,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series 103 (1991), 10.

<sup>160</sup> Stout, “George Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin,” 10.

unpublished manuscripts.”<sup>161</sup> For instance, early in the first volume, Dallimore was quick to point out Whitefield’s youthful errors. He was also honest about Whitefield’s relation to slavery. However, in a chapter entitled “Whitefield and the American Negro,” which is dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter, Dallimore demonstrated Whitefield’s egalitarianism when it came to matters of race; yet, there were instances where Whitefield was inconsistent and these would have unhappy consequences. But there is justification for putting the biography in the category of filiopietism due to Dallimore’s open admiration for Whitefield and his unhidden intent to use him as a model for Christian living.<sup>162</sup> All of this is studied in greater detail in our third chapter.

Stout said that he did not “emerge unscathed” after the publication of his book. “Apparently I broke some cardinal rules in writing religious history that had to do with not demeaning (i.e., humanizing) Christian mythic figures.”<sup>163</sup> The book underwent a number of very critical reviews. When Dallimore read *Divine Dramatist* he was moved to review it for the journal *Reformation & Revival*.<sup>164</sup> Though he started his review expressing thanks to Stout for giving Whitefield due attention and for showing his “unequalled powers as an orator,” Dallimore quickly turned critical.<sup>165</sup> In spite of some of the good that Stout pointed out about Whitefield, “the chief message of this book is

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<sup>161</sup> Geoffrey F. Nuttall, “Review of *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century* Vol. 1,” *The English Historical Review* 86.341 (October 1971), 851.

<sup>162</sup> I am thankful to Thomas Kidd for direction on placing Dallimore’s work. Kidd has now written the definitive biography of Whitefield: Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America’s Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

<sup>163</sup> Stout, “Biography as Battleground.”

<sup>164</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “Review of *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*,” *Reformation & Revival* 1.4 (Fall 1992): 125–128.

<sup>165</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 125.

false;” it is specious to call Whitefield a “dramatist.”<sup>166</sup> Stout “makes it appear that Whitefield was a superb actor and that his evangelism was accomplished solely by his dramatic power” and not by the Spirit of God.<sup>167</sup>

Not only did Dallimore have a problem with Stout’s overall thesis, but there were “omissions of important elements in Whitefield’s life.”<sup>168</sup> He highlighted a number, including Stout’s misinterpretation of Whitefield’s conversion—Dallimore called this “a painfully garbled account” that “speaks of his conversion as a humanly contrived experience.”<sup>169</sup> Dallimore also wrote that Stout “portrays Whitefield as having no interest in theology, but disregards the doctrinal content of the first ten sermons that he published . . . and of the letters that he wrote during his second passage to America.”<sup>170</sup> A similar criticism of Stout was echoed by Anglican theologian Lee Gatiss, editor of a recent two-volume collection of Whitefield’s sermons.<sup>171</sup> Gatiss, in the introduction to the first volume, said, “One modern biographer [Stout] claims that Whitefield ‘showed no interest in theology,’ but was more concerned with feelings, imagination, and experience. This is palpable nonsense, as any casual reader with an awareness of theological issues

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<sup>166</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 125. For a more in-depth critical review of Stout see Eric Carlsson, “Review of Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*,” *Trinity Journal* 14.2 (September 1993): 238–247. Carlsson said, “For whatever new illumination Stout’s biography lends for our understanding the evangelist, his insights are limited by the fact that he appears to disdain. The difference between, for instance, [Luke] Tyerman’s and Dallimore’s Whitefield and Stout’s is that they read him sympathetically, seeking to understand the man as a devout Christian believer and, though clearly imperfect, still a man whose passion was the greater glory of his God” and concludes by saying the book is a “disappointment.” Carlsson, “Review,” 246–247.

<sup>167</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 125.

<sup>168</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 126.

<sup>169</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 126.

<sup>170</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 126.

<sup>171</sup> Lee Gatiss, ed., *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

will be able to discern.”<sup>172</sup> Similarly, D. A. Carson wrote that Stout—whose approach Carson called “reductionistic”—“regularly belittles Whitefield’s interest in theology, but does not thoughtfully weigh the doctrinal content of whole sermon after whole sermon.”<sup>173</sup> In his section on Stout, Carson positively cited Dallimore’s review.<sup>174</sup>

Dallimore continued in his review to say that Stout’s account failed to understand that Whitefield was the first founder of Methodism, that John Wesley’s leadership was handed to him by Whitefield, and that “during [Whitefield’s] absence Wesley sought to turn the people against him.” Further, Dallimore said, “Dr. Stout fails to recognize that a movement then sprang up under Whitefield’s ministry, giving him in three years as large a body of followers as Wesley had.”<sup>175</sup> He concluded the section on “omissions” saying, “Without recognizing these important elements of Whitefield’s career we have his life only in a sad distortion.”<sup>176</sup>

After leveling other critiques—including Stout’s contention that Whitefield had no courage and that he was insincere—Dallimore turned to matters of “technical errors.”<sup>177</sup> He indicated that he marked his copy of Stout’s book “with the term ‘false’ written in the margin where these mistakes occur and has done so more than 300 times!”<sup>178</sup> Dallimore only offered a few examples: “Stout confuses Howell Harris...with Gabriel Harris, a

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<sup>172</sup> Lee Gatiss, “Introduction,” in Gatiss, ed., *Sermons*, 29. Gatiss cited Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 39. See also Guelzo, “Whitefield & his world,” 45, who emphasized the theological character of Whitefield as brought forth by the Dallimore biography.

<sup>173</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 485.

<sup>174</sup> Carson, *Gagging of God*, 485.

<sup>175</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 126.

<sup>176</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 127.

<sup>177</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 127.

<sup>178</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 127–128.

businessman from Gloucester.”<sup>179</sup> Stout made an error about whether William Seward sent Whitefield to an open-air meeting in a carriage. Dallimore also critiqued Stout’s choice of the term “revival”: “Whitefield never referred to the results of his work as ‘revival’ and virtually never used the word.” Dallimore chastised Stout for misrepresenting Whitefield’s inability to pronounce English words, arguing that “Whitefield’s preaching won the high praise of such masters of the English tongue as Lord Bolingbroke and the Earl of Chesterfield.” Dallimore concluded this section saying, “Pages could be filled with the technical errors that Stout has made.” He was also nonplussed over Stout’s failure to make use of Richard Owen Roberts’ bibliographical study *Whitefield in Print*, “a tome of 765 pages which lists 8,285 works on its subject.”<sup>180</sup>

Dallimore’s final remarks about Stout’s book move from the critical to the discourteous. He explained that as he read *Divine Dramatist* his mind kept reverting to 1 Corinthians 2:14, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: . . . neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. The knowledge of Whitefield which has long been degraded by Arminian writers is further dishonored by this book which portrays him as chiefly a self-promoting actor.”<sup>181</sup> To critique a published work is more than justified; but even if the critique is strong, it is not charitable to question the genuineness of a person’s Christian commitment over their interpretation

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<sup>179</sup> Compare Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:285, that follows George Whitefield, *The Works of George Whitefield* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771), 1:48, and Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 77. As per the nature of the series that *Divine Dramatist* appears in, Stout did not provide footnotes, so it is hard to know his source.

<sup>180</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 128. Cf. Richard Owen Roberts, *Whitefield In Print: A Bibliographic Record of Works By, For, and Against George Whitefield; with Annotations, Biographical and Historical Notices, and Bibliographies of Associates and Contemporaries* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts Booksellers & Publishers, 1988).

<sup>181</sup> Dallimore, “Review,” 128.

of an historical figure. One understands Dallimore's dismay, but this paragraph is regrettable.

The debate over Stout's reading of Whitefield was taken up in the pages of the *Banner of Truth* magazine, first by David White, and then more protractedly by Iain Murray; Stout was afforded the opportunity to respond.<sup>182</sup> While White was concerned to defend Whitefield and evangelicalism generally, Murray went beyond this to discuss matters of historiography. Murray argued that the primary failure of Stout and other Christian historians like him is the failure to write from the standpoint of "supernaturalism," namely the particular providence of God in history.<sup>183</sup> Stout, in his response, was favourable to the notion that God is active in history, but he did not see it as the historian's task to give "ultimate explanations," thus any discussions of providence go too far.<sup>184</sup> The final word in the debate between Stout and *Banner of Truth* was given to Murray, who, while arguing against Stout's interpretation of Whitefield as dramatist, made this historiographical statement:

The main point of your [Stout's] reply obviously concerns how evangelicals should write history, given the limitations of the contemporary academic world. You argue that by giving emphasis to the secondary, the social and the cultural, evangelical authors can prepare the way for an appreciation at deeper level. We understand your point and think that sympathy and understanding is due to Christians who are seeking to work effectively in academic institutions. Nor is it to be denied that more attention to the *human* side of biography is often needed in Christian biography. But surely, to write the lives of eminent Christians with minimum notice of the

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<sup>182</sup> David White, "Review of *The Divine Dramatist*," *Banner of Truth* 366 (March 1994): 29; Iain Murray, "Explaining Evangelical History," *Banner of Truth* 370 (July 1994): 8–13; Harry Stout, "Reviewers Reviewed," *Banner of Truth* 378 (March 1995): 7–10.

<sup>183</sup> Murray, "Explaining Evangelical History," 13.

<sup>184</sup> Stout, "Reviewers Reviewed," 8. For a helpful corresponding view see Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 172.

things which meant *most* to them, and without which their lives cannot be understood, is to mislead?<sup>185</sup>

### ***Tertium quid: An alternative proposal***

Are the “providentialist” and “objective” views of Christian history the only two options? Can there be a mediating position that allows Christian historians to remain faithful both to their vocational and spiritual callings? Or can the two be blended into a broader, audience-sensitive option that utilizes the best elements of both? To answer such questions we must remember what Martin I. Klauber observed: “there is no single ‘Christian’ approach to studying history.”<sup>186</sup> While we have been discussing the two options in this thesis, we cannot be reductionistic about them. Throughout our survey we have seen that so-called “naturalist historians” do recognize the providence of God over human affairs, and that they are willing, at times, to use the tools of evangelical faith in their scholarship. Mark Noll’s response to Bruce Kuklick and F. H. Bradley is an example. Advocates of the second model advocate for writing providential history under certain conditions. These involve, primarily, the issue of audience.

A blended perspective of utilizing both ends of the spectrum at particular times, was well summarized by historian Andrew Atherstone, who presented a paper titled “Hagiography and History” to the 2012 Westminster Conference in London. In it he argued for the legitimacy of both historiographical perspectives. According to

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<sup>185</sup> Iain H. Murray, “Editorial Response to Harry S. Stout,” *Banner of Truth* 378 (March 1995), 11. Emphasis his.

<sup>186</sup> Martin I. Klauber, “Conclusion: Historical Method in the Christian Tradition,” in Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds., *Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 624.

Atherstone, “Evangelicals need to embrace both styles of history writing, the ‘confessional’ and the ‘professional.’”<sup>187</sup> Both are justifiable evangelical pursuits, and each has a different function for different audiences; he advised that historians must not drive a wedge between the two as if they were polar opposites.<sup>188</sup> Providential historians who write for the church can still publish work that is historically accurate and serves as a contribution to a particular area of study; they can put forth a body of work that withstands the scrutiny of the historian’s guild. Likewise, professional historians can write well for a popular audience, bringing their historical learning to bear, and written in a way that will encourage Christians. As Atherstone said, the church needs providential history that is intentionally written to encourage the church. Naturalist history is also necessary to speak to a wider audience. Murray called Marsden an apologist for the faith in his biography of Edwards. Likewise, Atherstone wrote, “Evangelicals serving in an academic context have an apologetic responsibility. Their faith may be less explicit in their historical method but is still likely to shape their work in a number of ways.” These include how they choose their topic, what kind of research questions they will address, and the allowance of Christian themes to come to the fore.<sup>189</sup> This fits well within the larger program of intellectual history as set out by the Cambridge political historian Quentin Skinner, and taken up by a number of professional Christian historians in the book *Seeing Things Their Way*.<sup>190</sup> Evangelical historians can emphasise the faith

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<sup>187</sup> Atherstone, “Hagiography and History,” 58.

<sup>188</sup> Atherstone, “Hagiography and History,” 43.

<sup>189</sup> Atherstone, “Hagiography and History,” 58–59.

<sup>190</sup> Alister Chapman, John Coffey and Brad S. Gregory, eds., *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009). Cf. Quentin Skinner, “Introduction: Seeing Things Their Way,” in *Visions of Politics: Regarding Method, Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-7.

commitments of their subject, and do so in such a way as to not compromise academic standards.

Bebbington made a similar point when he reminded us that historians are not writing for themselves “but for an audience.”<sup>191</sup> The historian’s argument should be established so as to convince the audience of its validity. “If a Christian historian is writing for the religious community, there is no problem about the acceptability of providential history.”<sup>192</sup> Bebbington spoke of the “rhetorical nature of historiography,” that depending on whom the intended reader of a book is, providential writing can be more explicit.<sup>193</sup> There is no gulf between supernatural and natural historiography, for even if a work of history has no explicit Christian allusions, the Christian worldview of the writer shapes its composition so that the published work will be consistent with their presuppositions: “the Christian content will be implicit rather than explicit.”<sup>194</sup> As Atherstone argued, and Murray alluded to, even professional history can have an apologetic task, namely to reveal “as credible the belief that God stands behind and acts within historical process.”<sup>195</sup>

A good example of how to appropriate these two perspectives on a Christian philosophy of historiography comes from David Larsen of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He argued in his book on the history of preachers that to get “an effective blend” of history—he referred specifically to Whitefield—one needs to read the “hagiographers”

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<sup>191</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 186.

<sup>192</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 186–187.

<sup>193</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 187.

<sup>194</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 187.

<sup>195</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 188.

like Dallimore and the “realists” like Stout.<sup>196</sup> While his term “hagiography” is not totally appropriate to Dallimore, there is much to be said about Larsen’s approach, as the two perspectives are complimentary. Others have made similar statements about biographies of Jonathan Edwards; common advice for those interested in America’s theologian is to read the biographies by Murray, which generally fits the hagiographic/filipietistic label, and Marsden, who is more “realistic.”

The two approaches both also have precedent set for them in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. We have seen Murray use Luke the gospel writer as an example of a providentialist historian, often as a means of demonstrating the professional historian’s compromise with the world—Murray regularly asked what professional historians would do with the book of Acts.<sup>197</sup> However, a counter-example could be given to illustrate the biblical legitimacy of the naturalist perspective. Though chastised for failing to mention the specific providence of God in particular historical events, the professional Christian historian can look to the author of the book of Esther from the Hebrew bible as a guide. As biblical scholar Karen H. Jobes explained, Esther “contains neither the divine name *Yahweh* nor *’elohim*, the Hebrew noun meaning *God*.”<sup>198</sup> This posed problems for both Jewish and Christian interpreters who struggled over the book’s canonicity. No

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<sup>196</sup> David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of the Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998), 371–372. He did not mention Dallimore and Stout by name.

<sup>197</sup> See for instance his critique of David Ceri Jones in *Banner of Truth* 555 (December 2009), Cf. David Ceri Jones, “‘A Glorious Morn?’ Methodism and the Rise of Evangelicalism in Wales, 1735–62,” in Mark Smith, ed., *British Evangelical Identities Past and Present*, Studies in Evangelical Thought and History (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008), 97–113.

<sup>198</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *Esther* The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 19. Though not a historical book per se, the *Song of Songs* is also relevant as it does not contain any direct mention of the names of God. Cf. George M. Schwab, “Song of Songs 1,” in Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns, eds., *The Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 738.

commentary on Esther was produced in the Christian church's first seven centuries. Yet, as David G. Firth indicated in the subtitle of his commentary on Esther, God is "present but unseen."<sup>199</sup> While it does not make explicit mention of God, "the scarcity of overt theological statements in the book suggests that the author wanted his readership to deduce his message, at least in part, through his literary presentation."<sup>200</sup> Forrest S. Weiland argued that the author likely omitted "God's visible activity" though "strongly implied His presence."<sup>201</sup> The allusions to divine providence are evident "through the author's pervasive use of irony, the placement of scenes, the many coincidences, and the reversal of events."<sup>202</sup> Also, Esther 4:3, 14; 9:1, 22 are seen by a number of scholars as indirect references to God's activity. However, Weiland may be overstating his case when he said, "In this presentation God Himself emerges as the centerpiece of the story."<sup>203</sup>

If the author of Esther can write a history with only a veiled reference to YHWH, why should naturalist Christian historians be castigated for not mentioning the direct intervention of God in their historical narratives? Not only should Esther be seen as a biblical justification for professional historians writing for the academy, but it can also provide helpful tools for historians who do wish to subtly insert their theological convictions in their work. Just as the author to Esther directs his or her story along certain ironic lines leaving readers with the distinct implication that YHWH was working behind

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<sup>199</sup> David G. Firth, *The Message of Esther*, The Bible Speaks Today (Nottingham, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2010), title page.

<sup>200</sup> Forrest S. Weiland, "Literary Clues to God's Providence in the Book of Esther," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (January–March 2003), 34.

<sup>201</sup> Weiland, "Literary Clues," 38.

<sup>202</sup> Weiland, "Literary Clues," 43.

<sup>203</sup> Weiland, "Literary Clues," 42.

the scenes, so too can Christian historians write in such a way as to imply the presence of divine intervention, along those lines articulated by Atherstone.

### **Conclusion**

To set the stage for an analysis of Arnold Dallimore as an historian, this chapter has surveyed the two major responses that Christian historians have given to the question, “Is there a Christian way to do history?” The supernaturalist response argues positively for the use of providence in historical method, whereas the naturalist uses it implicitly as part of their overall social and cultural approach. We have also shown how Dallimore fits into this debate; the controversy he engaged with Harry Stout over how to interpret George Whitefield serves as an illustration of the larger discussion. It also helps set the stage for the study of Dallimore’s historiography in the rest of this thesis. The larger questions of whether Dallimore engaged in some of the fallacies of providential history, such as hagiography, or whether it is right to call him an historian, will be examined in subsequent chapters, and be drawn together in the conclusion.

Finally, this chapter has also pushed the discussion forward, advocating for a median between Bowden’s two extremes on the historiographical spectrum. This perspective recognizes the need for historians to be aware of their audience and write their history accordingly. It is wholly appropriate for an historian to write providential history, being careful not to fall into some of the pitfalls of this view, like hagiography or anachronism, if it is intended for the church. It is also justifiable for an evangelical historian to write professional history for the academy, following the standards of secular

scholarship, so long as they ultimately do not concede their own belief in the process.

This third option has been expressed by others, like Atherstone and Bebbington, but this chapter adds to the discussion by looking to the Old Testament book of Esther as a model for professional historians. Just as the author of this biblical book did not appeal to or make mention of God, so too can the evangelical historian write objective history without compromising their beliefs.

CHAPTER 3  
ARNOLD DALLIMORE:  
HIS LIFE AND THE WRITING OF WHITEFIELD

Now that the survey of different evangelical historiographical approaches has been given in the previous chapter, with Dallimore's role in the debate located, it is time to turn to a consideration of Dallimore himself. This chapter is a biography of a biographer, written not only to tell his life story, but to identify him as a Canadian Baptist and as a Reformed historian. It tells of his upbringing during the interwar years in Ontario, his education at Toronto Baptist Seminary, his various pastoral charges, his friendship with British evangelicals, and how he came to write the life of Whitefield. The chapter concludes with an explanation of Dallimore's continuing legacy, and considers some lessons that pastors and historians can learn from the story of his life. All of this will then set the stage for the subsequent chapters by explaining his historical interests that were ultimately expressed in his various biographies.

**“Fix my attention on things eternal”: Adolescence and conversion**

Arthur and Mabel

Amid the throng who swarmed to hear Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) in Victorian London was a young girl named Mabel Buckingham. Though her family's membership was Church of England, Spurgeon's dynamic preaching drew a varied crowd

to his Baptist church, and there she would sit holding her father William's hand.<sup>204</sup> Later in life, according to her son, Mabel had only vague memories of the great preacher, "[A]ll that she remembered of the experience was the tremendous crowd and Spurgeon's extraordinary voice."<sup>205</sup> Little did she know that her presence at the "Met Tab" would play a part in the twentieth-century revival of the theology that Spurgeon held dear.

The shadow of Spurgeon was also cast over Arthur Dallimore. He grew up with an alcoholic father, also William, who died at 45.<sup>206</sup> Around the age of 16, at the instigation of his recently converted sister, Arthur attended Arthur Street Baptist Church in Walworth, London, near the Monument to the Great Fire. The man who filled the pulpit there was a student of Spurgeon's Pastor's College and a number of his fellow students also attended. After an evening service four of these students gathered around Arthur and led him to Christ. The next morning, on his way to work at Imperial Tobacco, the four met him on the sidewalk to pray with him and encourage the new convert saying, "Be bold for the Lord, Dally!"<sup>207</sup> Bold for the Lord is an apt description of "Dally," who later lent his booming voice to street preaching, and saw the conversion of many, including his brother Albert, later a McMaster University graduate and Baptist minister in Canada.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> William Buckingham worked in construction, focusing on rebuilding "gentlemen's mansions" in his hometown of London, and was known as "handsome Buck." Though an Anglican, he "frequently attended the ministry of C. H. Spurgeon." Arnold Dallimore, "My Mother: Mabel Buckingham Dallimore," (Twelve-page typescript, n.d.) [p. 2-3].

<sup>205</sup> Arnold Dallimore, "Answers to Questions Presented by Dr. Michael Haykin," (Thirty-page typescript, c. 1994) [p. 2].

<sup>206</sup> William Dallimore was employed by Waterlow's in London, who printed the English pound note, but impoverished his family through alcoholism. While the Dallimores were Anglican, they did not regularly attend church. They lived in the Peckham Rye district of London, known for being of the lower class; it suffered heavy bombing in the Blitz. Dallimore, "My Mother," [p. 4].

<sup>207</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 1].

<sup>208</sup> Arnold inherited two characteristics from his father: He described Arthur as one who told stories with "native dramatism," something Arnold developed in his preaching style; and when street preaching in

Mabel, who came from an affluent British family, immigrated to Canada in 1908 to marry Arthur; she was thirty-four at the time.<sup>209</sup> She left her fine surroundings in England to live in the farming community of Tillsonburg, Ontario, where Arthur, following his brother William, had emigrated the year before. She had previously converted to Christ around 1900 at Arthur Street Baptist where the couple had met. Her move to Canada was against the wishes of her family who had eyes on another suitor for her, an underwriter at Lloyd's of London. She refused this man and a potential life of comfort because he was "not a born-again Christian."<sup>210</sup> A life in Canada with Arthur proved difficult as he worked for little on a farm and lived in a cold cottage; their first child, Howard Wilberforce, died when he was fourteen days old. Arnold Dallimore's widow, May Dallimore, said that her husband rarely spoke well of his father, who likely resented Mabel's well-to-do upbringing. He was remembered as harsh and hard to please and "Arn" called him a "dictatorial and even dominating authority."<sup>211</sup> In spite of the struggles Mabel found the faithfulness to Christ she was looking for in Arthur as he preached in small churches, taught Sunday school, and did mission work at the local jail. Thus, their son grew up in a Christian home that understood hardship and sacrifice.

### Dallimore's early life

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London, "Dad possessed a strong voice of unusual carrying power and it was reported that he could be heard for a full block." Likewise, Arnold was a powerful preacher. Dallimore, "My Mother," [p. 5].

<sup>209</sup> "Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 2]. Though Dallimore, "My Mother," [p. 7] said it was 1907.

<sup>210</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 3].

<sup>211</sup> Ian Hugh Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, (Ten page manuscript, July 13, 2011) [p. 12]. For background to this interview see Ian Hugh Clary, "Visiting Mrs. May Dallimore," *Grace Magazine* (February 2012): 6.

Arnold Dallimore was born on September 6, 1911, the same year that Wilfrid Laurier's (1841-1919) long reign as Canada's prime minister came to an end; a watershed in Canadian history. With Canada's later entrance into the First World War, the economic hardships of the Depression, and the struggle over national identity, the defeat of Laurier to Robert Borden (1854-1937) marked the beginning of a difficult time for Canadians.<sup>212</sup> Poverty descended on Canada like an ice age, and many were left destitute. This had great effect on the Dallimores who struggled to make ends meet for their growing family.

His early years were trying. He attended primary and secondary school in Chelsea Green—a newly developed suburb of London, Ontario—where feelings of inferiority over his family's financial condition kept him from making friends. His Sunday school offered little respite as he “never learned anything from the teacher.” When he and his older sister Ruth were of age, they left the local Sunday school to attend a Plymouth Brethren School where he first heard that “Jesus Christ had died for me.” At a children's meeting in the Gospel Hall, Dallimore said, “God drew me to Himself.”<sup>213</sup> Though he claims to have first heard the gospel among the Brethren, he must mean publicly; surely his gospel-centered parents had explained to him his need of a Saviour. His conversion experience was internalized and he never told anyone what happened, thus he was not immediately baptized. It was not until his sister Maudie, three years his junior, died possibly of diphtheria at the age of 6 that he began to “fix [his] attention on things eternal.”<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Cf. J. M. S. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 301-326.

<sup>213</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 3].

<sup>214</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 3]. There is a discrepancy between his earlier and later accounts of the exact timing of his conversion and whether he went public with it initially.

While times were tumultuous in Canadian public life, the church also suffered. This was the age of the fundamentalist/modernist controversy that swept through the United States, and Canada was not immune to the struggle.<sup>215</sup> In Ontario battles between the two groups became heated. The fundamentalist side was led by T. T. Shields, pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church in Toronto.<sup>216</sup> Arnold Dallimore was 17 when a divide amongst Ontario Baptists took place over the modernist teachings of L. H. Marshall (1882-1953), a professor at McMaster University in Toronto, the center of training for Baptist ministers and owned by the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.<sup>217</sup> Marshall denied the inerrancy of Scripture, held to the theory of evolution, and believed that Christ's atonement was not a vicarious sacrifice but a moral example. Shields and a number of churches pulled out of the Convention to form the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec; this also saw the formation in 1927 of The Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, of which Shields was president.<sup>218</sup>

Arthur and Mabel worshiped at Adelaide Street Baptist Church in London during Shields' pastorate (1904-1910), and they supported him in the later denominational

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<sup>215</sup> Cf. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 363-389.

<sup>216</sup> Leslie K. Tarr, *Shields of Canada: T. T. Shields, 1873-1955* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967); John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 23-34

<sup>217</sup> Harry A. Renfree, *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada* (Mississauga, ON: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988), 216-224; George A. Rawlyk, "Christian Education and McMaster University" in D. G. Hart ed., *Reckoning with the Past: Historical Essays on American Evangelicalism from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 322-353.

<sup>218</sup> *By His Grace To His Glory: Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, 1927-1987* (Toronto: Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, 1987).

split.<sup>219</sup> By the time the young Dallimore attended, Shields had gone to Jarvis Street in Toronto and the “evangelistic fervour of Adelaide St. had largely vanished.” Things had changed to such a degree after Shields left that the only advice Dallimore remembered from his Sunday school teacher, a McMaster graduate, was to “Sow your wild oats! Everybody else does!” It was at this time, when he was around thirteen years old, that the pastor “rounded up some six or eight young people and baptized them. I was among this handful, but the ordinance, I am sure, meant nothing to any of us.”<sup>220</sup>

### The call to ministry

The split rippled into local churches across the province and Adelaide Street underwent division when the leadership decided to stay in the Convention.<sup>221</sup> In a business meeting Arthur had seconded the motion to secede, which was ultimately defeated. As a result, fifty-nine members left and planted a new church affiliated with Shields. Within the year this church plant called James McGinlay, a Scotsman who was converted under Shields’ ministry, as pastor. They met in a theatre in downtown London for evening services, the building seated 1500 people and “was often filled to overflowing.” When a church building was completed, named Central Baptist Church, it seated 800 and “was filled

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<sup>219</sup> Mark Parent argued that Shields’ theology moved in a more conservative direction while at Adelaide Street. Cf. Mark Parent, “The Irony of Fundamentalism: T. T. Shields and the Person of Christ,” *Fides et Historia* 26.3 (Fall 1994), 48.

<sup>220</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 4].

<sup>221</sup> An example is Hughson Street Baptist in Hamilton, Ontario. See Michael A. G. Haykin and Ian Hugh Clary, “*Rivers of Living Water*”: *Celebrating 125 Years of Hughson Street Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ontario, 1887-2012* (Hamilton, ON: Hugh Street Baptist Church, 2012), 31-39.

Sunday by Sunday.”<sup>222</sup> McGinlay would eventually go on to pastor the Baptist Temple in Brooklyn, New York, until his death in 1958.

With the exciting work of McGinlay and the growth of the church came “a miracle” in the heart of the church’s youth, including Dallimore. A new devotion to Christ and the resultant activism of evangelism marked the lives of the young people. Dallimore began reading the scriptures in earnest, memorizing and meditating on large passages. It was at this time that he began to discern a call to ministry. He explained it thusly,

God worked a miracle in my heart and in the hearts of my cousins Syd and Steve Dallimore, my sister Ruth and several other young people. There came a new and deep devotion to Christ and three of us, young men, went into the London market each Saturday evening and attempted to preach the gospel. I had possessed a New Testament for some years but had never opened it, but now it became precious to me and I began to memorize verses and whole chapters. I soon came to the place where I was sure God was calling me to enter the ministry and with an inner delight I submitted to that call.<sup>223</sup>

To help support his family financially, Dallimore had worked for John A. Nash, Jeweler in London and thought he would spend his life in this profession. With his change in spiritual fervor, he left the store to work in a factory for two years to save money to put him through seminary. “Being assured that God had called me to preach,” he wrote, “it was but natural that I should apply to attend Toronto Baptist Seminary.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 5]. For a history of Central Baptist Church see Robert Robinson, W. D. E. Matthews and Leon Stevens, *A Jubilee of Blessings: A History of Central Baptist Church, London, Ontario, 1928-1978* (London, ON: Central Baptist Church, 1978).

<sup>223</sup> Cited in Michael A. G. Haykin, “Dr. Arnold Dallimore” in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2002), 2:75.

<sup>224</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 13].

### **“Joy and sorrow”: Toronto Baptist Seminary**

In September 1931, pursuing his call to preach, Dallimore moved from London to the city of Toronto to study at Toronto Baptist Seminary (TBS). The school was only four years old and served the fledgling Union of roughly sixty-five churches. Dallimore lived with a number of other students in the rooming-house district of Toronto, a place marked by the poverty of the Depression—Dallimore slept in a window-sill.<sup>225</sup> To help their financial situation the students ate for free at the seminary on week-days, their food largely paid for by Shields and a deacon of Jarvis Street. Sometimes Dallimore would go to Eaton’s department store downtown for “soup”—an appetizing blend of hot water and ketchup. The morale of the student body was low in the early days: “Life was hard and we had no assurance of anything better for the future.”<sup>226</sup> The denomination was small and struggling, prospects of finding work were slight. Most pastors began their churches from scratch with small congregations and no building. This time of struggle strengthened Dallimore in his call to be a minister of the gospel. In spite of the financial strains, he excelled in his education earning grades of at least one hundred in four classes in his first year. “When T. T. learned that I had obtained 106 in Theology and 107 in Life of Christ he was amazed, since many students had but 25 or 30, or less.”<sup>227</sup>

The three towering figures among the TBS faculty were W. Gordon Brown (1904-1979), W. S. Whitcombe (1905-1990), and Shields who stood over them all. Dallimore struggled under what he thought was the overly stern influence of Shields. A

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<sup>225</sup> For conditions in Canada during the Depression see Michael Horn, *The Great Depression of the 1930s in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1983).

<sup>226</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 7].

<sup>227</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 13]. Arnold’s grade-sheet, kept in the TBS archive, also records a mark of 100 in church history.

representative incident that remained firmly fixed in his mind involved student John Dempster, whom Shields publicly disciplined for being late to class saying “with bitterness, ‘You’re a lazy idler, Dempster! I could lash you to within an inch of your life with a verbal cat-and-nine-tails!’”<sup>228</sup> This was recorded in *The Gospel Witness*, the magazine of Jarvis Street, simply as “Mr. Dempster, I’m ashamed of you.”<sup>229</sup> The disjunction that Dallimore saw between witnessed events and the recording of them in the *Witness* led him to question the integrity of the magazine: “Nothing of his [Shields’] terrible temper was ever admitted in his paper and this tendency caused several of us, with the passing of some years, to recognize we could not accept everything in the *Gospel Witness* as truth.”<sup>230</sup> Dallimore gave another example: Between 1913 and 1919 Shields would preach during the summers at the famed Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England, where his friend A. C. Dixon (1854-1925) was pastor. According to Dallimore, Shields had openly expected to be called to this historic church when the pastorate was made available after Dixon’s resignation in 1919. He was turned down for the Strict Baptist Harry Tydeman Chilvers, whom Dallimore says was more “Spurgeonic” in his theology, and who remained as pastor for fifteen years. According to Dallimore, “T. T. never admitted that he was beaten in this attempt to acquire the largest Baptist pulpit on earth but on several occasions he claimed it was offered to him, but in addressing his Tuesday class he frequently poured out his unbounded wrath upon Chilvers.”<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 7-8].

<sup>229</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 8].

<sup>230</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 8].

<sup>231</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 8].

Dallimore's opinion of Shields was not entirely negative: "He gave us much that was worthwhile."<sup>232</sup> Shields taught courses in pastoral theology and homiletics at the seminary that were profitable for the ministers-in-training. Shields' influence is discernable in Dallimore's preaching style. In listening to recorded sermons it is evident that he is a respecter of the English language, a trait learned from his mother, but also from Shields. Dallimore said, "I had been a student for merely two months when he [Shields] had the whole seminary write an essay on 'Why I Should Not Use The Terms "That Far" and "This Big" Etc.'" Shields was demanding in the way one communicated and sought precision in style and language. For example, the word "absolute" should not be used in sentences unless one is referring to the "Absolute One." Shields was "a master of correct speech in the pulpit and in his classes." As a preacher, Dallimore said that Shields was "a joy to listen to for those who knew the English tongue."<sup>233</sup> In 1986 Dallimore published a short article on Shields in *Reformation Today* magazine that is largely adulatory, drawing attention to Shields as a powerful preacher, a dignified pastor, and though he "could be severely domineering and could prove bitter in his opposition...he could also be magnificently winsome and charming, and all manner of needy persons who came to his attention received his unbounded kindness."<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 9].

<sup>233</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 10].

<sup>234</sup> Arnold Dallimore, "Dr. T. T. Shields," *Reformation Today* 85 (May-June 1985), 10. This article was reprinted as Arnold Dallimore, "Dr. T. T. Shields," *The Gospel Witness* 64.17 (December 19, 1985): 11-13.

W. Gordon Brown, the dean of the seminary, was a student at McMaster in the early days of the modernist controversy.<sup>235</sup> A mechanism in the fundamentalist revolt, Brown was one of the students who made public the liberalism of L. H. Marshall. When TBS formed, Brown joined Shields as his lieutenant and was a large reason for the success of the school. An expert in the biblical languages, Dean Brown “was a thorough scholar and could use his Greek N. T. or his Hebrew O. T. for his devotional reading.”<sup>236</sup> D. A. Carson, a later student of Brown’s, dedicated his hermeneutics book *Exegetical Fallacies* to him.<sup>237</sup> Brown also taught the course on the life of Christ that Dallimore excelled in. Sadly, in the late 1940s there was a breakdown in the relationship between Shields and Brown, culminating in a split and the forming of Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto in 1948, with Brown as its first president.<sup>238</sup> This also led eventually to another denominational division and the formation of what became the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada in 1953.<sup>239</sup> Dallimore sided with Brown in the split and was a key figure in the formation of the new denomination. Central would eventually merge with London Baptist Bible College, a fundamentalist school, to form Heritage College

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<sup>235</sup> Cf. Leslie K. Tarr, “W. Gordon Brown,” in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2001), 1: 33-38.

<sup>236</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 10].

<sup>237</sup> D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996).

<sup>238</sup> For a history see Gary W. McHale ed., *The History of Central Baptist Seminary* (Gormley, ON: Central Baptist Seminary, 1993). For a sympathetic, yet balanced review of the Shields/Brown split, see Gerald L. Priest, “T. T. Shields the Fundamentalist: Man of Controversy” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 10 (2005): 96-99.

<sup>239</sup> There have been three histories of the Fellowship since its founding: Leslie K. Tarr, *This Dominion His Dominion* (Willowdale, ON: Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, 1967); Jack H. Watt, *The Fellowship Story: Our First 25 Years* (n.p.: A Fellowship Baptist Publication, 1978); Michael A. G. Haykin and Robert B. Lockey, eds., *A Glorious Fellowship of Churches: Celebrating the History of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, 1953-2003* (Guelph, ON: The Fellowship of Evangelical Churches in Canada, 2003).

and Seminary in Cambridge, Ontario, in 1993. Heritage continues to service Fellowship churches.<sup>240</sup>

Along with Brown, theology professor W. S. Whitcombe was another influence on Dallimore.<sup>241</sup> He recounted taking a fourth year theology class with Whitcombe and student, John R. Armstrong (1969-1974).<sup>242</sup> Whitcombe followed the mentoring methods used at Oxford University and “would take a turn enlarging upon a chapter in some book of theology and then would assign the same chore to John and then to myself for further days.” The result was that “I learned more in one year under this procedure than in all the rest of my time at T. B. S.”<sup>243</sup> It was Whitcombe who introduced French to the seminary curriculum; Dallimore picked up the language quickly and later used it for mission work in Quebec. Whitcombe was later dismissed by Shields and left TBS for Central Baptist Seminary to work alongside Brown.

Two lesser faculty members, in Dallimore’s opinion, were Olive Clark, whom Shields “made a lot of,” and W. W. Fliescher, the church historian, whose knowledge of the broad sweeps of history were “spotty” but the figures he did know “he could bring to life in the classroom.”<sup>244</sup> It was Fliescher, however, who gave Dallimore his love of

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<sup>240</sup> William H. Brackney, *Historical Dictionary of the Baptists* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), s.v. “Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada (FEBC),” 214.

<sup>241</sup> Leila Whitcombe, “Dr. W. S. Whitcombe” in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2002), 1:369-372.

<sup>242</sup> For Armstrong see Michael A. G. Haykin and Ian Hugh Clary, “*O Lord, Thy Word is Settled in Heaven*”: *A Celebration of the History of Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, 1920-2013* (Toronto, ON: Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, 2013), 40-43.

<sup>243</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 11].

<sup>244</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 11].

church history. “Fliescher added a warm spiritual note in Seminary life,” he said, “and under his influence I gained a richer love for the great men of ages past.”<sup>245</sup>

### Mourning the death of Mabel

Dallimore graduated from TBS in 1935. Reflecting on his student days over fifty years later he said, “I look back on Seminary life with both joy and sorrow.”<sup>246</sup> That Dallimore was well-taught and made life-long friends accounts for his joy. The sorrows were evident from the struggles of financial hardship, and the personality conflict with Shields. His greatest sorrow at this time, however, was the death of his mother. There is no doubt that Mabel played a big part in her son’s life, and her death was a bitter pill—after she died, a strip of white appeared in Dallimore’s dark hair that the family claim was the result of his deep felt grief. She was a formative spiritual influence: “In the light of her goodness I never had any doubts about the reality of Christianity.”<sup>247</sup> In an undated poem entitled “On a Picture of My Mother When She Was Young” Dallimore compared her youthful countenance with the memory he had of her growing up.<sup>248</sup>

Your face is young in the picture,  
Without a wrinkle and fair;  
But I saw it lined and weary,  
From years of gnawing care.

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<sup>245</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 11-12].

<sup>246</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 22].

<sup>247</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 12].

<sup>248</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “On A Picture of My Mother When She Was Young,” (One-page typescript, n.d.).

He noted her youth, her bright eyes and full hair, “but I saw you aged and feeble” because of long years of strife. Though she suffered, Dallimore remembered her unflinching smile that “time had failed to erase.” He concluded saying,

’Tis well that your days are over,  
That you’ve left this realm of strife,  
For the land where you’ll find the answer,  
To the mystery of life.

According to May Dallimore, it was her husband’s opinion that his mother died of “a broken heart.” She suffered hardship after leaving her family and middle-class lifestyle in England for the life of a farmer’s wife in rural Ontario with a difficult husband and the death of a young child. Yet, as evident from this poem, her faith in Christ was unshakable. This same faithfulness amidst hardship was a lasting model for Dallimore’s life and ministry.

### **An “Ordinary” Pastor**

#### La Belle Province

If Arnold Dallimore could look back on his time in seminary with joy and sorrow, his years of ministry would be similarly marked. Ministry experience first came while a student. As part of the curriculum at Toronto Baptist Seminary he and fellow students were required to accompany faculty or other pastors on preaching tours in Canada and the United States. Thus Dallimore’s earliest forays into ministry were on such trips, his first

to Saskatchewan with a “Mr. Bauer,” famous in Canada for making ice hockey skates.<sup>249</sup> Bauer took four students along with him and paid their expenses. However, all could not have been that well as Dallimore said that often “we were in the woods and caught our own food.”<sup>250</sup> In the summer of 1933 he went to Quebec, a province notable not only for its wonderfully distinct French culture and language, but also for its Roman Catholic opposition to Protestantism. This was just before the so-called Quiet Revolution in Quebec when traditionalist Roman Catholicism still kept a conservative hold on French society.<sup>251</sup> During the first half of the twentieth century, life would have been especially difficult for Protestant missionaries like the Anglo-Canadian students sent from TBS. Dallimore worked with the “elderly French pastor, Rev. St. James;” likely Arthur St. James, ordained in 1886, and pastor in Montreal.<sup>252</sup> The Seminary would support traveling students with seven dollars a week for every two students, “which was alright when it came, but for weeks nothing arrived and it was then that we worked on the French farm.” While in Quebec he “picked up a lot of Habitant French and upon returning to the Sem I sat with the men at the French table at noon.”<sup>253</sup> His remarks about the following year where he worked in Otterville, Ontario, under the leadership of Leander Roblin, indicate the difference in monetary value his work in Quebec received:

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<sup>249</sup> Dallimore does not specify which Bauer, but likely means Eddie Bauer. See Robert Spector, *The Legend of Eddie Bauer* (Old Lyme, CT: Greenwich Publishing Group, 1994).

<sup>250</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 22].

<sup>251</sup> Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007).

<sup>252</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 22]. C. E. MacLeod ed., *Baptist Year Book 1927 For Ontario and Quebec and Western Canada* (Toronto: Standard Publishing Co., 1927), 389. St. James would have left the Convention with another of other men like Morley Hall and Alex Thomson at the time of the split; the Convention lost 22 ministers that year. Cf. C. E. MacLeod ed., *Baptist Year Book 1927 For Ontario and Quebec and Western Canada* (Toronto: Standard Publishing Co., 1929), 369.

<sup>253</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 22].

“I got plenty [*sic*] to eat that summer [in Otterville] and did my best work of any year when I returned to the Sem. I received a total of \$20 for the summer but nothing for the previous one spent in Quebec.”<sup>254</sup>

A common Protestant evangelistic method used in Quebec was to preach and hand out tracts on street corners; routinely local priests would shut down such gatherings, often with a police presence. During a street evangelism campaign Dallimore was jailed for distributing New Testaments but was later released because he could speak French; May claims that her husband was the first student to be jailed.<sup>255</sup> Prison time became something of a trend, as later key evangelicals like Murray and Lorne Heron were notorious in the 1950s for the amount of time they spent in jail for preaching in the open air in defiance of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>256</sup>

#### On the road in the Maritimes

In his final year at seminary Dallimore was accidentally left off of the summer internship list. With no church, he travelled to the Maritime province of Nova Scotia with Hal MacBain, a fellow-student, life-long friend, and later a leader among Ontario Baptists.<sup>257</sup> They bought a car and headed east, the car doubling as a bed and stove—they heated

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<sup>254</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 22]. No dates for the various summer internships are given by Arnold, but in a poem entitled “The Christian’s Rest” there is a note that gives the date and place when it was authored: “Lines written in 1934 in Otterville Cemetery [*sic*], where many tombstones are engraved, ‘Asleep in Jesus.’” Arnold Dallimore, “The Christian’s Rest” (One page typescript, Otterville, ON, 1934).

<sup>255</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore.

<sup>256</sup> Murray Heron and Ginette Cotnoir, *Footprints Across Quebec: The Autobiography of Murray Heron, Pioneer Missionary to Quebec* (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 1999).

<sup>257</sup> Hal MacBain, “Dr. Hal MacBain,” in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2002), 1:189-199.

canned beans on the manifold. In Rimouski, Quebec, they parked overnight and slept in what they thought was a field, though the unpleasant smell should have tipped them off that they were in the town dump. The two continued to drive until they reached St. John, New Brunswick, where they sold the car to a junk dealer; in his eulogy of Dallimore, MacBain says that they purchased the Ford Model T for fifty dollars and sold it for fifteen because they needed the money. They stayed in Digby, across the Bay of Fundy, where MacBain phoned the pastor of a church he had worked in the year before. This minister was not interested in having them as interns, so they left their things at a Salvation Army and hitchhiked to Halifax, Nova Scotia. There they met an acquaintance of Dallimore's who allowed them to stay at his home in nearby Windsor. They lived on a can of pea soup and biscuits each day. In Dallimore's opinion, this was a wasted summer, and "it was years before I overcame its [physical] effects."<sup>258</sup> They hitchhiked back to Toronto where Dallimore worked for eight months on his thesis on Francis of Assisi; an early written demonstration of his love for church history. "I had no money," he said, "it was impossible to find a job and I lived as a tramp, taken in by married pastors or sleeping in an unheated room at the back of Dynevor Road Church with Tom Carson, the father of the scholar Don Carson."<sup>259</sup> The son, D. A. Carson, in his book about his father's ministerial experience in Quebec, cited a letter from Dallimore sent to him after his father's death. Dallimore recalled first meeting Tom Carson in September 1933 after he had "spent the summer in Quebec province delivering Gospels in the French tongue

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<sup>258</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 23].

<sup>259</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," [p. 22]. For Tom Carson see D. A. Carson, *Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor: The Life and Reflections of Tom Carson* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008); and D. A. Carson, "Rev. Tom Carson," in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2002), 1:39-47.

from door-to-door. My company was Basil Hall, younger brother of Rev. James Hall, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa.” Dallimore recalled that on their return to Toronto the group spent a weekend in Ottawa and “arranged to take two young men with us, Ed Hall and Tom Carson who were about to begin their first year at the [Toronto Baptist] Seminary.” Four years later Dallimore and Carson had adjoining rooms on the third floor of a rooming house.<sup>260</sup>

His work in Quebec, as with his time in Nova Scotia, gave Dallimore a taste for the struggles of ministry, but it was his clear sense of call that kept him from turning to other work. After graduation in 1935 Dallimore was sent to pastor for a short time at the East York Mission, in Toronto.<sup>261</sup> After this he worked at Westport Baptist Church in Westport, Ontario. Sadly, he was not able to leave his financial struggles behind in Toronto: “The treasurer gave me all the money that came in each Sunday and it was usually \$6 or \$7.”<sup>262</sup> Central Baptist Church in London, where his former pastor James McGinlay still ministered, adopted Dallimore as a missionary and sent him \$25 a month. He lived in a boarding house, though he was later forced to move into an unheated house for his final year at the church. Little is known about these first pastorates; all that remains is a collection of poems dated from this period, mostly expressing some sense of sorrow and suffering. For instance, “Help Lord!” dated 1938:<sup>263</sup>

Look down upon this life,  
Oh Lord I pray,

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<sup>260</sup> Quoted in Carson, *Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor*, 30.

<sup>261</sup> It is hard to determine if he pastored here during his last year of seminary.

<sup>262</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 23].

<sup>263</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “Help Lord!” (One page typescript, Westport, Ontario, 1938).

And see its wretched strife  
From day to day.  
Canst thou turn sorrow into happiness,  
Or bring delight from out of deep distress?

He described the aching fear that he held within, kept from the watching eyes of his peers, and his appeal to the “great Physician” to heal his “sickened heart.” He pled for God to

Take up the tangled skein  
That I lay down:  
A twisted pile, the pain,  
The smile, the frown.

The poem concluded with desire to find rest in God, a rest kept

For those who on thy breast,  
Would lean the more.  
As thou didst bid the sea’s wild waves to cease,  
So Master, to my troubled soul speak peace.

### *Orangeville and meeting May*

In March 1940 Dallimore was called to the Baptist church in Orangeville, Ontario, a small town northwest of Toronto; W. Gordon Brown previously served this church as pastor while a student at McMaster.<sup>264</sup> The congregation had between fifty and sixty people in attendance, although a number left to join the war effort either at home or

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<sup>264</sup> Tarr, “W. Gordon Brown,” 1:36.

overseas. Life took a positive turn in Orangeville for a number of reasons. Importantly, this was his first substantial ministry work that saw the conversion of many young people due to the influence of a popular bible study led by a Mr. Eagleson; it was well attended by people from the community, and many came, heard the gospel, and were saved.<sup>265</sup>

Orangeville was also a joyful experience because—equally importantly—this was where he met May Bredin. Born in Owen Sound, Ontario, in 1921, the last of Thomas and Elizabeth Bredin’s thirteen children, she was ten years Dallimore’s junior. Her father was a baker, and his large group of children consisted in what she called a “baker’s dozen,” though she also had three half-siblings from her dad’s previous marriage to Mary Bredin who had died. The Bredins were Anglican, and May was received into communion at twelve years of age. Though she grew up in a happy home, she says that she was not raised to love the gospel. Through a girlfriend Bredin was invited to a bible study at the Eagleson home. “His messages always pointed you to Christ,” she wrote, “and he made it plain that men and women being sinners before God, needed to trust Jesus and accept Him as their Saviour. This was a different message than I had ever heard.”<sup>266</sup> Eventually Bredin attended a Sunday morning service and was struck by the strong preaching. She was converted to Christ on July 1, 1941, at a special service where she heard a sermon on Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 10:9.<sup>267</sup> Initially her parents were not pleased about her conversion, they had experienced something similar with their son Mark, who had been converted earlier and would later go on to teach at the

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<sup>265</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 4.

<sup>266</sup> May Dallimore, “Memoir” (unpublished manuscript), 1:3.

<sup>267</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 1:4.

fundamentalist New Brunswick Bible Institute. It did not seem to bode well for them that their daughter was also to become serious about the Christian faith.

Bredin was initially disinterested in the young pastor, although many of the single women in the church were hopeful that he would turn his eye their way.<sup>268</sup> She recalled that, “The young girls used to tease one another about him and I always was there with my reply—‘a minister, not for me.’”<sup>269</sup> Eventually she warmed up to Dallimore, much to his delight, and they began to get to know one another. It was originally planned that Bredin would leave Orangeville to attend a nursing program in Guelph, Ontario. These plans were thwarted due to the Second World War, as many young men left Orangeville to serve overseas and the women who remained took the vacated jobs. Instead of nursing, Bredin moved to Toronto to attend a trade college for welding. She would often return to Orangeville where she discovered that the friendship she had “with the young minister began to get more serious.” Dallimore took her to meet Jack Scott, his good friend from seminary. Though they were often parted, the two wrote letters back and forth, “and eventually we spoke of marriage.” They were married on August 21, 1942 at Forward Baptist Church in Toronto. It was planned that Scott was to marry them, but service in the Royal Canadian Air Force prevented him; instead George Hunt, a pastor in Fergus, Ontario, who was originally to be Dallimore’s best man, officiated. Scott was later a president of Central Baptist Seminary, and an important voice in the early days of the

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<sup>268</sup> I owe this anecdote to Rebecca Wagler, grand-daughter to Arnold and May Dallimore.

<sup>269</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 1:6.

Fellowship and was also a source of encouragement to Dallimore. After Scott's death, he wrote a biography of this life-long friend.<sup>270</sup>

In March 1943, after three years in Orangeville, the Dallimores were called to “the Courtright-Wilkesport Circuit” that had been led by Jack Watt, a TBS graduate and historian of the Fellowship. This two-point charge was attractive to the young couple because Dallimore's friend Hal MacBain pastored in nearby Sarnia, Ontario. When they arrived at the parsonage in Courtwright, it had no washroom, so Dallimore was constrained to plumb his own. Recalling the experience, May said that Courtwright was “a cold church” and Wilkesport, which was fourteen miles away, “a bitter church,” though their life was generally happy at this point.<sup>271</sup>

### Surviving the Pastor Killer

This happiness would soon change with Dallimore's next pastorate. Briscoe Street Baptist Church in London, Ontario, was known by some as the “pastor-killing” church—he called it “a ministerial grave yard [*sic*], as ministers remained but a year.”<sup>272</sup> H. C. Slade, who took over Jarvis Street after Shields died in 1955, pastored Briscoe Street “and declared he would leave within a year if it meant to leave the ministry.”<sup>273</sup> Dallimore lasted thirteen months. When the Dallimores were first called to Briscoe Street, they were promised a parsonage, which they did not receive. Instead, they had to

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<sup>270</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *Only One Life: The Story of Dr. Jack Scott* (Hamilton, ON: Image Publishing, 1984).

<sup>271</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 4.

<sup>272</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 23].

<sup>273</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 23].

live in the home of a lady whom May said treated them poorly. She spoke of this time as a “horrible experience,” and was even forced to give up her beloved German Shepherd Buster.<sup>274</sup> Dallimore’s departure from the church also marked the beginning of a three-year break from ministry. While Briscoe Street did not kill Arnold Dallimore, it drove him into depression. He started work in painting and renovation with another man from the church and took out a two-thousand dollar loan to buy houses, renovate them, and sell for profit. The Dallimores, with their baby son Paul, born on November 15, 1947, lived in eight houses during Dallimore’s first two years in construction.<sup>275</sup> The financial strain on the family led May to sell their wedding gifts in order to eat.<sup>276</sup> During this time, her husband disappeared to New York State for three months on doctor’s orders. She knows nothing about where he went or what he did only that he seemed better when he returned home.

#### Cottam: Years of construction and growth

In November 1949 a group of twenty-nine people in Essex, Ontario, near Windsor, left Essex Baptist Church to form another, initially meeting in the Essex Library. In need of a pastor, this group contacted Dallimore, still living in London, who came down to regularly preach for them. Discerning a call to return to ministry, he agreed to help them plant a church in the nearby town of Cottam. The following February, Cottam Baptist

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<sup>274</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 4.

<sup>275</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 1:9.

<sup>276</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 4. It is interesting to note that Mabel Dallimore had to do the same thing.

Church was chartered.<sup>277</sup> Dallimore—relying on his construction experience—drew up the blueprints for the building and committed to a two-year ministry to see them through the construction. The Dallimores moved to Cottam on June 11, 1950, a month to the day after their daughter, Linda May, was born. On the first Sunday of September 1950 Cottam Baptist held its first service with John Armstrong, Dallimore’s friend from seminary, preaching to a full congregation. Dallimore remained at Cottam for 23 years. When asked why he went back into ministry after such bad experiences, May’s answer was that “he always believed he was called to ministry.”<sup>278</sup> The years of work in construction were not lost; as the church flourished Dallimore used this experience to help in three subsequent church building projects.

The plans for the church’s first construction included an apartment attached to the back that became the Dallimore home for their first eight years of ministry. Their second daughter, Cheryl, was born on February 18, 1955, and spent her first years there. When she was three, the family moved to a newly bought parsonage on Talbot Street in town. Due to church expenses the Dallimores’ financial struggles continued, but May remembered Cottam with fondness. Their ministerial labors saw the church grow—thus the continual building projects—with a number of conversions that she claimed were “miraculous.”

An example of such “miracles” is seen in the story of Howard Ross, a known alcoholic in the town whom many called “the village blaggard.” On the night of a horrific snow storm the Dallimores were surprised by a knock on their parsonage door. Expecting

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<sup>277</sup> See *Cottam Baptist Church 1950-2000: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Booklet* (Cottam, ON: Cottam Baptist Church, 2000) for a copy of the charter, Arnold and May’s signatures appear on the second page.

<sup>278</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 5.

to open it to someone stranded by the storm, there stood Ross who had ridden to their house on a tractor. As Ross was known for his drinking, Arnold Dallimore was notorious for evangelizing across the hamlet. Ross' conscience had been so pricked that he sought out the man who could answer his questions about salvation. Shirking the cold, Ross told them that he couldn't live without Christ, and so Dallimore told Ross how to find him, which he did to the amazement of everyone in the town.<sup>279</sup> Another such example is seen in the story of Claire Alfred, who worked in a local pig farm, and would resort to physical abuse to keep his wife from coming to church. Dallimore called a special meeting one Wednesday evening where a group of seventy members prayed for the Alfred family. The next day, he drove to the pig farm to plead with Alfred to come to church. On the following Sunday, Alfred was found in a pew and that day gave his life to Christ.<sup>280</sup> These are only a sampling of stories demonstrating the gospel-driven growth of Cottam Baptist. May said, "I could make a list of names where we saw God's power at work converting men and changing homes and lives."<sup>281</sup> By the 1960s the Sunday school grew to nearly two hundred and fifty attendees, a significant number considering the small size of the town.

#### "Integrity and dignity": Dallimore as pastor

A glimpse of Dallimore's ministry is captured in the words of Richard Valade, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Essex, a church Dallimore helped plant. While a student at

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<sup>279</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 5.

<sup>280</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 5.

<sup>281</sup> Dallimore, "Memoir," 1:13.

Central Baptist Seminary in the 1970s, Valade would return to Essex County in the summers to work as an intern at Cottam Baptist and receive mentoring by Dallimore. Valade was exposed to every facet of ministry at the church: “He got your feet wet whether you wanted him to or not. Being thrust into various responsibilities, and being entrusted with various ministries like outreach.”<sup>282</sup> At one point after his retirement Dallimore oversaw a small church in Windsor whose pastor had recently died, and Valade was enlisted to help. He says that Dallimore “had this huge list of people who attended the church that had left. I started pursuing every one of them, it was amazing.”<sup>283</sup> Evangelism was a large part of the ministry, and so it was Valade’s responsibility to go door-to-door, with tracts drawn up by Dallimore: “That had an impact on me. I carried on with that until we moved to Essex.”<sup>284</sup> As a minister Valade recalled that Dallimore was “willing to suffer any hardship. He suffered tremendous financial hardship for the sake of the gospel. He laboured tirelessly, physically as well as in the ministry. He was as much of an outstanding deacon as he was a pastor.”<sup>285</sup> Valade described Dallimore as a man of “integrity” and “dignity” who would “persevere in the midst of extreme opposition and suffering.” Though he was “short in stature” he was “a very big man.” Dallimore “loved the gospel and loved preaching it.”<sup>286</sup>

Local evangelism had long been an emphasis of Dallimore’s by the time he was directing Valade to go door-to-door. In 1952, the year before the merger of the Baptist

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<sup>282</sup> Ian Hugh Clary, Interview with Richard Valade, (Eleven page manuscript, November 17, 2006) [p. 7].

<sup>283</sup> Clary, Interview with Richard Valade, 10.

<sup>284</sup> Clary, Interview with Richard Valade, 10. Grace Baptist had originally been located in Windsor as Berean Baptist. Cf. Phil Borre, “A New Work in Windsor,” *Reformation Canada* 3.4 (Fall 1981): 11-14.

<sup>285</sup> Clary, Interview with Richard Valade, 7.

<sup>286</sup> Clary, Interview with Richard Valade, 7.

Union with the Independents, and while he was editor of *The Union Baptist* magazine, Dallimore contributed a short essay to the Independents' periodical, *The Fellowship Evangel*. Entitled, "Every Man a Missionary" Dallimore observed that "[t]he idea that every man should be a missionary...and that even his or her secular employment should be only a secondary matter to the all-important task of soul-winning,—this has never, never, entered the minds of most believers, or become the accepted policy of many churches."<sup>287</sup> However, he encouraged readers that this task "can be done." As an example of his historical awareness he pointed to the early Christians and the Methodists who prove that such evangelism can be done by everybody: "Not their preachers, but farmers, cobblers, shopkeepers and housewives, who made their ploughing, shoe-repairing and dish-washing secondary to the mighty work of testifying to the Grace of God, and winning their neighbours to the Lord Jesus.—And it can be done today!"<sup>288</sup>

#### Dallimore's philosophy of ministry

Dallimore's vision for ministry is expressed in a *Gospel Witness* article entitled "Preach the Word" published in 1993. In it he described the role of the minister. First and foremost, he must be able to communicate the truths of Scripture to the "total congregation" ranging from aged citizens to young children. The minister is not to be studiously aloof, but should be involved in the life of the people: "As he undertakes a new church it is his duty first to get to know his people, the men as to where they work, the women as to their particular lives, the teenagers concerning their special ambitions

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<sup>287</sup> Dallimore, "Every Man a Missionary," *The Fellowship Evangel* 19.6 (July-August 1952), 3.

<sup>288</sup> Dallimore, "Every Man a Missionary," 3.

and the children regarding their sports and their schooling.”<sup>289</sup> It is clear that Dallimore implemented his advice. In an obituary written in *The Gospel Witness* by Norman Street, at the time a pastor of Jarvis Street, the Dallimore ministry is described: “We were all reminded of the interest Arnold and May took in the young people who were always very much a part of the church’s life.”<sup>290</sup> According to Dallimore, the sphere of a pastor’s duties is “wider than that of a lawyer or a physician,” and will engage most of his time.<sup>291</sup> He is to preach the full counsel of God, not turning to entertainment to draw people into the church—this was something that Dallimore felt strongly about. Entertaining services might grow the size of the church, but it will not feed the sheep, nor will it convert sinful hearts. But when the preacher puts before his congregation the Word of God, Christians will grow in faith and sinners will be saved. Evangelistic preaching is not to be merely an academic exercise, however, but is to be passionate, knowing that many in the congregation may be lost: “Oh that our eyes might overflow with tears as we tell lost men and women of the destiny that awaits them and from which He is willing to save them.”<sup>292</sup>

The task of a minister is explained in greater detail in a series of talks Dallimore gave as the Spring Lectures in February 1980 at Toronto Baptist Seminary, later published in two parts in *The Gospel Witness* as “Death to Self, Road to Life in the Ministry.”<sup>293</sup> In these articles Dallimore stressed the need for a learned ministry: “The

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<sup>289</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “Preach the Word,” *The Gospel Witness* 72.11 (October 28, 1993), 3.

<sup>290</sup> Norman Street, “Arnold Dallimore: Home at Last,” *The Gospel Witness* 77.5 (April 23, 1998), 12.

<sup>291</sup> Dallimore, “Preach the Word,” 3.

<sup>292</sup> Dallimore, “Preach the Word,” 15.

<sup>293</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “Death to Self, Road to Life in the Ministry, Part One,” *The Gospel Witness* 59.7 (June 19, 1980), 19.

minister must be a student, a scholar. He must know, above everything else, his Bible, and besides knowing it in English, he should also know the New Testament in Greek and, if at all possible, the Old Testament in Hebrew.”<sup>294</sup> The pastor’s learning should not stop here, however, “He must be a man of books, possessing a library and ever adding to it and must seek to be informed in any and every realm—to bring all areas of learning under tribute to the mighty task of preaching Christ.”<sup>295</sup> Though the pastor may have administrative duties the “*one mighty, matchless labour stands out preeminent and supreme*. That is the work of preaching.”<sup>296</sup> The minister is to follow his calling without scruple, and must die to self: “Let us labour to crucify the old self, to trample pride and the desire to attract attention under foot, and so to live unto Christ that we may present Him in all the glory of His saving power.”<sup>297</sup> In this manner Dallimore discharged his duties as pastor in Cottam.

### The birth of a denomination

Dallimore’s early ministerial experience had been with the Union of Regular Baptist Churches, the denomination founded in 1928 by T. T. Shields after the split with the Convention.<sup>298</sup> Though great strides were made toward establishing a stable denomination, it was dogged by internal strife. The denomination grew from seventy-

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<sup>294</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 19.

<sup>295</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 19.

<sup>296</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 19. Emphasis his.

<sup>297</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “Death to Self, Road to Life in the Ministry, Part Two,” *The Gospel Witness* 59.8 (July 3, 1980), 15.

<sup>298</sup> For the history of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Canada see Tarr, *This Dominion His Dominion*, 95ff; Watt, *Fellowship Story*, 31ff.

seven churches at its founding to ninety by 1931. Controversy grew over the relationship between two Regular Baptist groups—the Fundamentalist Baptist Young People’s Association and the Women’s Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada—and the denomination. It was argued that the two diverted energy and resources away from the Union. As a result of confusion and discord, the denomination dropped in membership to 60 churches in 1933. That year a number of the dissident churches formed the Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches that by 1950 had grown to 125 congregations.

Troubles in the Union continued, focusing on Toronto Baptist Seminary. In December 1948 there was a division between Shields and Brown. This resulted in the formation of a new school, Central Baptist Seminary in January 1949. After this split of like-minded Baptists, the Union voted against Shields’ leadership and replaced him as president—Shields responded by pulling Jarvis Street out of the Union with ten other churches to form The Association of Regular Baptist Churches. This small group struggled until its eventual disbanding in 2003. The Union, now led by Hal MacBain, Dallimore’s old traveling partner, continued for a number of years until they merged with the Independent Baptists to form the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada (FEBC) in 1953. MacBain was its first president, and in his inaugural address expressed the hope of many Canadian Baptists: “[T]o be frank and open in our vision, we must say that we cannot hope for less than that every evangelical Baptist church in Canada should be together in a glorious fellowship of churches, dedicated to the same great Baptist distinctives and employing the same methods of operation.”<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Quoted in Haykin and Lockety, *Glorious Fellowship*, 143.

Cottam Baptist was three years old when the Fellowship was formed. In the split with Shields Dallimore sided with Brown, so it was natural that his new church would join the Union led by MacBain. Dallimore's early interest in writing manifests itself at this time—in November 1950 he became the editor of *The Union Baptist* magazine. In 1953 Cottam joined with other Union churches to form the Fellowship, and Dallimore continued exploring his writing gifts, becoming the editor of the new magazine *The Fellowship Baptist* in 1958.

#### Isolation and retirement

While these were times of unity for evangelical Baptists in Canada, Dallimore felt distance from his fellow pastors. At Cottam he came to believe in the doctrines of grace, commonly known as Calvinism, and this set him apart from many of his colleagues. Though he was educated at Toronto Baptist Seminary, noteworthy for its broad Calvinism, and was a member of the Union of Regular Baptists, that had a history of Reformed theology, Dallimore remained doctrinally non-committal on the subject of election. However, as he became familiar with the life of Whitefield through his research for the biography, he also came to imbibe the evangelist's theology. This set him at odds with other pastors in the Fellowship. Of the few who shared Dallimore's theology, Robert Brackstone—a childhood friend and fellow student at TBS—was one of his only sources of encouragement.<sup>300</sup> According to Dallimore, the other pastors in the denomination did not understand or support him in his research and writing—even close friends and church

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<sup>300</sup> Roy and Carolyn Wanamaker, "Dr. R. E. J. Brackstone," in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2002), 1:21-31.

members. In an interview conducted not long before his passing historian Michael Haykin asked Dallimore about the difficulties he faced in writing George Whitefield's life. "The first," he answered, "was my loneliness." He continued: "Indeed, until my first volume appeared in print several pastors assumed the whole affair would never be done and that it was no more than talk. And the constant poverty in which I lived did not help."<sup>301</sup> But it was put on Dallimore's path to write the definitive biography of the great evangelist, and as with his sense of pastoral call, Dallimore could not keep from pursuing his literary interests.

In 1970 the Banner of Truth Trust, a Reformed publisher in London, England, now in Edinburgh, Scotland, released the first volume of Dallimore's two-volume biography of Whitefield, a project that he began in his early days in Cottam and took nearly thirty years to complete. Yet, Dallimore managed to maintain the work of ministry while writing. As the church continued to grow, they were confronted with the need for a fourth building project to start in 1972. Dallimore, however, was faced with the reality that the much-needed second Whitefield volume would not be written if he were to undertake the work of construction. He also felt opposition from within the church; many wanted him to focus solely on ministry. In 1971 he was encouraged by one of his key members to abandon writing: "He came to me and angrily asserted 'You've written one book and now you're going to write another. We're paying you \$75 a week and we ain't getting our monies' worth!'"<sup>302</sup> In a letter to his publisher, Dallimore gave a series of reasons why he felt he must leave the ministry, most of them financial. The first was due to the

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<sup>301</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," 24.

<sup>302</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," 17.

constraints of ministry. He said, “I am getting virtually nothing done on Volume 2. I have but 4 chapters written and unless I get away from the pastorate there is no possibility that it will ever be done.”<sup>303</sup>

Added to this, Dallimore was facing pastoral burn-out. In his almost twenty-four years of ministry, he never had a proper vacation because it could not be afforded. When he did take time off, it was to do research, which was time intensive, laborious and tiring. Also at this time ten of the young people in his church left for Bible College and seminary, and so, without additional support, “I felt I could not carry on any longer.”<sup>304</sup> The most troubling reason for his stress was more personal: it was found that his wife had a lump on her right lung that needed to be removed, which was followed by a hyper-thyroid condition resulting in “the destruction of the thyroid by the radio-active treatment.”<sup>305</sup> These had long-lasting effects that had to be controlled over a long period of time by medication.

After twenty-three years in Cottam, Dallimore tendered his resignation in March 1973 to pursue his call to write. On the day of his retirement the church was packed and many wept, wanting him to stay, but he believed that God was leading him to finish the task he had started twenty years before. Dallimore described his fearful situation: “I had no house and no money and I faced the likelihood of having no income.” According to May, “This was a turning point in our lives! We found ourselves with very little money and no home as we had lived in a parsonage. The church called a pastor and wanted to re-

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<sup>303</sup> Arnold Dallimore, letter to Humphrey Mildred, March 14, 1973.

<sup>304</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 18.

<sup>305</sup> Arnold Dallimore, letter to Iain Murray, May 12, 1978. Dallimore, “Memoir,” 1:18.

decorate the parsonage, and we had one week left to leave there, and as yet no where to go.”<sup>306</sup> She recalled, “I prayed to God that He would see fit to answer my prayer for a small home in Cottam.” One day during their last week at the parsonage, looking in *The Essex Free Press*, they found a potential home that suited their needs. Dallimore went with his real estate agent to speak with the owner to explain their financial situation. While they were gone, May said that she “prayed alone upstairs on my knees.” After her husband returned, the woman who owned the house called, and though she had other offers, she agreed to sell it to the Dallimores, which was to them an obvious answer to prayer.<sup>307</sup> On his retirement the church gave him two thousand dollars that he used as a down payment on the house. He was also in receipt of financial support from Banner of Truth as he continued with the second half of his writing project. In early 1973 he expressed to Iain Murray his satisfaction “in the prospect of adequate financial support till Vol. 2 is finished,” but also his desire to keep up remuneration, “but I am sure you will realize the immediate need for a downpayment on a house.”<sup>308</sup> With this cobbling together of finances, the Dallimores moved into their new home; his first project was to pour cement footings and build “a room on one side of that served as my study and I worked on Vol. 2.”<sup>309</sup>

### **Pastor as historian: Writing the life of Whitefield**

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<sup>306</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 1:19.

<sup>307</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 1:19.

<sup>308</sup> Arnold Dallimore, letter to Iain Murray, March 1973. Arnold still required advances for the second volume up to the time of its publication; Arnold Dallimore, letter to Iain Murray, June 21, 1979: “Many thanks also for the advance that you are sending. This will be sufficient to carry me till the further royalties arrive.”

<sup>309</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 18.

The life of the historian can be marked by long periods of seclusion with time spent holed away in research libraries, or bound by words to a desk—it can be the loneliness of the long distance runner. Arnold Dallimore felt isolation, but for a variety of reasons. Not only did he become familiar with the solitude found in many world-class libraries, and in his own study, but he also suffered from being misunderstood by his peers. This was due in the main to theological differences he had with other pastors in his denomination. It was also because few could—or cared to—help him in the task of research and writing. For this Dallimore had to look across the Atlantic to find those who were theologically like-minded, who cared about the life of his subject, and knew something of the history surrounding eighteenth-century evangelicalism.

#### Love for church history

How did Dallimore come to an interest in church history? In his student days, under the at-times faulty direction of historian W. W. Fliescher, Dallimore first came into contact with a man who had long been dead: George Whitefield, the so-called “Grand Itinerant” of the Great Awakening. At Toronto Baptist Seminary Dallimore read Albert David Belden’s 1930 biography *George Whitefield, the Awakener: A Modern Study of the Evangelical Revival*, and found it “unsatisfactory.”<sup>310</sup> He explained that “while in Seminary I had no thought of writing on Whitefield but rather of familiarising [*sic*] myself thoroughly with his career.”<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “Answers to Questions Presented by Dr. Michael Haykin,” (Thirty-page typescript, ca. 1994) [p. 14]. Cf. Albert D. Belden, *George Whitefield—The Awakener: A Modern Study of the Evangelical Revival* (Nashville, TN: Cokesbury Press, 1930).

<sup>311</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 14.

The curriculum at TBS required students to write a final thesis before graduation, and Dallimore—in hindsight, not surprisingly—devoted his to church history. What may be surprising is that a student at such a notoriously Protestant seminary would choose to write on Francis of Assisi (1181/1182-1226), the founder of the Catholic Franciscan Order. While the thesis' title, "The Franciscan Failure," might indicate that it is a critical look at the great monastic, it is largely favorable to its subject.<sup>312</sup> Even at this early stage, Dallimore demonstrates a facility with language. Consider its opening sentences; while not exactly apt for an academic paper, they do carry a rhetorical flourish that make for an appealing read and shows something of his later style:

Francis of Assisi! The very name brings to mind a picture of unparalleled charm—a picture of one, who, perhaps more than any other, succeeded in fulfilling his conception of conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ. We think of him as a young man, contemplating a bride more beautiful and lovely than all other persons—Lady Poverty, and renouncing every temporal possession in order to win her. We see him, the son of a rich merchant, clothed in the coarse garb of the Umbrian peasant, tending lepers, assisting the poor in their most menial tasks, and begging crusts of bread for his sustenance. We mark the countenance of the saint who possesses nothing, radiant with happiness and contentment, and we are melted under the power of his eloquent words as he proclaims penitence, peace and joy.<sup>313</sup>

While he offered a positive view of the "saint," Dallimore's thesis sets out to prove that the Franciscan movement failed after Francis' death. In a way, it is a Francis vs. the Franciscans argument that is wholly Protestant in its outlook.

It would be another twenty years before Dallimore took up the task of writing church history again, this time with another "saint," George Whitefield, in mind. The early part of Dallimore's ministry in Cottam was devoted to building a church, a task that

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<sup>312</sup> Arnold Dallimore, "The Franciscan Failure" (BTh dissertation, The Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, [1935]).

<sup>313</sup> Dallimore, "Franciscan Failure," 1.

he was heavily involved in, including the drafting of the blueprints and construction: “I designed a colonial type of Church that would seat 200, with a three bedroom apartment adjoining the rear of the building.”<sup>314</sup> After this was completed, and Dallimore had more time, he turned his hand to reconstructing a colonial religious life.

### Poverty and providence: Writing as tent-making

In an article for *Reformation Today* in 1980 Dallimore explained that his motivation to write came, in part, because “I had known Richard Ellsworth Day [pastor of Central Baptist Church in London, Ontario] who wrote a life of Spurgeon...and similar works on [D. L.] Moody, [Charles] Finney and [David] Brainerd, and in view of the financial success these undertakings attained, I determined to produce a life of Whitefield in the hope that it would bring me some monetary reward. This was to be my tent-making.”<sup>315</sup> Elsewhere he said that “Day had nothing of Spurgeon’s theology in his head and nothing of his soul-winning spirit in his heart, but he made some extra money by his writing.”<sup>316</sup> Dallimore was only receiving fifty dollars a week in Cottam, so his thought was to supplement his income, and “remembering how little I had found on Whitefield I determined to write on him.”<sup>317</sup> In essence, the financial strain that Dallimore endured in

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<sup>314</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 14.

<sup>315</sup> Arnold Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” *Reformation Today* 55 (May-June 1980), 15. Cf. Richard Ellsworth Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim: The Life Story of C. H. Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans* (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson Press, 1934); Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: The Story of Dwight Lyman Moody* (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson Press, 1936); Richard Ellsworth Day, *Man of Like Passions: A Dramatic Story of Charles Grandison Finney* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1942); Richard Ellsworth Day, *Flagellant on Horseback: The Life Story of David Brainerd* (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson Press, 1950).

<sup>316</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 16.

<sup>317</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 17.

ministry was a major factor in the production of one of the most important Christian biographies written in the last hundred years.

During the period of church construction, Dallimore started collecting books on Whitefield, and by 1955 “I turned out a 300-page account of his life.”<sup>318</sup> Not happy with what he wrote, the manuscript was destroyed. Immediately he started over and in two years produced another, but again did nothing with it. Initially he contacted publishers in the United States, “but I feared to submit the manuscript, realising [*sic*] that, like most previous biographers of Whitefield, I had failed to grasp much of the true significance of his accomplishments and much of the greatness of his person.”<sup>319</sup> Also, “I decided to do nothing about publishing it till I could first get to England and look up material on Whitefield’s friend Howell Harris in Wales. In 1959 I went to Britain on the ‘fly now and pay later’ basis.”<sup>320</sup>

Just before his first trip to England, Dallimore came into contact with Geoffrey Williams (1886-1975), the founder of the Evangelical Library in London, as well as Iain Murray and Erroll Hulse of the Banner of Truth Trust. The Evangelical Library was founded in 1945, and Banner of Truth in 1957, both with the active influence of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981), pastor of Westminster Chapel, London.<sup>321</sup> With the

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<sup>318</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 14. There is a discrepancy with this account and in *Reformation Today* where he says that “by 1951 [I] had a manuscript completed which would have made a paper-back volume of some 200 pages.” Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 15.

<sup>319</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 15.

<sup>320</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 14.

<sup>321</sup> For a history of the Evangelical Library and Banner of Truth see John J. Murray, *Catch the Vision: Roots of Reformed Recovery* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2007). For Lloyd-Jones see Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years, 1899-1939*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982); Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith, 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1990); John Brencher, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) and Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003).

help of Lloyd-Jones, the Library and the Banner have put into the hands of pastors and Christian lay-people the great works of church history, particularly from the Reformation, Puritan, and Evangelical periods. A Welshman, Lloyd-Jones revered the writings of evangelicals like Daniel Rowland (1713-1790) and Howell Harris (1714-1773), eighteenth-century revival leaders from his homeland. As a self-confessed “eighteenth-century man,” Lloyd-Jones also loved Whitefield, whose *Journals* were published by Banner of Truth in 1960.<sup>322</sup>

In his contact with Williams, Dallimore found him “desirous of seeing something thorough done of Whitefield and Murray and Hulse proved of similar mind and willing to publish it.”<sup>323</sup> Dallimore’s first Sunday in London was spent with Murray at Westminster Chapel, who had previously served as assistant pastor. After the morning service Murray took him “to the study to meet Dr. Lloyd-Jones.”<sup>324</sup> Dallimore was happy to find that Lloyd-Jones “declared it had for years been his chief desire to see something thorough published on G[eorge] W[hitefield] and he arranged to have me meet him at the Carlton Club of which he was a member.”<sup>325</sup>

### Meeting the Doctor

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<sup>322</sup> George Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960). For the quote see John Coffey, “Lloyd-Jones and the Protestant Past,” in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones eds., *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of “the Doctor”* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2011), 317.

<sup>323</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 14.

<sup>324</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 15.

<sup>325</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 15.

The Carlton Club was a premier gentlemen's club that met on James Street near Pall Mall in London and whose members were involved with the Conservative Party.<sup>326</sup> Lloyd-Jones was a member due to his previous role as a medical doctor at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he served as chief clinical assistant to Sir Thomas Horder (1871-1955), the physician to the Royal Family. Dallimore and his host remained at the club for two hours.

Familiar with his education at Toronto Baptist Seminary, Lloyd-Jones "wanted to see how fully I was tarred with the brush of T. T. Shields." Dallimore "told him that several of us who had been in his school had found it necessary to part from him over his treatment of Mr. [W. Gordon] Brown but we still respect him for his ability and his work, he [Lloyd-Jones] was very happy to hear it."<sup>327</sup> The reason for Lloyd-Jones' concern over the influence of Shields can be accounted for in Murray's biography, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty years, 1899–1939*. In 1932 Lloyd-Jones traveled to Toronto to preach for nine weeks at a Methodist church. While there he met with the recently-bereaved Shields who, after hearing Lloyd-Jones on the radio, invited him to his home for a meal. The meeting went well, but a point of discussion came up over Shields' polemical reputation. Shields questioned Lloyd-Jones for preaching in the theologically liberal church on the corner of Sherbourne and Carlton Streets in the city's downtown core. Recalling Shields as a renowned preacher, even the "Canadian Spurgeon," Lloyd-Jones pled with him to leave the constant battling behind: "Why don't you come back! Drop all this, preach the gospel to people positively and win them!" According to the Murray

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<sup>326</sup> Cf. Barry Phelps, *Power and the Party: A History of the Carlton Club, 1932-1982* (London: Carlton Club in conjunction with Macmillan, 1983).

<sup>327</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," 15.

account, after some verbal interchange Shields acquiesced with “tears in his eyes” saying that he would consult with the board of deacons of Jarvis Street for advice, if they agreed with Lloyd-Jones, then he would stop. The deacons disagreed, and thus Shields continued with his style of ministry.<sup>328</sup>

In his initial meeting with Dallimore, Lloyd-Jones “told me in detail of his visit to T. T. in Toronto in 1932 and his account differs in certain details from the view inserted by Iain Murray in his life of L[loyd-] J[ones].”<sup>329</sup> In a review of Murray’s biography published in the September 22, 1983, issue of *The Gospel Witness*, Dallimore pointed out “some errors” in the account of the 1932 meeting. Dallimore approached his criticism of Murray from the stand-point of a Shields insider, arguing that the account did not fit with what people at Jarvis Street and TBS saw of their pastor and president. He wrote, “Certainly, Dr. Shields indulged in a great amount of controversy, and it must be admitted some that was unnecessary.” However, to say that Shields neglected biblical preaching in favor of pulpit pugilism was not true. It will “surely seem incredible to all who knew the Jarvis Street services in those days...what Gospel preaching there was in Jarvis Street, what number of conversions, and of lives transformed and what activity there was for the Lord!” Dallimore also highlighted the way that Shields’ words were recollected by Lloyd-Jones, “Whoever heard him use the word ‘Man!’ as an exclamation?”<sup>330</sup> The “chief misunderstanding,” according to Dallimore, was Murray’s suggestion that Shields only fought against liberalism at McMaster because he was vying

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<sup>328</sup> Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, 1:271-274. This is also recounted in D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 274-276.

<sup>329</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 15.

<sup>330</sup> Lloyd-Jones recounted Shields saying “Man! What’s the matter with you?” when Lloyd-Jones said that he did not care for the ministry of Joseph Parker. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, 1:272.

for a teaching post there. Dallimore said that this was “an incredible statement in the minds of all who know the situation existing in Canada at that time. Dr. Shields opposed the appointment of a liberal to the theological faculty at McMaster, but the suggestion that he wanted the position as his own reveals a total lack of understanding of the man himself and of the battle then going on in this land.”<sup>331</sup>

Curiously, Dallimore did not rely on the differences in the account he heard from Lloyd-Jones at their meeting at the Carlton Club, whatever they were; this would have given him a stronger argument against Murray’s telling of the story. Dallimore also did not allow for inexact dialogue in Lloyd-Jones’ retelling of the meeting from memory; though the form of the story may not be precise, the veracity of the account may be.

### Visiting the valleys of green

After the meeting in London, Lloyd-Jones again expressed the need for a work on Whitefield and “strongly encouraged my undertaking.”<sup>332</sup> He also warned Dallimore that documents relating to the Welsh revivalist Howell Harris would be difficult to decipher, but provided the name of a woman in Aberystwyth, Wales, with whom Dallimore could stay. Murray drove them to Wales, making a detour to Oxford where they toured places of historical interest. With Murray as his tour-guide, Dallimore was treated to a tour of key places in English Protestant history. They continued on to Trevecca and visited sites related to Harris, and Selina Hastings (1707-1791), Countess of Huntingdon, another

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<sup>331</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, “Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Dr. T. T. Shields: Some Errors in an Account of a Discussion They Held,” *The Gospel Witness* 62.14 (September 22, 1983): 6.

<sup>332</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 15.

close associate of Whitefield. After this they travelled to Gloucester and stayed in the Bell Inn, where Whitefield grew up: “I had an old room that was possibly similar to what it had been in the days when the Whitefield family owned the place.”<sup>333</sup> Murray left Dallimore, who rented a car and drove to Aberystwyth. While there he found various letters and journals of Harris’, and did research at the Calvinistic Methodist Archives, and the National Library of Wales. Gaining information that he felt would contribute to the improvement of his Whitefield manuscript, Dallimore returned to London and stayed at the Hulse home, making treks to the British Museum for further research. From England he flew back to North America—he had been gone for three months—where he traveled to “some of the large libraries of the eastern seaboard...they house numerous documents relating to Whitefield’s ministry in the Colonies.”<sup>334</sup> At this time, photocopy machines became more accessible, “and this made it possible to obtain copies of documents in both America and Britain...this greatly facilitated the whole matter of research, and I secured copies of numerous letters that I could not otherwise have obtained.” By 1980 Dallimore could boast of having “at least three hundred letters from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, in either Photostat or micro-film form, most of which have never been published.”<sup>335</sup> Armed with this new material, Dallimore began another re-write of his manuscript, now with the plan of producing a two-volume biography to incorporate his new findings.

### The struggles of writing

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<sup>333</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 16.

<sup>334</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

<sup>335</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

While loneliness and the need to travel great distances for research posed problems, another concerned writing style. “In a university thesis,” Dallimore explained, “one has merely to present the facts and document them without regard to style of presentation, but I had to present facts and document them and also to do so in a manner that would make attractive reading.”<sup>336</sup> He saw it as his task not only to provide historical facts but also to tell a story; he felt “obliged to keep the narrative alive and, indeed, in such a story as that of Whitefield’s life, to endeavour to make it gripping.”<sup>337</sup> Judging from the reviews published after his first volume was released, Dallimore succeeded in this task. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Theological Seminary wrote, “This book may make you forget to talk to your wife (or husband, as the case may be); you may forget to go to work; but it’s worth a few sacrifices. Why do I go to such extremes? To talk like that is surely abnormal. Yet it is. But I did get into an unusually abnormal frame of mind as I read it. Besides, I am even now, weeks later, still abnormal.”<sup>338</sup> Geoffrey Thomas, in his biography of Ernest C. Reisinger, recounted that Van Til was sometimes “spotted mowing his lawn with [Dallimore’s] book in his hand.”<sup>339</sup> Sherwood Wirt, editor of *Decision* magazine and biographer of Billy Graham, wrote in a letter to Dallimore that the first volume was “one of the great monumental literary achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. George Whitefield has come alive for me as I have been reading the book.”<sup>340</sup> Oswald J. Smith, at the time pastor of The People’s Church in Toronto, said that the first

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<sup>336</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

<sup>337</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

<sup>338</sup> Quoted in Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God’s Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 9.

<sup>339</sup> Geoffrey Thomas, *Ernest C. Reisinger* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002), 136. I am thankful to Mark Nenadov of Essex, Ontario, for pointing this quote out to me.

<sup>340</sup> Sherwood E. Wirt, letter to Arnold Dallimore, November 5, 1970.

volume was “the greatest religious book of this century...My heart was tremendously stirred as I read it—more than it has for many, many years.”<sup>341</sup>

Dallimore’s study in Cottam became something of a small public attraction for those who knew him. Plastered on walls circling the perimeter of the room were charts, timelines, quotations, and dates, all set up to help him visualize the life of Whitefield in his social context. In file-folders retained in the Dallimore family archive is a nineteen page, single-spaced, alphabetically ordered list of the places where Whitefield preached, from Aberdeen to York. Other papers include photocopies of encyclopedia and journal articles, collections of library references, notes of quotations, outlines and drafts of chapters—some typed, others in longhand. He described the process of compiling and presenting his research: “It proved impossible—by reason of many overlapping events—to present matters in a strictly chronological order—and thus I grouped the facts of the various areas of my story, presenting a distinct and unified portion of the subject in each chapter.”<sup>342</sup> He had to make decisions on what to include and what to omit, all the while feeling unsure of his decisions. “I was alone in my task and longed for someone with whom I could discuss the subject and the problems of understanding and presenting it.”<sup>343</sup>

He did receive encouragement from his publisher—as the continual flow of letters between Dallimore and *Banner of Truth* attest—as well as from Lloyd-Jones. An editorial in the *Banner of Truth* magazine published in March 2006 shows the nature of Lloyd-Jones’ encouragement. Correspondence between the two began in February 1960 and

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<sup>341</sup> Cited on the *Banner of Truth* website, accessed June 29, 2014, <http://banneroftruth.org/us/store/history-biography/george-whitefield/>.

<sup>342</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

<sup>343</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

continued until November 1980, not long before Lloyd-Jones' death in 1981. Not only was the Doctor's knowledge of Whitefield, Harris, and revival put to use, but also his medical expertise. In a letter from late 1976, during Dallimore's work on the second volume, Lloyd-Jones wrote: "With regard to the medical questions you put to me I fear I cannot agree with your conclusions. With regard to Whitefield what you describe is clearly not 'cardiac asthma'. This condition never lasts 22 years and is generally a terminal event."<sup>344</sup> As a pastor, Lloyd-Jones also understood the time constraints that kept Dallimore from meeting deadlines—the first volume was originally to appear by December 1964, some six years before it was finally released.

#### S. M. Houghton: The critic

However, Lloyd-Jones' support was also felt in the disagreement that Dallimore had with his publisher over two problems: writing style and the significance of John Wesley to the Great Awakening. The senior advisor of the *Banner of Truth* during the time that Dallimore submitted the first volume was Sidney Maurice Houghton (1899-1987), a former school master and history teacher who had "very high standards."<sup>345</sup> Erroll Hulse, writing in *Reformation Today*, said, "Virtually every item for publication passed through his hands, the monthly magazine as well as the books. This included the daunting task of actually correcting the mistakes of the Doctor and Arnold Dallimore, men of very strong mind to say the least! Editorially, he knew how to control Iain Murray, which was no

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<sup>344</sup> "Supporting Arnold Dallimore," *Banner of Truth* 510 (March 2006), 26-27.

<sup>345</sup> "Supporting Arnold Dallimore," 26. For a life of Houghton see his "Reminiscences" column that ran periodically in the *Banner of Truth* magazine between 1973 and his death in 1987; these were collected in S. M. Houghton, *My Life & Books: Reminiscences of S. M. Houghton* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988).

small achievement.”<sup>346</sup> In a memorial essay written by Murray in *Banner of Truth*, Houghton is described as a “critic” who was “meticulous, precise, demandingly exact.”<sup>347</sup> Of Houghton’s reputation he said, “Sometimes would-be authors, who never met him personally but whose cherished manuscripts ‘suffered’ from one of his critiques, conjectured that he was high-handed and authoritarian.” But, Murray went on to explain, “One knew that he offered criticism in order to help and he never gave it in a form which created tension if it was unacceptable...there was nothing remotely pontifical in his criticisms.”<sup>348</sup>

Dallimore was one of the “would-be authors” who chafed under Houghton’s pen. When he received his first draft of volume one back from the publisher, he was aghast at Houghton’s editorial censure: “He went over my writing, criticizing every word and virtually rejecting everything I had said.” In turn, Dallimore remarked wryly, “I rejected almost everything he had said.”<sup>349</sup> This began a lengthy period of distress for Dallimore as he exchanged letters not only with *Banner of Truth*, in particular Murray, but as well with Williams and Lloyd-Jones. With the latter two he found sympathy. In October 1968 Williams replied to a letter from Dallimore saying, “I can entirely appreciate your feeling in respect to the penciling by Mr. Houghton, and it has been my experience that his efforts are often more academic than helpful in other ways. I have not always found that warm-hearted spiritual touch in his words and writings which doubtless you felt were prompted by God...I pray that you may have courage to refuse outright to have your own

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<sup>346</sup> Erroll Hulse, “A Christian with Two Lives,” *Reformation Today* 99 (1987), 22.

<sup>347</sup> Iain Murray, “A Tribute to a Dear Friend: S. M. Houghton,” *Banner of Truth* 290 (November 1987), 10.

<sup>348</sup> Murray, “Tribute,” 10-11.

<sup>349</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 17.

style wrecked.”<sup>350</sup> Commenting on this in personal correspondence with this author, however, Murray defended Houghton saying, “Men here affected Arnold’s judgment, wrongly I believe. Geoffrey Williams was a good friend of mine but he did not know S. M. Houghton.”<sup>351</sup> According to Dallimore, “Dr. L[loyd-] J[ones] agreed with me.”<sup>352</sup>

It is likely that Dallimore took Houghton’s criticisms too personally and did not appreciate how the former teacher—and an historian in his own right<sup>353</sup>—could improve his work. Houghton took an Honours degree in the department of history at Victoria University, Manchester. He went on to become the History Master at the Grammar School in Rhyl, Wales, where he remained for thirty-five years, also serving as librarian.<sup>354</sup> He also worked for thirty years with an examining board in the English school system marking “O” level exams in history, typically seeing five hundred per year. Of this Houghton said, “This work, too, also required one to keep *au fait* with historical writing.”<sup>355</sup> He also taught the “O” and “A” level courses in scripture at his school. Thus he brought to bear his years of experience on his editorial work at the Banner of Truth, including Dallimore’s work. Houghton’s own literary style is simple, reserved, and almost quaint, though not *jejune*. This is not to say that he is tedious to read, if anything his style reflects his personality that was quite endearing. His memoir is a good example of how he approached issues of style. He laced his work with personal

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<sup>350</sup> Geoffrey Williams, letter to Arnold Dallimore, October 23, 1968.

<sup>351</sup> Iain Murray, letter to author, May 2, 2011.

<sup>352</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 17.

<sup>353</sup> See S. M. Houghton, “George Whitefield and Welsh Methodism,” *The Banner of Truth* 51 (November-December 1967): 14-18, 20; S. M. Houghton, *Sketches from Church History: An Illustrated Account of Twenty Centuries of Christ’s Power* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1980).

<sup>354</sup> Houghton, *My Life*, 40-42.

<sup>355</sup> Houghton, *My Life*, 98.

anecdotes, vocative interjections, entertaining asides, and colorful descriptions. For instance, of his experience of living for so long in North Wales he wrote, “Its hills and its valleys, its history past and present, its people and its chapels, its ministers and its aspirations, I learned at first hand.”<sup>356</sup> In plain, yet evocative language, Houghton communicated his experience of Welsh geography and culture, blending them into visually stimulating sentences stripped of any flowery or overly-descriptive language. The entire memoir reflects this facility with language and writing.

A closer look at Dallimore’s literary corpus leads one to see the influence of Houghton more positively; it may be that he is an unsung hero who played an important role in Dallimore’s great achievement. Hulse boldly claimed that Houghton is the “key to understanding Arnold Dallimore and his wonderful work on Whitefield.”<sup>357</sup> When the two Whitefield volumes are compared with his other biographies, especially his Irving and Spurgeon, there is a discernable difference in the quality of research and writing. The Whitefield biography made use of a range of primary and secondary sources, is well documented, and while it is engaging, there is a succinctness of style missing in the others that tend to floridity. This discrepancy between the two volumes and the latter writings can be accounted for by Dallimore’s age. He spent the best thirty years of his life writing Whitefield, whereas his other biographies were published in his twilight years. As well, he spent roughly ten years on the latter, not nearly as long as he did on Whitefield. These reasons do not discount the role that Houghton played, who, as a head master of a private school was not averse to pushing his “student” to deeper analysis, and more

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<sup>356</sup> Houghton, *My Life*, 98.

<sup>357</sup> Erroll Hulse, email message to author, August 31, 2012.

precise style. Hulse, who also felt the strength of Houghton's editorial influence, recalled, "If you made a grammatical correction once and you made the error a second time, he reminded you that you had been told before and now must never make that mistake again!" Lloyd-Jones, while writing the first in his *Romans* commentary series, was "stunned" by Houghton when the editor insisted that the Doctor "cut out the preaching and start writing" and that he "would have to reduce his manuscript by one third!"<sup>358</sup> Dallimore was not alone in his confrontation with Houghton, but it is clear that the Banner of Truth's senior editor played a vital role.<sup>359</sup>

#### John Wesley: Friend or fiend?

Another point of difference between Dallimore and Banner of Truth was over the interpretation of John Wesley's (1703-1791) role in the Great Awakening. While more will be said in a later chapter about Dallimore's approach to Wesley, this section provides historical background relevant to the writing of Whitefield. In the manuscript for the second volume of his biography Dallimore maintained a low opinion of Wesley, and accorded him a relegated position in the revival. In his essay, "My years with George Whitefield," Dallimore explained that his "greatest difficulty...arose from the widely prevailing and yet false concept of John Wesley."<sup>360</sup> Wesley was not favourable to Whitefield's Calvinism, and they shared significant personality differences; Whitefield being the more irenic of the two. Dallimore believed that Wesley created a party spirit,

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<sup>358</sup> Hulse, email message to author, August 31, 2012.

<sup>359</sup> I am indebted to Iain Murray for confirming this argument about Houghton's influence. Iain Murray, email message to author, August 31, 2012.

<sup>360</sup> Dallimore, "My years with George Whitefield," 16.

and that many of his followers saw him as “virtually flawless.” Though he was willing to concede “many exemplary qualities,” Dallimore argued that Wesley “was determined to acquire prestige and power, and could be utterly ruthless and lastingly unforgiving toward anyone who stood in his way.”<sup>361</sup> Yet to ignore the boorish Wesley would impinge on a faithful telling of the life of Whitefield, because the two were so closely intertwined. He felt it was necessary not only to write about Wesley, but also to portray him as he really was. In a letter to Murray just before the publication of the second Whitefield volume Dallimore highlighted what he saw as Wesley’s dual personality: “He could be a most veracious man, but could also be an outright liar. He could be humble and self-sacrificing, but could also be arrogant, self-centered. One side of his nature was kind and forgiving, but the other was full of malice and envy, was vicious and vindictive.”<sup>362</sup> In an earlier letter to Murray, Dallimore expressed his belief that Wesley was so uncharitable to Whitefield that “I am almost ready to say that if G[eorge] W[hitefield] had been an Arminian J[ohn] W[esley] would have become a Calvinist.”<sup>363</sup>

The Banner of Truth felt differently and challenged Dallimore’s interpretation of Wesley.<sup>364</sup> According to the editorial “Supporting Arnold Dallimore,” they “were particularly concerned that, in his concern to give Whitefield his true place in the Evangelical Revival, Arnold Dallimore verged on discrediting John Wesley’s importance.”<sup>365</sup> As with his response to Houghton over writing style in the first volume,

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<sup>361</sup> Dallimore, “My years with George Whitefield,” 16.

<sup>362</sup> Arnold Dallimore, letter to Iain Murray, June 21, 1979.

<sup>363</sup> Arnold Dallimore, letter to Iain Murray, April 6, 1973.

<sup>364</sup> Murray published a work on Wesley offering a more appreciative view than expressed by Dallimore. Iain H. Murray, *John Wesley and the Men Who Followed* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2003).

<sup>365</sup> “Supporting Arnold Dallimore,” 26.

Dallimore again pushed back. He wrote a lengthy letter to Murray where he discussed Houghton's interpretation of Wesley. "I bear in mind his advanced age and also your dependence on him. But his comments reveal he just does not know his subject when it comes to the Wesley-Whitefield controversy." After listing a number of sources that he was sure Houghton had never read, he continues, "And as to his manner, I had certain friends here read his comments, and their reaction was, like mine, that he assumes a position of near infallibility. 'Oracular' was the word of one. At best his attitude is that of Schoolmaster to school boy."<sup>366</sup> Houghton regularly wanted Dallimore to insert dates that the latter thought would bog down the flow of the narrative. It was Dallimore's belief that he and Houghton implicitly disagreed as to the intended audience. Whereas "I write with Canadian and American pastors and people in mind—the people who have written to me about Volume 1. You have in mind the British scholar. Both view points are necessary, but who can attain them?"<sup>367</sup> Dallimore sought the help of Lloyd-Jones and the latter "more than once, was put into a mediating role with the Trust's editors."<sup>368</sup> Although as Dallimore described it, Murray also had a hand in settling the issues and "reduced our points of difference to a handful and I went to England again to iron them out with them."<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Arnold Dallimore, letter to Iain Murray, May 12, 1978.

<sup>367</sup> Dallimore, letter to Murray, May 12, 1978.

<sup>368</sup> "Supporting Arnold Dallimore," 26. J. I. Packer offered Arnold advice: "I sympathise [*sic*] with your difficulty in handling the story of John Wesley's arrogance, but I think that if you simply narrate and document the facts, they will speak for themselves. I diagnose Wesley's arrogance as springing from family pride and another fixation (cf. *Son to Susanna*), both of which required him to call himself an Arminian and not take anything from an Englishman of a lower social grade like Whitefield (Moravians, of course, being Germans, were different!). J. I. Packer, letter to Arnold Dallimore, April 22, 1975. Packer referenced G. Elsie Harrison, *Son to Susanna: The Private Life of John Wesley* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1937).

<sup>369</sup> Dallimore, "Answers to Questions," 17.

After a trip to England in June 1978 to speak at the Metropolitan Tabernacle's pastor's conference, Dallimore began to accept the Banner's perspective on Wesley. He visited a number of sites relevant to the Great Awakening, and while in Cornwall he determined to try and be more positive to Wesley's role in the revival. While he maintained that Wesley was "an outright liar and deceiver and well deserving of the name 'The Old Fox,'" he said, "but now I'm trying to overlook this side of his person and in my rewriting I'll try to see mainly the good side. The portrayal in the ms. sent to you [Murray] is correct, but inappropriate. I think I can adopt a largely different attitude."<sup>370</sup>

Dallimore introduced volume two with a discussion of common misconceptions about the Whitefield-Wesley relationship and said that "the real John Wesley is still but little known," and that Wesley has remained a "semi-legendary" figure. He continued: "Many persons who have held the accepted view of Wesley will undoubtedly tend to regard the attempt to deal with him more realistically as motivated largely by prejudice, and such a reaction is fully understandable."<sup>371</sup> Yet Dallimore felt that he must paint a true picture of the differences between the two revival leaders. He said, "I have rewritten this section of the manuscript several times, endeavouring to depict Whitefield-Wesley relationships objectively, and readers will judge as to the degree in which I have succeeded or failed."<sup>372</sup> The entire opening chapter to the second volume detailed the controversy between the two, beginning with the debate over predestination that he had addressed in volume one, giving a more negative slant to Wesley's role, and laying the

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<sup>370</sup> Arnold Dallimore, Letter to Iain Murray, August 2, 1978.

<sup>371</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:6.

<sup>372</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:10.

blame of the division between Whitefield and the Wesley brothers at the feet of John Wesley.

### Praiseworthy reception

The completed biography in two volumes is called *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century*. The first traced Whitefield's life from his birth in 1714 through to his anxious return to England in 1740 to face possible opposition by the Wesleys. Volume two picked up the story in 1741 and carries it to completion with Whitefield's death in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1770. Although Dallimore's primary purpose was to write a full history of Whitefield, he also wanted to set Whitefield up as a model for Christian living. In the preface to volume two he said, "This *Volume 2*, like its companion, *Volume 1*, goes forth with a mission. As the ministry of Whitefield was used in setting men on fire for God two hundred years ago, so may the story of that life be used today. As God then granted a mighty outpouring of His Spirit and used the preaching of the Gospel to the conversion of untold numbers of mankind, so may the record of that work move men to seek and labour unto a renewal of such blessings in this, our equally needy age."<sup>373</sup>

When the first volume was published in 1970 there was a mail strike in Ontario, so Banner of Truth had to send Dallimore's copy to his friend Jack Scott then in Detroit, Michigan, "and it was with high excitement that I went across the border and saw my

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<sup>373</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:ix-x.

first book.”<sup>374</sup> Praises quickly came from all quarters. The words of Van Til, Wirt, and Smith have already given a sense of its positive reception. Likewise, other noteworthy theologians and church leaders shared their enthusiasm. J. I. Packer, at the time still at Latimer House, Oxford, said it was a “...biography in the grand old manner and at a high level of achievement. The steps in Whitefield’s theological and spiritual development are analyzed superbly. One may feel the inadequacy of occasional statements on peripheral matters, but for Dallimore’s treatment of Whitefield himself there can be nothing but praise. Author and publishers, please hurry up with Volume 2.”<sup>375</sup> Packer’s friend O. R. Johnston, of the University of Newcastle, reviewed it in the *Church of England Newspaper* and said, “This penetrating work sets matters right with charity and with impeccable scholarship—and how we thirst for volume 2...I can think of no book better able to renew our vision of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation than this heart-warming account of Whitefield’s life.”<sup>376</sup> In *Christianity Today*, Geoffrey Bromiley wrote, “The first installment of a full-scale account of one of the greatest figures in modern evangelism. The continuation will be awaited with eager expectation.” Allen Guelzo Jr., an expert in eighteenth-century American religion, wrote in an essay on revival literature that Dallimore’s was now the standard biography of Whitefield, and “although Dallimore’s biography was plainly written that ye may believe, it represents a major effort to move Whitefield out of the shadow of Wesley, to redeem him from the picture of public buffoon that the enemies of the Awakening retailed, and to establish in

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<sup>374</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” 17.

<sup>375</sup> Cited in Arnold Dallimore, ed., “Some Expressions of Opinion Regarding Arnold Dallimore’s *George Whitefield*,” (unpublished two-page manuscript, n.d.), 1. Dallimore collected reviews of the first volume. Unfortunately he did not indicate where Packer’s words were printed, or whether they were sent in a letter to himself or *Banner of Truth*.

<sup>376</sup> Cited in Dallimore, ed., “Some Expressions,” 2.

painstaking detail Whitefield's transatlantic goings and comings over three decades."<sup>377</sup>

Later in *Christian History* Guelzo said that the two volumes were "so well written that the length is no burden. [Dallimore] treats Whitefield as a serious theological thinker, rather than a stump preacher, and leaves no detail unexamined."<sup>378</sup> David Lyle Jeffrey, in *English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley* called it "the best modern study of Whitefield."<sup>379</sup> Interestingly, Roger H. Martin, Associate Dean of History at Harvard Divinity School, wrote to Dallimore after the publication of the second volume, saying "how much I enjoyed reading it. The field of 'Whitefield Studies' is so wide, that it is helpful to have a fairly concise examination of his life. Hopefully your work will encourage others to examine a man who, unfairly, has been overshadowed by John Wesley."<sup>380</sup>

*George Whitefield* was not received without criticism, as scholars have taken issue with certain points of interpretation. For instance, whether Whitefield was induced to field-preaching by Howell Harris, J. D. Walsh at the time of Jesus College, Oxford argued that the precedent was set less by the "leather-lunged Harris," than by William Morgan, Whitefield's friend and Cotswold clergyman. Walsh said that Dallimore's evidence in favor of Harris was "inferential and not conclusive."<sup>381</sup> Another criticism was

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<sup>377</sup> Allen C. Guelzo, "God's Designs: The Literature of the Colonial Revivals of Religion, 1735-1760," in Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart, eds., *New Directions in American Religious History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 155.

<sup>378</sup> Allen C. Guelzo, "Whitefield & his world," *Christian History* 12.2 (1993), 45. Volume 2 was also well-received, see Michael Hennell, "Review of *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*" in *Churchman* 94.4 (1980): 366-367.

<sup>379</sup> David Lyle Jeffrey, *English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2000), 280.

<sup>380</sup> Roger H. Martin, letter to Arnold Dallimore, May 6, 1981.

<sup>381</sup> J. D. Walsh, "Eli Halévy and the Birth of Methodism," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series 25 (1975), 8-9.

less academic and reflected the theonomic bias of the reviewer David Chilton, a Christian Reconstructionist who, though largely favorable to the book, said, “[T]he work falls into the typical Banner-of-Truth [*sic*] biographical style; i.e., there is a relative disregard of Biblical standards in law, economics and social relationships.” Later in the review Chilton says that “Whitefield’s neoplatonism was never fully rooted out”—by this he meant the denial of one’s creaturehood (*sic*) and humanity, “the vain wish to be pure spirit and flee earthly cares”—seen in Whitefield’s apparent denial of creaturely comforts, in particular marriage.<sup>382</sup>

For his first volume, Dallimore was awarded two honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees, both from schools associated with the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada. The first came in April 1973 from Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Vancouver, British Columbia, now part of the ACTS consortium. The second came the following May from Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto. In April 1976, D. A. Carson, who at the time taught at Northwest, wrote to Dr. Dallimore asking if he would become a “scholar in residence in either the autumn of 1977 or 1978, which he turned down.<sup>383</sup> Carson added in his letter, “I read the first volume with great pleasure and profit, and therefore look forward to the second with considerable anticipation.”<sup>384</sup> In November 1977 Dallimore was contacted by another leading evangelical scholar, J. Edwin Orr (1912-1987), asking if he would be interested in attending the Oxford Reading

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<sup>382</sup> David Chilton, “Review of *George Whitefield*,” *The Biblical Educator* 2.10 (October 1980), 2-3.

<sup>383</sup> D. A. Carson, email message to author, August 14, 2012.

<sup>384</sup> D. A. Carson, letter to Arnold Dallimore, April 15, 1976.

& Research conference to be held at Regent's Park College in July 1978, and whether he would become a senior fellow of their association.<sup>385</sup>

### Whitefield and the Calvinist international

Whatever one thinks about historiographical debates, Dallimore's work on Whitefield has had a significant impact on evangelicalism. As of May 2011 the sales figures for the first volume, given by the Banner of Truth, were at 30,602 copies, and volume two sat at about half of that at 15,469; these are statistics for English translations only.<sup>386</sup> These numbers are not insignificant.

The biography's importance to English speaking evangelicalism is well-captured by remarks made by D. A. Carson in a discussion of the "pastor-scholar" originally given at a conference on the same subject and later put into print. Carson, in speaking about the different gifts that God gives to his church, pointed to Dallimore as an example of one uniquely gifted by God. He said,

Arnold Dallimore was a Baptist pastor who studied theological training with my dad. His only degree, his terminal degree, was a bachelor of theology. For forty years he served one church in the small Ontario town of Cottam.<sup>387</sup> Nevertheless, he also set himself the task of mastering material on George Whitefield. It became a hobby, a summer challenge, a life goal. He traveled frequently to England, ransacked archives, found material that no one had ever used before and wrote his magnificent two-volume biography of Whitefield. Few books make me weep, but

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<sup>385</sup> J. Edwin Orr, letter to Arnold Dallimore, November 28, 1977.

<sup>386</sup> Iain H. Murray, letter to author, May 27, 2011. According to the publisher, Arnold Dallimore *George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2010), a condensed version of the two volumes initially published in 1990, has sold 21,700 copies; Randy Jahns, email message to author, October 2, 2012.

<sup>387</sup> Carson is incorrect on the length of time Dallimore was in Cottam.

on occasion that biography did. For all its technical competence and heavy documentation, it made me pray, more than once, *Oh, God, do it again!*<sup>388</sup>

Specifically, Dallimore's Whitefield has had an important role in the growth of Reformed theology in the late twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. In *Catch the Vision*, a history of this development, John J. Murray argued that during the period between Spurgeon and Lloyd-Jones, there was little Reformed influence in churches.<sup>389</sup> He cited Lloyd-Jones as the root of the "recovery," as well as Geoffrey Williams of the Evangelical Library, Iain Murray and Banner of Truth, and other notables like J. I. Packer and John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary. Though the movement was underway by the time of publication, Dallimore was involved with Lloyd-Jones, Williams and Murray as early as 1959.

Likewise, in 2007, Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., wrote a series of blogposts on the website for his 9 Marks Ministries called "Where'd All These Calvinists Come From?" In them he gives an account for the rise of what has been called the "Young, Restless, Reformed," or "New Calvinist" movement, which in 2009 was listed by David Van Biema at *Time* magazine as one of the ten ideas changing the world.<sup>390</sup> In the second installment Dever cites Martyn Lloyd-

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<sup>388</sup> D. A. Carson, "The Scholar as Pastor: Lessons from the Church and the Academy" in Owen Strachan and David Mathis eds., *The Pastor as Scholar & the Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry: John Piper & D. A. Carson* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 73. When Carson delivered the lecture, he was visibly emotional when discussing Arnold's biography, see <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/conference-messages/the-scholar-as-pastor>, accessed August 28, 2012.

<sup>389</sup> Murray, *Catch the Vision*.

<sup>390</sup> These terms were first used in Collin Hansen, *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist's Journey with the New Calvinists* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008); David Van Biema, "The New Calvinism," *Time* (March 12, 2009), accessed October 2, 2012, [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1884779\\_1884782\\_1884760,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1884779_1884782_1884760,00.html).

Jones, and in the third the influence of the Banner of Truth Trust.<sup>391</sup> Both laid the bedrock for the foundation of young Calvinists in twenty-first century North American and British churches. From the sales of Dallimore's Whitefield biography, alongside the above quote by Carson (another major figure in the New Calvinist movement), it is demonstrable that Dallimore was an important factor in this resurgence of Calvinism in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. As well, key people in the New Calvinism movement have shown appreciation for Dallimore's work on Whitefield. Popular Reformed blogger Tim Challies reviewed the two volumes in 2007 saying, "Few recent books have so wide and so deep an impact as Arnold Dallimore's magisterial biography of George Whitefield."<sup>392</sup> Dane Ortlund, Senior Editor of the Bible Division at Crossway Books, who received a Ph.D. in New Testament at Wheaton College wrote, "Reading Dallimore's bio of G[eorge] W[hitefield] was critical in my own sense of call into vocational ministry in 2002. It is the best biography I've ever read."<sup>393</sup>

Dallimore concluded the second volume with a chapter titled, "The Measure of a Man." To consider the "measure of a book," it might easily be said that it is taken by those who have read and been encouraged by it. Dallimore spoke of "the breadth of appeal" that Whitefield's ministry had, and the continued interest in this story further proves the point.<sup>394</sup> *George Whitefield* stands as a monument to the indefatigable labours

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<sup>391</sup> Mark Dever, "Where'd All These Calvinists Come From?" accessed August 30, 2012, <http://www.9marks.org/blog/whered-all-these-calvinists-come-part-2-10> and <http://www.9marks.org/blog/whered-all-these-calvinists-come-part-3-10>.

<sup>392</sup> Tim Challies, "Book Review – George Whitefield," accessed October 2, 2012, <http://www.challies.com/book-reviews/book-review-george-whitefield>.

<sup>393</sup> Dane Ortlund commenting on Matthew Harmon's blog *Biblical Theology*, "Finishing Marsden on Edwards; Dallimore on Whitefield Next," accessed October 2, 2012, <http://bibtheo.blogspot.ca/2007/01/finishing-marsden-on-edwards-dallimore.html>.

<sup>394</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:523.

both of its subject and author. Whitefield made multiple trips across the Atlantic to share the gospel with any who came his way. Dallimore travelled as frequently in order to share that story of Whitefield's gospel. And the story continues to be read, lessons learned, and Christians encouraged.

### **Final years and passing**

On March 14, 1994, not long after Dallimore and his wife moved into a new apartment in Leamington, Ontario, he suffered a mini-stroke—a Transient Ischemia Attack (TIA)—and was driven by May to the hospital nearby. He was then sent to London where it was suggested by doctors that he undergo heart bypass surgery, advice that Dallimore flatly rejected. Sadly, he was to continue to have these strokes—May recorded that in two years he had nine TIA's—and doctors finally ordered him to move into a long-term care facility. He moved first into Southgate Residence and later to Kingsville Court in neighbouring Kingsville, Ontario, where he spent his final year. May faithfully drove from her home in Cottam to Kingsville every second day to take care of him, and every Sunday to bring her husband to church when he was strong enough to attend. In spite of his need for a wheel-chair, and the relinquishing of life's regular comforts, May says that her husband never complained.

Life was quiet for Dallimore and he was no longer able to write, but his influence continued to be felt across the world through his many books. May recalled that in the early part of his time in Kingsville Court, four young men who had read the two Whitefield volumes, and were inspired to form their own "Holy Club," came up from

New York State to meet the author. They rented a motel in Leamington and spent a weekend visiting Dallimore, pelting him with questions about Whitfield, church history, and theology that he was all too happy to field. May wrote in her diary that “they were amazed as they sat in his room, how he could talk and remember all the details. They asked him many questions and were amazed at his memory!”<sup>395</sup> They were so taken with his continued ability to teach that they returned with a church group to meet at Cottam Baptist and have Dallimore speak on various subjects and ask him questions. After this mini-conference, the whole group returned to Kingsville Court where they remained to sing hymns for the people who lived there. May said, “It was a great time and most all the people came out of their rooms to listen to their music.”<sup>396</sup>

“Without a struggle”

Dallimore’s health rapidly degenerated during the last year of his life. It was also hard on This was difficult for May, who not only had to watch her husband die, but also suffer her own health problems; doctors told her that she needed back surgery for Spinal Stenosis, which she was scheduled to have in April 1999. On March 17, 1998, due to his severe weakness, Dallimore was moved from the retirement home to the Heart Unit in a nearby hospital for regular medical attention. He showed significant improvement the next day, and so the family was invited to come and visit him. May was assiduous in keeping her husband company and on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> she feeding him supper while he quietly read his biography of Charles Spurgeon. In what remains a poignant testimony to

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<sup>395</sup> May Dallimore, “Memoir” (unpublished manuscript), 2:5.

<sup>396</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 2:7.

his love for May, he told his wife of almost sixty years: “I could never have picked a better mother for my three children;” May wrote, “These were his last words to me.”<sup>397</sup>

When one considers the profound and lasting influence that his mother, Mabel Buckingham, had on his life, Arnold’s final words to May are deeply moving and appropriate.

May left her husband’s hospital room at nine o’clock in the evening on that Thursday evening, and would not see him alive again on this side of the resurrection. Doctor had prepared May for the worst by indicating that her husband’s heart was bad. At two o’clock the next morning she was awoken by a phone call from the hospital asking her to bring the family to his bedside; there they stayed with him for his final hours. In May’s words: “On Friday, March 20 [1998] Arnold passed away at 6:45 A.M., without a struggle.”<sup>398</sup>

His funeral was held at Cottam Baptist Church on the following Sunday evening, and all day Monday, where over 500 people came to pay their respects. “The church was so crowded,” wrote May, that “all the ministers and their wives [were placed] up in the seats reserved for choir. It was full!”<sup>399</sup> Dallimore’s old seminary friend Hal MacBain drove from Toronto to give a eulogy, as did George Hunt, the man who married Arnold and May in 1942. Dallimore’s last pastor, Victor McWilliam of Cottam Baptist gave a tribute, alongside his son Paul. Cheryl Shuttleworth delivered a poem about her dad entitled, “To Those of You Who Never Knew.” Norman Street, at the time pastor of

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<sup>397</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 2:11.

<sup>398</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 2:13.

<sup>399</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 2:13.

Jarvis Street Baptist, shared memories of their friendship. Richard Valade, pastor of Grace Baptist Church of Essex that Dallimore helped to start, preached “the gospel that Arn loved.”<sup>400</sup>

Arnold Dallimore was laid to rest in the cemetery behind Trinity Anglican Church, often called “the little white church,” that is surrounded by headstones, a reminder not only that death comes to us all, but that at the last day those who died in Christ will be raised to new and everlasting life. The church was founded in 1866 and has had a long pedigree in the sleepy community of Cottam and is now part of a two-point charge with St. Paul’s Anglican in Essex. May Dallimore now resides at Erie Glen Manor, a small retirement community in Leamington, Ontario surrounded by fields and a small stream. Though she has aged since the passing of her husband the steel in her eyes remains; so does her quiet faithfulness to the Lord. She keeps a long and detailed prayer list that she prays through regularly; the words of the epistle of James reminds us, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective;” words that well describe the legacy of this ordinary pastor and his faithful wife.

### **Conclusion: Dallimore, suffering and perseverance**

Arnold Dallimore’s writings recorded the lives of his subjects, but to help readers learn by their example. In the case of George Whitefield, it was written, among other things, to encourage gospel ministry to the lost, and to demonstrate character in the face of adversity. Likewise, a number of themes from Dallimore’s life become apparent and form

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<sup>400</sup> Dallimore, “Memoir,” 2:13.

a two-fold subtext to this chapter.<sup>401</sup> As “an ordinary pastor,” Dallimore experienced trials that, like so many other pastors, could have forced him out of ministry to escape to another vocation. This he did not do because of his sense of pastoral call. Related to—and driven by—his calling is the second subtext: Dallimore’s perseverance in the face of suffering and adversity. This conclusion explores the three themes of Dallimore’s sense of call and his perseverance through suffering.

“The goings of heaven upon the soul”: Following the call

As described above, in the late 1920s the youth of Central Baptist Church in London became invigorated by the preaching of their pastor, James McGinlay, and Dallimore was soon to discern his calling. Although the details were not spelled out, what is clear is that his life plans took a drastic change. Work as a jeweler did not satisfy the new desires implanted in his heart, so Dallimore quit his job to work in a factory to save for tuition; after two years he entered training at Toronto Baptist Seminary. He was driven by what he said was the *assurance* “that God had called me to preach.”<sup>402</sup> Elsewhere he described his experience: “I soon came to the place where I was *sure* God was calling me to enter the ministry and with an inner delight I submitted to that call.”<sup>403</sup> The language of both quotes is that of being *sure*. And it is this psychological assurance that carried him through the various stages of suffering that he and his family endured.

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<sup>401</sup> This keeps Arnold from being totally “ordinary” in the sense that D. A. Carson uses it in *Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor*, 9.

<sup>402</sup> Dallimore, “Answers to Questions,” [p. 13], emphasis mine.

<sup>403</sup> Haykin, “Dr. Arnold Dallimore,” 2:75.

Dallimore reflected on his experience in the two-part article, “Death to Self, Road to Life,” the print version of a lecture given to students at TBS, where he wrote about the call of God on the life of the preacher. “Recognizing then the Biblical nature of the work of preaching,” he said, “we must recognize also that *it is a work that a man may truly enter, only at the call of God.*”<sup>404</sup> He argued that the pastoral call is connected with the one given to Old Testament prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, who “heard the call of God to the office.” Like them, the pastor “in equal assurance may...hear the call of God to the work of ministry today.”<sup>405</sup> Again, he used the language of assurance.

Later in the piece Dallimore described the psychology of the pastor who knows that God has called him:

Deeply moved by the goings of heaven upon his soul he may know that God has said of him, ‘He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name...’ and, losing sight of all prospects and enticements that earth may hold, he may assert with the Apostle, ‘When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.’<sup>406</sup>

He used similar language in “The Minister—An Ambassador for Christ,” a graduation address also preached at TBS. Dallimore said, “Granted, no two calls are alike, but there is an experience of the goings of heaven upon the soul, an inner certainty in the heart which turns a man’s attention away from seeking a career related to earthly matters and fills him with an overmastering desire, ‘Oh! that I might preach among the heathen the

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<sup>404</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 20, emphasis his.

<sup>405</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 20.

<sup>406</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 20.

unsearchable riches of Christ!”<sup>407</sup> Further he said that there are “many men who have entered the ministry without any assurance of being called of God.” In response to this, in another place, Dallimore says, “God forbid that any man should attempt to enter the ministry merely to please his parents, to satisfy his pastor, or, as some would think, to enjoy the prestige of an elite profession.” Rather, quoting Spurgeon, “Every man who is rightly in the ministry must have been moved thereto of the Holy Ghost. He must feel an irresistible desire to spend his whole life in his Master’s cause.”<sup>408</sup>

Addressing the seminary students directly in “Death to Self,” Dallimore advised: “Avoid the ministry if you possibly can! But if nothing else in life will satisfy you, and you are moved with a certainty that God has laid His hand upon you and if He has placed within you a desire to spend and be spent in His service, then yield entirely to Him and hurl yourself with all the powers of body, mind, and soul into the glorious undertaking, the work of the ministry, the task of preaching.”<sup>409</sup> Illustrative of Dallimore’s experience of the ministerial call is his description of George Whitefield’s mental state at the realization that God called him to holy orders—“this dread of the ministry.”<sup>410</sup> Whitefield wrote in his journal, “God alone knows how deep a concern entering the ministry and preaching was to me. I have prayed a thousand times, till the sweat has dropped from my face like rain, that God... would not let me enter the Church before he called me and

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<sup>407</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, “The Minister—An Ambassador for Christ,” *The Gospel Witness* 62.7 (June 16, 1983), 3.

<sup>408</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 20, quoting Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Susannah Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon’s Autobiography, Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1899), 1:359. Interestingly, Arnold quotes this in greater length in the beginning of chapter four of the first volume of his Whitefield biography. See Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:78.

<sup>409</sup> Dallimore, “Death to Self...Part One,” 20.

<sup>410</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:87.

thrust me into this work.”<sup>411</sup> In the earlier quote, Dallimore encouraged TBS students to yield entirely to God and be *hurled* into their task. In this, he quotes Whitefield speaking of being *thrust* into the ministry. In the same sense, we can see that Dallimore would have described his own call in similar, violently-passive terms: God threw him into the pastorate, and gave him the ability to hurl himself fully to the task. It could be said of Dallimore, as he said of Whitefield, that he “knew he was called of God to its labours and that before long he must enter upon it...he felt he could undertake it only if he received such an *assurance* from heaven, that he could consider it a Divine commission.”<sup>412</sup> This sense of call not only propelled and kept him in pastoral ministry, but also gave him the emotional and spiritual strength to pursue the historian’s vocation.

“New strength”: Perseverance of the called through suffering

The “assurance from heaven” of his divine commission is what proved to be the ballast that kept the Dallimores afloat through times of suffering in ministry. As this chapter has narrated, Dallimore experienced physical, financial, or emotional hardship from his birth. His parents had little money; his father was authoritarian; he watched his mother, who experienced the death of her first-born, suffer the heartache of living with a hard man; he lived during the poverty of the Depression; he felt belittled in public school and seminary; he continued to experience financial hardship in ministry; Briscoe Street Baptist in London sent him into a depression that led him to disappear to an unknown location; he felt alienated from the ministers in his denomination; he felt inadequate to

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<sup>411</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:86.

<sup>412</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:87. Emphasis mine.

write the life of Whitefield; his wife fell seriously ill on a number of occasions; and finally, he retired to further financial struggles to complete his massive writing project. Yet through all of this, Dallimore persevered in ministry. There was, of course, the difficult three-year period between the Briscoe Street trial and the commencement of his twenty-three year pastorate in Cottam where Dallimore left the ministry altogether. Of this his wife said that it was due to his belief that he was called by God that he returned to the ministry instead of keeping with a new life in construction. He believed in his sense of call, that God had set him apart, and though he needed time to recuperate from a harrowing experience, it was the call that brought him back to the pulpit.

The way that Dallimore described the experience of one of his biographical subjects sheds some light on his own perseverance. Charles Haddon Spurgeon famously suffered depression. Dallimore called them “severe depressions,” and though he said that they were likely brought on by gout, he surmised that there were also ministry-related reasons.<sup>413</sup> Due to the size of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Spurgeon had to deal with the various trials of his people, many who came to him for counsel. Spurgeon’s wife Susannah suffered ill health, which was a great concern to her husband. And due to his stature as England’s great preacher, Spurgeon felt isolated, and “having no one to whom he could fully unburden himself, he built up a sense of trial within his breast, and it gradually bore him down into severe depression.”<sup>414</sup> In these respects, Dallimore could identify with Spurgeon. Dallimore likewise bore the burdens of those in his congregation who came to him for help; Dallimore’s wife May suffered a number of health issues

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<sup>413</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 186.

<sup>414</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 186.

which weighed on her husband; and he felt a sense of isolation from those in his church and the pastors in his denomination that left him suffering alone. Of Spurgeon's depression Dallimore said, "What he suffered in these times of darkness we may not know"—the same could be said of his three month trip to upstate New York.

In Spurgeon's suffering, Dallimore could detect the hand of providence. "Those terrible experiences," he wrote, "had their good effect upon his ministry." For instance, he could empathize with those in his congregation who suffered, which was reflected in his preaching: "His words were full of sympathy that lifted spirits and sent tried men and women forth to face their circumstances with new strength."<sup>415</sup> Dallimore quoted one of Spurgeon's lectures that he claimed "gives insight into Spurgeon's behavior when under depression." Spurgeon said, "There are many passages of Scripture which you will never understand thoroughly until some trying or singular experience shall interpret them to you."<sup>416</sup> It is this theodicy, that God uses suffering for good, coupled with his own assurance that God called him to ministry, that helped Dallimore persevere to the end. When Dallimore retired from Cottam Baptist Church after the publication of his first volume of *George Whitefield*, he did not see himself as abandoning the call that he responded to as a young man. He was as convinced that God wanted him to complete the second volume of his life of Whitefield as when he was first assured that he was to go into the pastorate. Just as he faced the prospect of financial hardship when he left the jewelry business to attend seminary, Dallimore took the same risk and left the pulpit to

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<sup>415</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 186-187.

<sup>416</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 187; citing William Williams, *Personal Reminiscences of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1895), 83-85.

pursue the writer's desk. It was there that he completed his life of Whitefield and his other biographies that this dissertation now turns to examine.

## CHAPTER 4

### GEORGE WHITEFIELD ACCORDING TO ARNOLD DALLIMORE

In 1959 Arnold Dallimore published a negative review of Stuart C. Henry's biography *George Whitefield: Wayfaring Witness*.<sup>417</sup> The review is revealing not only in terms of Dallimore's view of Henry's work—he said Henry “utterly fails to present a true, full and proportioned portrait” of Whitefield—but also of the task he set for himself as a would-be biographer. He wrote that any study of Whitefield “demands the labour of some true historian.” This person must “search out the copious new material” that had become available, and then, after gathering every shred of information, must analyze it, separating the true from the false. Above all, this historian must peer down beneath the surface “to discover the real man—his aims, his motives and his ideals.” Only this kind of work enables the biographer to “know his subject, and interpret him to the public.”<sup>418</sup> Presumably Dallimore saw himself as this “true historian,” and was up to the task of writing such a history. This chapter evaluates whether he succeeded in giving a reliable interpretation of Whitefield to the public.

In light of the admiration that Dallimore had for his fellow Calvinist George Whitefield and that his historical method fits in the providential history end of the spectrum outlined in chapter two, it is pertinent to ask, to what degree did he allow his evangelical and Reformed sympathies to shape the way he wrote history? As a filiopietistic biography, in what way was Whitefield's past usable? Dallimore was aware

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<sup>417</sup> Stuart C. Henry, *George Whitefield: Wayfaring Witness* (New York: Abingdon, 1957).

<sup>418</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, “Review of Stuart C. Henry, *George Whitefield: Wayfaring Witness*,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 32.1 (March 1959), 24.

of the potential for being accused of hagiography and so expressed his desire to avoid it by highlighting Whitefield's character flaws, though couched in admiring terms:

I have endeavoured to give my portrait of Whitefield both reality and depth. I make known not only his accomplishments and abilities, but also his foibles and his mistakes. I must confess, however, that I had almost wished his faults had been more pronounced, lest by reason of their fewness and feebleness, I should be charged with favouritism.<sup>419</sup>

Ian J. Maddock argued that Dallimore did not succeed in this endeavour. In a comparison of the historiography of Dallimore and Harry Stout, Maddock argued that "Dallimore betrays the considerable extent to which his biographical impulses are shaped by a qualified 'hermeneutic of admiration.'"<sup>420</sup> Though Maddock did not define what a "hermeneutic of admiration" is, and it appears to be a term that he invented, a basic definition can be surmised. Dallimore so esteemed Whitefield that he interpreted his life through the lens of admiration, clouding his judgment on the negative aspects of Whitefield's life. The result is hagiographic history. Is Maddock right in his appraisal?

Greater clarity can be given to this question by observing how Dallimore treated Whitefield in areas where ideological bias can cloud historical objectivity. In the case of Whitefield three pertinent areas stand out that give perspective on how Dallimore may or may not have allowed his theological commitments to colour his writing of history. The first is the question of celebrity. How did Dallimore interpret Whitefield's character in light of his transatlantic fame? The second is the important subject of slavery. Did Dallimore have a clear eye on Whitefield's failings regarding the ownership and

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<sup>419</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:15.

<sup>420</sup> Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers, John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2012), 14.

enslavement of Africans? The third is how to understand the nature of revival in general and Whitefield's role as a revivalist in particular. The chapter concludes with some thoughts on Dallimore and the standards of history.

### **Whitefield and the power of celebrity**

Pietistic interpretations of Whitefield have generally focused on his role as one of history's greatest preachers or evangelists. The language expressing this typically involves superlatives that cannot be measured by any empirical standards. How does one determine who is the greatest preacher without some kind of data like statistics?

Interpretations by professional historians tend to focus on the impact that Whitefield had on certain sociological phenomena. For instance, Frank Lambert's *"Pedlar in Divinity"* emphasized the way that Whitefield shaped mass media in eighteenth-century Anglo-America.<sup>421</sup> Of relevance to both of these interpretations is the question of Whitefield's celebrity status. As a powerful orator, Whitefield had the capacity to draw large crowds. They not only came to hear him preach, but also followed after him in ways akin to the Beatle-mania of the 1960s.<sup>422</sup> They came to his campaigns not only because of his ability to preach, but also because he knew how to generate publicity. All of this worked towards establishing him as one of America's first celebrities. The power of celebrity plays directly into the question of hagiography. Whitefield was lifted onto a pedestal by the crowds, in what way did his biographers follow suit? Germaine to this thesis, in what

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<sup>421</sup> Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar in Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>422</sup> Maxie Burch likened Whitefield to a fifth Beatle. Maxie Burch, "The Fifth Beatle No One Knows," accessed June 3, 2014, <http://www.maxieburch.net/blog/?p=553>.

way did Dallimore approach the question of Whitefield and celebrity? With celebrity comes the temptation to pride. Did Whitefield succumb to such a temptation? If he did, was Dallimore able to see the flaws in Whitefield's character?

This section looks at Dallimore's treatment of Whitefield and celebrity by locating the author in his Canadian cultural context. Canadians naturally eschew the concept of celebrity or hero, so why did Dallimore write about Whitefield in such a way? It then turns to look at the nature of Whitefield as a celebrity and how he used it to serve the revivals and his own person. Finally, the section concludes by surveying the ways that Dallimore viewed aspects of Whitefield's celebrity to determine whether he was aware of this as a subject, or whether it was something that Dallimore uncritically espoused, and how this plays into the larger question of whether his biography is hagiography.

Of heroes and not liking them

### **Celebrity and hero**

What is a celebrity? P. David Marshall explained that the word is difficult to define as the concept focuses on what is known about a person not about who that person really is.

Celebrity often has more to do with how a person is perceived by outside observers—in this case the public—than it does about the essence of that particular celebrity. The term is a sign without a clear referent.<sup>423</sup> The word celebrity has its roots in the Latin *celebrāre*, which carries the meaning of renown. In English it is derived from the word “celebration” and initially had to do with the observance of a rite or ceremony. Later it developed to mean “the condition of being much extolled or talked about; famousness,

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<sup>423</sup> P. David Marshall, “Celebrity and Power: Celebrity Status as a Representation of Power in Contemporary Culture” (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1992), 8-9.

notoriety.” Finally it took its form as a celebrated person or public character in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>424</sup> Though the two are closely linked, celebrity should be distinguished from fame.<sup>425</sup> A famous person has a recognized role in public life that merits continued attention, but this is different from celebrity. As John G. Cawelti explained, “The object of celebrity is the person; the object of fame is some accomplishment, action, or creative work.”<sup>426</sup>

In his essay evaluating early evangelical celebrity entitled, “Paparazzi in the Hands of an Angry God,” Gary David Stratton differentiated between two types of celebrity. The first is the “celebrity as star,” which refers to the modern phenomenon of celebrity birthed in the so-called “age of Barnum” in mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth-century Hollywood.<sup>427</sup> Stratton quoted Graeme Turner who described the celebrity-as-star as someone whose “private [life] attract[s] greater public interest than their professional [life].”<sup>428</sup> Scholars tracing the origin of celebrity have pointed to well-known figures like the writer Walt Whitman (1819-1892) and lesser-known figures (in today’s memory) like

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<sup>424</sup> John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, *Oxford English Dictionary* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 2: 1018-1019.

<sup>425</sup> Larry Z. Leslie, *Celebrity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Reference Handbook*, Contemporary World Issues (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 3.

<sup>426</sup> John G. Cawelti, *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture: Essays* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 49.

<sup>427</sup> For “the age of Barnum” see James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>428</sup> Gary David Stratton, “Paparazzi in the Hands of an Angry God: Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and the Birth of American Celebrity Culture,” *The Other Journal* (October 2010), accessed June 4, 2014, <http://theotherjournal.com/2010/10/23/paparazzi-in-the-hands-of-an-angry-god-jonathan-edwards-george-whitefield-and-the-birth-of-american-celebrity-culture/>. Cf. Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2004), 8.

Adah Isaacs Menken (1835-1868) as part of the early history of American celebrity.<sup>429</sup> In this sense, George Whitefield was not a celebrity for purely chronological reasons: he lived before the advent of the star. The second type is the “celebrity as hero,” which has a much older pedigree stretching back to the Graeco-Roman period. Stratton included mythical characters like Achilles, Odysseus, and biblical examples such as David, Mary, and Paul in this category because “they embody the virtues valued in our culture.”<sup>430</sup> This kind of cultural hero needs to be both virtuous and famous in order for them to be emulated. The biblical rationale for such a perspective is Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” Stratton outlined four stages in the creation of celebrity-as-hero. First, a defining incident makes a person a hero; second, an aspect of the person’s character sparks admiration and influence; third, the intentionality of the hero meets the public desire for connection to his or her story; fourth, the public’s identification with the person exerts influence in other’s lives that shapes behaviour.<sup>431</sup> Stratton argued that both Edwards and Whitefield were celebrities-as-heroes and, reflecting the Pauline injunction, that this was a good thing for the church and society.

Carl Trueman shared similarities with the general survey outlined above in a series of critical reflections on the twenty-first century movement dubbed “Young, Restless,

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<sup>429</sup> Cf. David Haven Blake, *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Renee M Sentilles, *Performing Menken: Adah Isaacs Menken and the Birth of American Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>430</sup> Stratton, “Paparazzi.” For a survey of heroes from the past, including those of classical mythology, see Robert Garland, “Celebrity Ancient and Modern,” *Society* 47.6 (November 2010): 484-488. Garland said, “The Greek and Roman world has bequeathed to us an exceedingly rich gallery of individuals who were celebrities in their own day and whose careers provide us with the means to undertake a detailed and in-depth investigation of a phenomenon that is by no means exclusive to modern times.” Garland, “Celebrity,” 484. See also Robert Garland, *Celebrity in Antiquity: From Media Tarts to Tabloid Queens* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., 2006).

<sup>431</sup> Stratton, “Paparazzi.”

Reformed.” In an online essay Trueman differentiated between a person who is a public figure and one who is a celebrity.<sup>432</sup> The public figure is one who is known for performing a public action such as writing or making a speech. The more well-known he or she is the more they are viewed as being famous. As Leslie and Cawelti noted above, celebrity and fame are not identical and can be distinguished, likewise in Trueman’s understanding of celebrity and public figure. A public figure can have a degree of fame yet not be a celebrity. As Peter A. Lawler said, “Celebrity, in the most obvious sense, is the lowest form of fame.” This is so because celebrity involves more than public action or fame, it is a “gift of public opinion.”<sup>433</sup> According to Trueman, celebrity “carries with it connotations of branding and marketing.”<sup>434</sup> Echoing the work of Richard Schickel, Trueman spoke of the “pseudo-familiarity” that accompanies celebrity. This is “the strange familiarity whereby celebrities are referred to in quite intimate terms by people who have never met them or have only the most passing connections with them.”<sup>435</sup> All of this can lead to a celebrity being ascribed a “peculiar power” that they do not intrinsically possess and brings with it “a certain aesthetic influence” where members of a movement begin to look like its celebrities. Trueman advised that church leaders should be wary of such celebrity and about becoming a brand. His fear for the church involves the lack of accountability that often accompanies celebrity.

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<sup>432</sup> Carl R. Trueman, “Public Figures and Celebrities,” *Reformation21* (July 2011), accessed June 5, 2014, <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2011/07/public-figures-and-celebrities.php>. Cf. Collin Hansen, *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist’s Journey with the New Calvinists* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

<sup>433</sup> Peter A. Lawler, “Celebrity Studies Today,” *Society* 47.5 (September 2010), 419.

<sup>434</sup> Trueman, “Public Figure.”

<sup>435</sup> Trueman, “Public Figure.” Cf. Richard Schickel, *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity* (New York: Fromm International Publishing Corp., 1986).

### **“That might hint of boasting”: Canadian anti-heroes**

Dallimore’s *George Whitefield* certainly is a tale of “heroic celebrity.” Yet there is a seeming incongruity between Dallimore’s treatment of Whitefield as a heroic celebrity and his own Canadian context. Historically Canadians have had little place for heroes or celebrities in their cultural memory. As John Ralston Saul said, “It is difficult to think of a country where the modern idea of the Hero is less celebrated.”<sup>436</sup> This is largely to do with the stereotypical polite Canadian disposition. As Peter C. Newman explained, Canadians “by habit and temperament do not recognize heroes because that might hint of boasting.”<sup>437</sup> This antipathy toward hero is also due in large part to Canada’s relationship to the United States, a country that venerates its heroes. One could think of a diverse array of American heroes like Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), Robert E. Lee (1807-1870), and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), but there are few Canadian equivalents. Canadians regularly try to distinguish themselves from their southern neighbours, and the lack of a celebrity culture is one way they do it. Canadians do take pride in heroic efforts—one only has to think of the way that the Battle of Vimy Ridge is upheld in the Canadian memory as the beginning of its national identity independent from Britain.<sup>438</sup> But this kind of appreciation for military, and even sports, heroism is not the same as American or British hero-worship. Saul said,

This is not to say that thousands of people haven’t acted in an heroic manner, in wars and out of wars. The hero of the heroic action has nothing to do with modern Hero worship. And it must be said that, even when it comes to the hero of the heroic

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<sup>436</sup> John Ralston Saul, *Reflections of a Siamese Twin* (Toronto: Viking, 1997), 139. I am thankful to Michael John Plato of Toronto, Ontario, for this reference.

<sup>437</sup> Peter C. Newman, *Heroes: Canadian Champions, Dark Horses and Icons* (Toronto: HarperCollins, ), 2. Newman says that Canadians would “rather be Clark Kent.” Newman, *Heroes*, 1.

<sup>438</sup> Geoffrey Hayes, Andrew Iarocci and Mike Bechthold eds., *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007).

act, Canadians are willing to show respect, but little more. They are nervous that anything more might slip into that other thing.<sup>439</sup>

Newman provided an example of the way Canadians view those who have displayed bravery in battle. Although the Canadian government has its version of the Victoria Cross, a medal that recognizes military valour, none have been awarded. Canadians prefer anonymous bravery or team-oriented heroism to pageantry. The shared qualification of any who come close to being considered a Canadian hero is that they are dead. Newman cited Louis Riel (1844-1885) as a typical example of a Canadian hero. Riel was the nineteenth-century Canadian politician and Métis leader who led the Red River Rebellion in 1869-1870. He was executed in 1885 for treason after a series of battles against the armed forces of the Canadian government.<sup>440</sup> Riel, Newman said, “personified the quintessential Canadian hero: a deluded mystic who died prematurely by pretending to be sane.”<sup>441</sup>

What might also be related to Canadians’ self-conscious distancing from their American cousins is their desire not to be put upon, and the idea of a hero is seen as an imposition. In his biography of Gabriel Dumont (1837-1906), another Métis leader like Riel, George Woodcock said, “The pattern is clear. Canadians distrust heroes, partly because heroism is always a kind of imposition; the hero is dominating us by his strength, by his brute courage, and we have become suspicious of such qualities.”<sup>442</sup> Reflecting

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<sup>439</sup> Saul, *Reflections*, 139.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State*, Religions of the Americas (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2012).

<sup>441</sup> Peter C. Newman, *Canadian Heroes*, accessed June 4, 2014, [http://www.greatquestions.com/en/PeterCNewman\\_Article1.html](http://www.greatquestions.com/en/PeterCNewman_Article1.html).

<sup>442</sup> George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont* (Edmonton, AB: Hurtig Publishers, 1976) 11, cited in Saul, *Reflections*, .

Newman's sentiments on Riel, Woodcock argued that Canadians prefer to identify with martyrs. So, in contradistinction to Britain and the United States, Canada has not had a Lord Nelson or a General Patton, neither has it had a "Lady Di" or a "Brangelina." When a celebrity like Neil Young or Justin Bieber rises through the ranks, they typically move to the United States.

In light of this Canadian antipathy, how can we understand Dallimore's heroic celebrity, George Whitefield? It is important to remember that Whitefield was not a Canadian hero, he was British who had a significant impact in colonial America. Thus Dallimore was not out of step with the Canadian "tall poppy syndrome." Canadians typically do not have problems with heroes from other lands.<sup>443</sup> In fact, he falls into line with his own culture in his unpublished manuscript of the Canadian pastor T. T. Shields, where at a number of points he is significantly critical of his subject.<sup>444</sup> Dallimore's work on Whitefield fits well with Canadian Anglophilia, the common Canadian love for British history and culture.<sup>445</sup>

#### "Saw him as their champion": Whitefield as celebrity

The eighteenth century had many glamorous characters who could be considered celebrities, none more-so than the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Rousseau was more than a thinker, he was also a playwright, a composer, and a writer. Robert Van Krieken described Rousseau as "the European celebrity of his day,

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<sup>443</sup> I owe this insight to Michael John Plato of Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>444</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *Thomas Todhunter Shields: Baptist Fundamentalist* (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. Michael Plato, "There'll Always Be An England: Anglophilia as Antimodern Leasure," *College Quarterly* 13.4 (Fall 2010), accessed June 28, 2014, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ930412.pdf>.

constantly being gossiped about in newspapers and cafes, as recognized a face on the streets of Paris as Diana was globally two centuries later.”<sup>446</sup> Van Krieken compared Rousseau and the Princess of Wales to highlight certain aspects of celebrity:

The characteristics of celebrity which Rousseau and Diana shared included the capacity to communicate with a comparatively large audience relatively quickly, a fascination with social mobility, meritocracy and the possibilities of “democratic aristocracy,” a split between the private and public self and a need to manage the relation between the two. For Rousseau as well as for Diana, the public interest in who they “really” were, the human being behind the public image, was both a benefit and an unwelcome intrusion into their private lives. In both the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, “being well known” was an enormous form of capital or surplus-value, independent of whatever achievement or social position one was well known for, capable of being exchanged for, and transformed into, other kinds of capital: power, wealth, esteem, status. The power relation between them and their audiences was entirely symbolic, as opposed to political, military or economic power.<sup>447</sup>

Much of this description could be applied to Whitefield. For instance, he demonstrated a profound ability to communicate with large audiences through preaching and the printed word. The numbers who came to hear him preach from the earliest days of his ministry were remarkable. Examples of their size are many, such as his farewell sermon on the Boston Common in 1740, when he was just 25 years old, which attracted some 23,000 people. In Philadelphia, Whitefield’s friend Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) conducted an acoustic experiment and concluded that one of the revivalist’s sermons that he attended had an audience of approximately 30,000 people. Whitefield himself estimated that over his seven trips to America, and his various preaching tours in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the Netherlands and the Caribbean, he preached at least 18,000 times, addressed roughly ten million hearers in his lifetime, and that four-fifths of the American colonists

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<sup>446</sup> Robert Van Krieken, *Celebrity Society* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 4.

<sup>447</sup> Van Krieken, *Celebrity Society*, 4.

from Georgia to New Hampshire heard him at least once.<sup>448</sup> Whitefield brought about a revolution in print culture that created a burgeoning market for newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets. This allowed his message of the “new birth” to be read in mass settings on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>449</sup> Lambert has demonstrated that Whitefield created a religious market that largely centered on himself and his message. As Lambert described, “Through bold promotion, Whitefield limned the self-portrait he desired—a divine instrument producing remarkable results.”<sup>450</sup> Or, as Harry Stout explained,

So pervasive was Whitefield’s impact in America that he can justly be styled America’s first cultural hero. Before Whitefield, there was no unifying intercolonial person or event. Indeed, before Whitefield, it is doubtful any name other than royalty was known equally from Boston to Charleston. But by 1750 virtually every American loved and admired Whitefield and saw him as their champion.<sup>451</sup>

Whitefield is often looked to as one of the first, if not *the* first American celebrity. Richard Brookhiser wrote, “The first three celebrities in American history—the first people who had, during their lifetimes, a powerful hold on virtually everyone—all were named George: George III, George Whitefield, and George Washington.”<sup>452</sup> Stratton fit Whitefield into his four stages of celebrity—incident, identification, intentionality, and influence. Whitefield’s “incident” was his first trip to America and the successful open-air preaching campaign immediately before it. Whitefield also “identified” with the

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<sup>448</sup> J. I. Packer, “The Spirit with the Word: The Reformational Revivalism of George Whitefield,” in W. P. Stephens, ed., *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: Essays in Honour of James Atkinson* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 168.

<sup>449</sup> See Ian Hugh Clary, “George Whitefield: Preacher of the New Birth,” *Credo Magazine* 4.3 (2014), forthcoming.

<sup>450</sup> Lambert, “*Pedlar in Divinity*,” 230.

<sup>451</sup> Harry S. Stout, “Heavenly Comet,” *Christian History* 38 (1993), 13-14.

<sup>452</sup> Richard Brookhiser, “Celebrity Conquers America,” *American Heritage* 49.4 (July-August 1998), 30. This dissertation cites Brookhiser from the online edition: <http://www.americanheritage.com/content/celebrity-conquers-america>, accessed June 7, 2014.

public, especially the entertaining aspects of his preaching. In his second preaching tour Whitefield was “intentional” in the management of his celebrity by making it an intercolonial event, particularly with the use of mass media. This then gave him “influence” where he became able to network with the upper echelons of society, and where he obtained a voice to critique others of standing like unconverted ministers.<sup>453</sup> Thus Whitefield was a “heroic celebrity.” Such sentiments have been echoed by scholars of eighteenth-century evangelicalism. Nathan Hatch said, “Whitefield became Anglo-America’s first religious celebrity because he competed for public attention outside the arena of the churches—in the marketplace.”<sup>454</sup> Stout wrote, “As the first intercolonial religious celebrity, Whitefield paved the way for extrainstitutional movements that would reverse traditional order and travel from the bottom up.”<sup>455</sup> Whitefield’s celebrity began even before he commenced his ministry in the American colonies. Between August and December 1737, while he waited for his delayed ship to take him on his first voyage to the new world, he preached over a hundred times in London and became, in the words of Mark Noll, “London’s best known celebrity.”<sup>456</sup>

A telling example of Whitefield’s lasting celebrity is the way that his body was treated after his death. Whitefield’s life expired on September 30, 1770, in Newburyport, Massachusetts, not long after he preached to a crowd who followed him to his lodgings demanding a sermon. His body now appropriately lies in a crypt beneath the pulpit at “Old South,” the First Presbyterian church in the town. Today tourists, mostly

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<sup>453</sup> Stratton, “Paparazzi.”

<sup>454</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, “Preface,” in Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, x.

<sup>455</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 92.

<sup>456</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, A History of Evangelicalism (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 89.

evangelicals, make regular pilgrimages to the site, averaging anywhere from 700 to 1000 visitors per year.<sup>457</sup> Such veneration is not new. Arthur S. Lefkowitz recorded the story of soldiers in Benedict Arnold's (1741-1801) army who were stationed in Newburyport. After attending a special service at First Presbyterian Church, the men formed two ceremonial lines inside the church and presented arms. When the service was complete, Colonel Arnold with his senior officers and the church sexton went down to the crypt where Whitefield was buried. Lefkowitz described what happened next:

The sexton removed the lid from Whitefield's coffin, and Arnold and his officers gazed upon the remains of the great cleric. Whitefield's body had decayed, but some of his clothing remained intact. The sexton solemnly reached into the coffin and removed the clerical collar and wristbands from the corpse. He cut them into small pieces with a pair of scissors and gave a piece of the precious relic to each officer to take with them to Quebec. As the coffin was closed, they prayed for the success of their enterprise.<sup>458</sup>

For evangelicals who criticize Roman Catholics for their relics, this is certainly a surprising tale! An even more morbid illustration of Whitefield's post-mortem celebrity comes from the early nineteenth century. In the introduction to his book on Whitefield's spirituality Michael A. G. Haykin recounted the story of two English Baptists, Francis Alexander Cox (1783-1853) and James Hoby (1788-1871), who traveled to Newburyport to see where Whitefield was buried. After going down into the "subterranean vault," they sat on two other coffins and watched as the lid was lifted off of Whitefield's "to reveal the skeleton secrets of the narrow prison-house." They handled his skull while they thought of his devoted life and expressed adoration to God who fitted Whitefield for this

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<sup>457</sup> G. Jeffrey MacDonald, "Evangelicals on the Newburyport Trail," *Christianity Today* 53.7 (July 2009), 35.

<sup>458</sup> Arthur S. Lefkowitz, *Benedict Arnold's Army: The 1775 American Invasion of Canada During the Revolutionary War* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2014), 61-62.

life and the life to come. As Haykin observed, “What makes this scene even more *outré* is that the skeletal remains that Cox and Hoby viewed were not intact.” A bone from Whitefield’s right arm had been stolen by another Englishman. It was returned to the church in a wooden box—which is currently on display in the church—either in the late 1830s or 1840s.<sup>459</sup>

Whitefield himself was aware of his celebrity and struggled with the temptations that it aroused. In his *Journals* he wrote: “The tide of popularity now began to run high. In a short time, I could no longer walk on foot as usual, but was constrained to go in coach, from place to place, to avoid the hosannas of the multitude. They grew quite extravagant in their applauses; and had it not been for my compassionate High Priest, popularity would have destroyed me.”<sup>460</sup> If Whitefield could be honest about his own struggles with celebrity and fame, why should his biographers not be?

#### Dallimore and Whitefield’s celebrity

Celebrity and hagiography are related issues. The power that a celebrity held over his or her audience in their day can reverberate down through history so that historians can be taken up by the same magnetism and fail to view their subject in a critical light. Not only do historians have to wrestle with the issue of Whitefield’s celebrity, they also have to be aware of the effect of that celebrity on their own work. According to Jessica M. Parr, there are “many faces” of Whitefield depending on the perspective of the biographer

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<sup>459</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Revived Puritan: The Spirituality of George Whitefield*, Classics of Reformed Spirituality (Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2000), 21-22.

<sup>460</sup> George Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals 1738-1741* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1998), 89.

studying him.<sup>461</sup> From his death his followers sought to preserve his memory that ultimately became an effort to defend his sometimes controversial legacy. In this regard, how did Dallimore write about Whitefield's celebrity, and to what degree was his writing shaped by it? Who was Dallimore's Whitefield?

Biographers since Whitefield's day have described his life and ministry using superlative terms. One of his earliest biographers, John Gillies (1712-1796), was commissioned by Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), and Whitefield's executrix after his death. Gillies' work was written to challenge the negative images of Whitefield's ministry, especially as they pertained to accusations of financial infelicitities.<sup>462</sup> Of Whitefield Gillies wrote, "Since my first acquaintance with him...I have highly esteemed him, as an excellent Christian, and an eminent Minister of the Gospel...I often considered him as an angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, to preach unto them that dwell on earth."<sup>463</sup> As Joseph B. Wakeley aptly observed, "[Whitefield's] whole history is chivalrous and romantic, far surpassing fiction. There is nothing like it in the history of the Church or the world. It stands alone—without a parallel."<sup>464</sup> Such accolades are found in twentieth- and twenty-first-century studies of Whitefield as well. Martyn Lloyd-Jones exclaimed, "George Whitefield is beyond any question the greatest English preacher of all time...This man was simply a

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<sup>461</sup> Jessica M. Parr, "Inventing George Whitefield: Celebrity and the Making of a Religious Icon," (PhD dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 2012), 1.

<sup>462</sup> Boyd Stanley Schlenther, "Whitefield, George (1714–1770)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29281>, accessed 6 June 2014].

<sup>463</sup> John Gillies, *Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield, M. A.* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772), 296.

<sup>464</sup> J. B. Wakely, *The Prince of Pulpit Orators: A Portraiture of Rev. George Whitefield, M. A.* (New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1871), 6.

phenomenon.”<sup>465</sup> Steven J. Lawson said, “[T]hat God raised up the English evangelist George Whitefield. Like lightning from a cloudless sky, Whitefield stepped onto the world stage as the most prolific herald of the gospel since the days of the New Testament. God empowered Whitefield to become a blazing lamp on a hill in the midst of Satan’s empire of darkness.”<sup>466</sup> Aside from the vexing question of how one can measure who is the greatest preacher—should numbers of converts be the standard to determine the veracity of this claim?—such accolades often reflect an uncritical perspective on Whitefield. For instance, Lawson claimed that in Whitefield, “There was no false dichotomy between his personal life and public ministry, no firewall separating the two.” Later in his book he made a similar point: “So godly was [Whitefield], there was never a legitimate scandal that surrounded his personal life.”<sup>467</sup> As the next section of this chapter details, Whitefield was a slave-owner, so it is difficult to claim that the Grand Itinerant had no legitimate scandal. Though Whitefield decried the “perfectionism” of the Wesleys, one would think from such accolades that Whitefield himself was entirely sanctified.

Dallimore clearly saw Whitefield in a similar, though not uncritical, light. Indeed, in the preface to his condensed Whitefield biography Dallimore called him, “[T]he greatest evangelist since the Apostle Paul.”<sup>468</sup> However, it should be noted that the quote is from a preface and that superlative language does not appear in the rest of the short

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<sup>465</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans*, 104, 111.

<sup>466</sup> Steven J. Lawson, *The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield, A Long Line of Godly Men Profile* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2013), xviii. In numerous places Lawson claimed that Whitefield was the greatest preacher since the time of the New Testament, see, for example, Lawson, *Evangelistic Zeal*, 2, 5, 19.

<sup>467</sup> Lawson, *Evangelistic Zeal*, 30, 44.

<sup>468</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God’s Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 9.

book. The language does appear at places in the two volumes. In the second volume he made the same statement about Whitefield as the greatest preacher since Paul.<sup>469</sup> In a brief discussion of Whitefield as an orator Dallimore wrote, “[I]n any appraisal of the greatest orators of all time—those of antiquity as well as of later centuries—Whitefield must be recognized as possessing a rare, and perhaps unique, prominence.”<sup>470</sup> Yet unlike hagiographies of Whitefield old and new, Dallimore’s work is not suffused with such praise.

As chapter three outlined, Dallimore did not at first decide to write about Whitefield because of any preconceived notions about the evangelist’s greatness. Rather, he initially wrote his biography in the hopes of alleviating some of his financial burden. His sense of Whitefield as a hero would have come in the process of researching and writing. There are a number of factors that might explain how this developed. The first is that Dallimore was educated at Toronto Baptist Seminary under the tutelage of T. T. Shields, a Briton who venerated his own heroes. Shields, himself likened as the “Spurgeon of Canada,” held up figures of the Christian past such as C. H. Spurgeon in hero-like fashion.<sup>471</sup> Past heroism regularly featured in Shields’ sermons as illustrations to be emulated. During the Second World War Shields often looked to Winston Churchill as a model for leadership. It is interesting that Shields had his own portrait taken by Yousuf Karsh (1908-2002), who also famously took Churchill’s portrait in 1941.<sup>472</sup> As a young man Dallimore would

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<sup>469</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:536.

<sup>470</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:535.

<sup>471</sup> For Shields as “Spurgeon of Canada” see George A. Rawlyk, *Champions of Truth: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and the Maritime Baptists* (Montreal, QC and Kingston, ON: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), 50.

<sup>472</sup> Cf. Yousuf Karsh, *Karsh: Beyond the Camera* (Jaffrey, NH: David R. Godine, 2012). For Shields’ portrait by Karsh see Leslie K. Tarr, *Shields of Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1967), 175.

have witnessed and to some extent imbibed this perspective on the hero. The second factor was Dallimore's friendship with British evangelicals like Lloyd-Jones and Iain Murray. Like Dallimore, Lloyd-Jones looked to the figures of church history in a hero-like fashion, particularly those of the evangelical period like Whitefield and the Welsh revivalist Daniel Rowland (1713-1790), whom Lloyd-Jones called "the greatest preacher in the world."<sup>473</sup> When Dallimore first met Lloyd-Jones at the Carlton Club in London he had already written a draft of his Whitefield biography, but the Doctor gave him great encouragement to do more research and delve into primary sources. He communicated the great need for the church to recapture the zeal of Whitefield for saving souls. Thus Dallimore would have gone from merely being a biographer to make some money on the side, to being an advocate for Whitefield as a hero. Murray's 2009 book *Heroes*, which offers biographical chapters on well-known and obscure Christians, is an example of how to look to the past to find heroes to emulate. Murray included in it the regular cast of Edwards and Whitefield, but also highlighted lesser-known figures like Charles Colcock Jones (1804-1863), a Presbyterian slaveholder in Georgia who preached to his slaves. In regard to the latter, Murray was rightly critical.

### **Celebrity and ego**

Celebrities are noteworthy for inflated egos. In what sense did Whitefield wrestle with problems of pride as he preached to thousands, and how did Dallimore deal with it? Mark Noll spoke of Whitefield's "characteristic mixture of ego and diffidence." He cited as an

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<sup>473</sup> D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002), 104. Cf. Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985).

example a quote by Whitefield in a letter written not long after he preached his first sermon at St. Mary de Crypt: “I trust I was enabled to speak with some degree of Gospel authority. Some few mocked, but most for the present seem struck, and I have since heard that a complaint has been made to the bishop that I drove fifteen mad at the first sermon.”<sup>474</sup> Yet at the same time Whitefield wrestled internally with problems of ego. Dallimore recorded him as saying, “God give me a deep humility, a well-guided zeal, a burning love and a single eye, and then let me or devils do their worst!”<sup>475</sup> Dallimore was not blind to Whitefield’s struggles with pride and described them. “More than once he accused himself of pride,” Dallimore wrote, “Looking upon his great fame as a danger and a stumbling-block, he portrayed himself in such a way as to make the people see that their idol was but a poor, weak sinner.”<sup>476</sup> Dallimore also saw in Whitefield’s regular confessions of sin recorded in his letters and journals an underlying struggle with pride. Whitefield’s most frequent prayers were for God to humble him. Dallimore believed this was largely to do with Whitefield’s controversies with unconverted ministers: “In his sword-brandishing he had taken unto himself something of the glory that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and this, we may be sure, was the sin that especially caused his grief.”<sup>477</sup> When adoring correspondents showered praise upon him, Whitefield had to rebuff them saying, “You have my person too much in admiration. If you look to the instrument less and to God more, it will be better.”<sup>478</sup> Dallimore’s descriptions of

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<sup>474</sup> Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 86. Noll cited Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:97 instead of Whitefield himself.

<sup>475</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:140.

<sup>476</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:402.

<sup>477</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:402.

<sup>478</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:402.

Whitefield's pride were often framed as a great man's struggle against sin. Thus he viewed the struggles in a generally positive light. Nonetheless, he did not gloss over them as though they were not a problem.

Dallimore's criticisms of Whitefield were not relegated just to issues of humility. Alongside the chapter dealing with the problem of slavery, which will be detailed in the next section, Dallimore devoted a chapter to what he called "Whitefield—right and wrong." One of the burdens of the two-volume biography of Whitefield was to defend its subject against the prevailing notions of John Wesley as the founder of Methodism. Thus Dallimore was openly critical of Wesley, and as was explained in chapter two, the biographer had a genuine struggle in putting Wesley in any positive light. Without wanting to make Whitefield appear the saint and Wesley the devil, Dallimore sought to be open about what he saw as Whitefield's mistakes and failings, though he claimed that "Whitefield's mistakes...were of a different kind" than Wesley's.<sup>479</sup>

In his chapter on Whitefield's failures, Dallimore noted that the majority of Whitefield's errors were youthful and occurred early in his ministry, particularly in 1739. They were most common in his controversies with anti-evangelical clergy who were openly critical of Whitefield. Though he initially decided not to answer his critics after they formed a united front against him in print, as the opposition ramped up he altered this practice. He opted instead to reply to his critics' denials of truth or rejections of Christian ethics. Dallimore saw this changed course as a commendable choice—a defence of the gospel needed to be made. The fault with Whitefield's change lay primarily in the manner in which it was expressed. Dallimore said that it "sometimes

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<sup>479</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:333.

displayed the ‘style too apostolical,’” for which Whitefield ultimately had to apologize. This bad manner was most clearly seen in Whitefield’s interaction with Joseph Trapp (1679-1747), professor of poetry at Oxford, who also held three livings in the Church of England. Trapp had preached against Whitefield on a number of occasions in various churches, and published his critique in four discourses in 1739.<sup>480</sup> This spawned a number of responses and rejoinders from various London leaders, some siding with Trapp, others with Whitefield. For his part Whitefield preached a series of sermons answering Trapp that were immediately published that same year.<sup>481</sup> Of them Dallimore said, “[W]hile much in these sermons of Whitefield’s is highly commendable, all is not so.”<sup>482</sup> Whitefield demonstrated skill as a controversialist, and showed up Trapp’s lack of good exegesis, but paraded his knowledge before a watching audience. After giving a series of quotes to demonstrate this attitude, Dallimore concluded that Whitefield exhibited a certain bravado that he later had to apologize for. This same tone also crept into his interactions with other ministers who were critical of his ministry. Though Whitefield gave clear-cut responses to them, which Dallimore thought was admirable because they kept his flock from confusion, he was “again partly wrong in his manner.”<sup>483</sup> As Whitefield confessed, “I have frequently written and spoken in my own spirit, when I thought I was writing and speaking by the Spirit of God.”

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<sup>480</sup> Joseph Trapp, *The Nature, Folly, Sin, and Danger of Being Righteous Overmuch* (London: S. Austen, 1739).

<sup>481</sup> George Whitefield, “The Folly and Danger of not Being Righteous Enough” in Lee Gatiss ed., *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 1:168-185.

<sup>482</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:337.

<sup>483</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:340.

Another error that Dallimore called “regrettable, yet perhaps was hardly avoidable,” and is related to the question of celebrity was Whitefield’s publishing of additional *Journals*. These were lamentable largely because they repeated the faults that Whitefield had committed in his first journal, namely recounting in the same bombastic manner his earlier controversies. Dallimore claimed that “These records have been chiefly responsible for posterity’s concept of Whitefield.” They were the production of a young man of twenty-three and twenty-four and portrayed a “period of his life that was not normal.” Even Whitefield in later years admitted that he published them too soon. “His error has done his memory harm, and it is necessary that its limited nature be recognized.”<sup>484</sup> Though Dallimore noted that the entries from the Holy Club days “smack of an egoism which is unbecoming,” he nowhere chastised Whitefield for vain self-promotion in the publication of the *Journals*.<sup>485</sup> However, there can be no doubt that Whitefield strategized in their publication and that of the sermons and that they shaped his public image. In strong language, Stout wrote, “Whitefield’s *Journals* were... notable both for their shameless egocentricity and for the creation of a persona deliberately crafted for public dissemination and image.”<sup>486</sup> Self-promotion was one means of attack that London antirevivalists levelled against him. Samuel Weller (1684-1753) was scathing at Whitefield’s self-promotion: “[T]he Conduct of this Gentleman in publishing the daily Occurrences of his Life is without Example, and unjustified by a Precedent among the Saints of God.”<sup>487</sup> Dallimore nowhere mentioned Weller. Similar concerns

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<sup>484</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:345.

<sup>485</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:105.

<sup>486</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 223.

<sup>487</sup> Samuel Weller, *The Trial of Mr. Whitefield’s Spirit: Some Remarks Upon His Fourth Journal* (London: T. Gardner, 1740), 10. I owe this reference to Lambert, “*Pedlar*,” 127.

were raised against Whitefield in America years later. His self-promotion was seen as evidence that the revival was only a matter of appearance and a fabrication. Lambert cited a letter written to the *Boston Evening-Post* on September 23, 1754, as an example. This writer accused Whitefield of preaching sermons filled with “pretty diverting Stories” that had as their main point “to establish Mr. Whitefield’s Reputation.”<sup>488</sup> Even evangelicals who sympathized with Whitefield were concerned about how he appeared in his *Journals*. In a letter to Nathaniel Wood, his old schoolmaster at St. Alban’s, on September 10, 1741, Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) expressed his opinions about Whitefield: “I am sorry to hear Mr. Whitefield has misrepresented things, as your letter imports, I take him to be a very honest, though a very weak man. Who can wonder if so much popularity has a little intoxicated him? He certainly does much good, and I am afraid some harm.”<sup>489</sup> Dallimore recognized Whitefield’s propensity to fabrication as well early on when he inflated numbers of those who came to hear him preach. Whitefield himself admitted this and in later editions of his *Journals* reduced the numbers to believable proportions. For instance, Dallimore cited an early estimate of a crowd at 50,000 that was later recounted as, “said by some to be above 30 or 40,000.” Commenting on this, Dallimore said, “It is probable that this reduction is still not enough and that a figure which would decrease his estimates by half would be more correct.”<sup>490</sup>

Though Dallimore saw shortcomings in Whitefield’s publication record, he was more concerned with how his tone appeared in certain works rather than the justifiability

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<sup>488</sup> Letter to *Boston Evening-Post* (September 23, 1754), cited in Lambert, “*Pedlar*,” 195.

<sup>489</sup> John Doddridge Humphreys ed., *The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D. D.* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 4:56.

<sup>490</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:295-296.

of them as a whole. It does not appear that he was aware of the criticisms that had been levelled at Whitefield from within evangelicalism and without. In this sense, Dallimore was not willing to go beyond Whitefield's mature self-criticism. He recounted an entry in the *Journals* after a later revision where Whitefield said, "In my formal Journal, taking things by hearsay too much, I spoke and wrote rashly of the colleges and ministers of New England, for which, as I have already done it when at Boston last from the pulpit, I take this opportunity of asking public pardon from the press. It was rash and uncharitable and though well-meant, I fear did hurt."<sup>491</sup> D. Bruce Hindmarsh, commenting on the editorial changes Whitefield made to his *Journals* in 1756, said,

He finally made good on all this contrition in 1756, at 41 years of age, when he republished his whole autobiographical corpus (the two-part autobiography and the Journals) in a corrected and abridged version. Many passages that were "justly exceptionable" were silently omitted. By comparing the originals with the 1756 edition, we can thus see two narrative identities for Whitefield: an ebullient and obstreperous young evangelist in the late 1730s and early 1740s, and a chastened and experienced evangelical minister in 1756.<sup>492</sup>

Related to the question of Whitefield and his publications is the problem of the quality of his printed sermons, especially those published between 1737 and 1740 that consist of the majority of those now available. Dallimore observed that the young Whitefield suffered from the fact that "he did not need to do careful work in order to achieve wide circulation." Because there was an eager audience for his sermons he published a number of them (though Dallimore did not indicate which ones) in haste. Dallimore believed that "some might better have been retained and re-written." Due to

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<sup>491</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:552, citing George Whitefield, *Journal* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth), 462.

<sup>492</sup> D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 109.

the hasty nature of these early sermons, any assessment of them “must take into account the fact that they were the work of so young a man—a fact the critics have usually overlooked.”<sup>493</sup>

### Conclusion

Dallimore’s admiration for Whitefield did not lead to a complete whitewashing of the problems of Whitefield’s celebrity, particularly his pride and self-promotion. However, in both instances, Dallimore gave Whitefield a tremendous benefit of the doubt and chalked most of the problems up to youthful ignorance. This fits well with the claim of this thesis that distinguishes between Dallimore’s filiopietistic historiography from hagiography. For Dallimore, in spite of Whitefield’s shortcomings, they were overshadowed by the immense good that he did. As he said, “[T]hough Whitefield may have been wrong in some things and was undoubtedly right in others, all that he did was overshadowed by the magnificence of his ministry.”<sup>494</sup>

### Whitefield and the problem of slavery

While Whitefield may have struggled with the pride that often accompanies the celebrity, the real blot on his reputation that all biographers must address was his role in the early institution of slavery in the southern colonies, particularly South Carolina and Georgia.<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:294-295. Dallimore did not indicate who these critics were.

<sup>494</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:350.

<sup>495</sup> The relationship that Whitefield had with slavery has been treated by biographers and as areas of specific study. See for instance Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 107-108. See also Samuel J. Rogal, “Whitefield, Whittier, and the Poetic Bridge to the Issue of Slavery,” *Asbury Journal* 64.1 (Spring 2009): 23-39; John Coffey, “Evangelicals, Slavery and the Slave Trade: From Whitefield to Wilberforce,” *Anvil* 24.2 (2007):

Stephen J. Stein catalogued three ways that Whitefield biographers have examined the subject up to the early 1970s. There are those who have tried to balance his allowance of slavery with his aims to educate slaves. Others, in an “attempt to mitigate the charge of racial prejudice,” have highlighted the economic constraints that forced Whitefield to use the institution. Finally, others ignored the tension and lauded Whitefield as “the father of nineteenth-century humanitarianism.” Stein included Dallimore in this third group because he argued that Whitefield’s relationship to African Americans was “warm and familiar,” and that he was “the first great friend of the American negro.”<sup>496</sup> This section examines whether Stein was right to say that Dallimore ignored the tension. It interacts with Stein by summarizing Dallimore’s interpretation of Whitefield and slavery in light of scholarship on the “peculiar institution” in pre-Revolutionary America. It looks at whether Dallimore’s admiration for Whitefield clouded his judgment about the moral evils of slavery. It concludes that Dallimore did not ignore the tension and in fact saw the institution as a serious problem for Whitefield’s character. Stein is right to say that Dallimore tried to balance Whitefield’s use of the slave trade with a humanitarian desire to educate slaves. Dallimore also saw and applauded in Whitefield a spiritual motive of wanting to bring the message of salvation to the slaves he owned. While he attempted to temper Whitefield’s involvement in the slave trade with these concerns, Dallimore did

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97-119; Irv Brendlinger, “Wesley, Whitefield, a Philadelphia Quaker, and Slavery,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36.2 (Fall 2001): 164-173; William A. Sloat III, “George Whitefield, African-Americans, and Slavery,” *Methodist History* 33.1 (October 1994): 3-13; Alan Gallay, “The Great Sellout: George Whitefield on Slavery,” in Winfred B. Moore and Joseph F. Tripp eds., *Looking South: Chapters in the Story of an American Region* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), 17-30; Stephen J. Stein, “George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence,” *Church History* 42.2 (June 1973): 243-256.

<sup>496</sup> Stein, “George Whitefield on Slavery,” 243-244. He cited Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:501, 509. The use of the term “negro” is confined in this thesis only to quotations from earlier writers. For reasons why see Ben L. Martin, “From Negro to Black to African American: The Power of Names and Naming,” *Political Science Quarterly* 106.1 (Spring 1991): 83-107.

not do so to the neglect of the horrors of the institution and the stain it left on Whitefield's legacy.

“Yet to understand”: Twentieth-century historians on slavery

The history of slavery in America can be traced back to the early seventeenth century when captured Africans were first brought to Virginia in 1619. By the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 the number of slaves figured around four million. The rise of the American nation occurred largely on the backs of slaves who provided its industrial and economic backbone. By the time of the American Revolution the subject of slavery had been wrestled with for around one hundred and fifty years. Though not the sole cause, slavery was a major factor in the disruption caused by the Civil War. However, as James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton comment, “[M]ost Americans have yet to understand its importance, the institution of slavery itself, or the lives of the slaves.”<sup>497</sup>

Horton and Horton also summarize the attitudes of recent historians, beginning with Thomas F. Dixon, Jr.'s (1864-1946) racist defence of the Ku Klux Klan in his book *The Clansman* (1905).<sup>498</sup> This was produced ten years later as the film *The Birth of a Nation* directed by D. W. Griffith (1875-1948), and famously viewed with approval at the White House of the Wilson administration. Historian Ulrich Bonnell Phillips (1877-1934), who taught at Columbia University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Michigan, and Yale University, “portrayed blacks as passive, inferior people, whose African origins

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<sup>497</sup> James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Slavery and the Making of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8. This paragraph is indebted to Horton and Horton, *Slavery*, 7-8.

<sup>498</sup> Horton and Horton, *Slavery and the Making of America*, 8-10. Cf. Thomas J. Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1905).

made them uncivilized.” Phillips’ scholarly views sadly contributed to racial segregation. He viewed slavery as unprofitable but ultimately crucial for racial control in the south.<sup>499</sup> By the time of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s scholarship largely changed, and there developed a growing sympathy with the plight of the slaves. At this time historians like Eugene D. Genovese (1930-2012), whose work was produced in response to Phillips, brought greater clarity to the subject by allowing the testimonies of slaves to speak for themselves about the horrors that they experienced.<sup>500</sup> When Dallimore wrote and published the first volume of his Whitefield biography the general historical perspective on slavery had begun to change and his work reflects that change. He was openly critical of Whitefield on the problem of slavery. It is for this reason that it would not be appropriate to label his work hagiography.

#### Dallimore on Whitefield and slavery

Dallimore’s forthrightness about Whitefield and slavery appears near the end of the first third of volume one. There he addressed the problems Whitefield faced in wanting to make his orphanage called Bethesda a reality in the colony of Georgia. As Dallimore commented, this made Whitefield turn “in a tragic direction.”<sup>501</sup> At this point slavery had been outlawed by Georgia’s governor James Oglethorpe (1696-1785), though with

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<sup>499</sup> Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*, Southern Classics (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). See also John David Smith and John C. Inscoe eds., *Ulrich Bonnell Phillips: A Southern Historian and his Critics*, Studies in Historiography (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

<sup>500</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1976). For Genovese’s relationship to Phillips’ work see John Herbert Roper, *U. B. Phillips: A Southern Mind* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 3.

<sup>501</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:207.

resistance from the colony's inhabitants.<sup>502</sup> They believed that the hot southern climate necessitated the use of slaves who could physically handle it better than those of European stock. They compared the impoverishment of Georgia with wealthier colonies like the Carolinas and Virginia that allowed for slavery. As Dallimore noted, evangelicals in these and other colonies also "condoned the practice, claiming that (as they supposed) the Gospel could not be taken to the African in his native land" but by bringing him to America he could hear it and be converted. According to Dallimore, Whitefield "proved susceptible to this propaganda." Though the evangelist would later publish a pamphlet critiquing the cruel practices of slave-holders, he was nevertheless "influenced towards accepting the principle of slavery" due to the agitation of the Georgian people.<sup>503</sup> Whitefield along with James Habersham (ca. 1712-1775) and Hugh Bryan (1699-1753) decided to purchase a plantation worked by slaves in South Carolina to fund the Georgia orphanage.<sup>504</sup> As Whitefield explained in a letter dated from "Charles-Town" on March 15, 1747, "God has put it into the hearts of my *South Carolina* friends to contribute liberally towards purchasing a plantation and slaves in this province; which I purpose to devote to the support of Bethesda."<sup>505</sup> That month Whitefield purchased a plantation and called it "Providence." Dallimore did not ignore or whitewash these events but bluntly

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<sup>502</sup> David Lee Russell, *Oglethorpe and Colonial Georgia: A History, 1733-1783* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 177.

<sup>503</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:208. As Mark Galli astutely observed, "As an evangelist, Whitefield was unconventional and remarkable. Lamentably, his views on slavery were conventional and unremarkable." Mark Galli, "Slaveholding Evangelist," *Christian History* 12.2 (1993), 41.

<sup>504</sup> Hugh Bryan had been converted to Christianity during Whitefield's 1740 trip to America and had demonstrated early sympathy with enslaved Africans due to his own capture by Native Americans during the Yamassee War in 1715, though he later became a moderate on the question of slavery. Cf. Leigh Eric Schmidt, "'The Grand Prophet,' Hugh Bryan: Early Evangelicalism's Challenge to the Establishment and Slavery in the Colonial South," *South Carolina Historical Society* 87.4 (October 1986): 238-250.

<sup>505</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:219 citing Whitefield, *Works*, 2:90.

observed the paradox saying, “Thus, the man of God became the owner of slaves.”<sup>506</sup> Though he argued that the slaves were treated with kindness by Whitefield who would have “brought them under the sound of the Gospel,” Dallimore was critical that his subject should resort to such a heinous institution. He said, “[I]n this action Whitefield was making himself a partner in the practice of slavery, with all the inhumanity inherent therein, and while his motive was commendable the means adopted was deplorable.”<sup>507</sup> Harry Stout shared similar sentiments in a record of the same event, where he likened Whitefield to the American Founders: “[L]ike those planters who would lead America’s campaign for independence, [Whitefield] was incapable of seeing the contradictions between a rhetoric of freedom and the reality of slavery.”<sup>508</sup>

Dallimore’s most detailed treatment of Whitefield and slavery is the chapter in volume one entitled, “Whitefield and the American Negro.” In it he outlined the convoluted and shameful involvement Whitefield had in the slave trade. Dallimore began by observing the way Whitefield criticized aspects of the institution early in his American tours. Though Whitefield not only supported slavery and brought it to Georgia in the 1740s, he was openly critical of those slave-owners who mistreated their slaves. This criticism was famously expressed in “A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina Concerning their Negroes” which he gave to Benjamin Franklin to publish in pamphlet form.<sup>509</sup> Whitefield noticed in his travels throughout the

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<sup>506</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:219.

<sup>507</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:219.

<sup>508</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 199.

<sup>509</sup> George Whitefield, “A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina Concerning their Negroes” in *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield, M. A.* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771) 4:35-41. This thesis quotes from the original publication, George

colonies that their inhabitants often treated their slaves worse than they treated their own animals. He declared that “God has a Quarrel with you for your Abuse of and Cruelty to the poor Negroes” and that it is “sinful...to use them as bad, nay worse than as though they were Brutes.” The slaves were over-worked and not taken care of. In oft-quoted words he said, “Your Dogs are caress’d and fondled at your Tables: But your Slaves, who are frequently stiled Dogs or Beasts, have not an equal Privilege. They are scarce permitted to pick up the Crumbs which fall from their Masters Tables.”<sup>510</sup> He argued that the slaves should be permitted to enjoy the fruits of their labour and should be provided proper lodging. Whitefield was convinced that because of the cruel way the slaves were treated that God would bring judgment. The letter, as Dallimore explained, “had attained an unprecedented prominence” and “focused public attention on the treatment of the slaves as nothing else had done.”<sup>511</sup> This in turn provoked a strong public backlash from both those who supported and criticized the institution. One particular example, though from an anti-slavery perspective, is the criticism that came from Alexander Garden (*ca.* 1685-1756), the South Carolina Commissary for the Bishop of London, who accused Whitefield of hypocrisy.<sup>512</sup>

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Whitefield, “Letter III: To the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina,” in *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield* (Philadelphia: Franklin, 1740), 13-16. Dallimore’s quotations are not exact representations of this original.

<sup>510</sup> Whitefield, “Letter III,” 13.

<sup>511</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:495-497.

<sup>512</sup> For Alexander Garden’s general criticisms of the Great Awakening, see Fred Witzig, “The Great Anti-Awakening: Anti-Revivalism in Philadelphia and Charles Town (PhD dissertation, University of Indiana, 2008), 166-203..

However, as Dallimore rightly observed, “Whitefield did not attack the practice itself.”<sup>513</sup> As Whitefield said, “Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy Slaves, and thereby encourage the Nations from whom they are bought, to be at perpetual War with each other, I shall not take it upon me to determine.”<sup>514</sup> This fact is important to observe, that Whitefield’s primary concern was not to abolish slavery, but to prevent the cruel treatment of slaves. As Stein said, though Whitefield publicly condemned those who mistreated their slaves, he “stopped short of rendering a moral judgment on slavery itself as an institution.”<sup>515</sup>

In this chapter, after dealing with Whitefield’s letter, Dallimore continued to explore Whitefield’s relationship to African Americans more positively, seeking to balance out the Grand Itinerant’s problematic views. As Stein indicated, Dallimore highlighted Whitefield’s humanitarian efforts to help the slaves. After observing their suffering, Whitefield purchased property on the forks of the Delaware and built a large house that he called “Nazareth” particularly to give them a place for instruction. Beyond just wanting to provide for their earthly comforts, Dallimore also explained how Whitefield provided for them spiritually. Before Whitefield, “little had been done to take the Gospel to the black population of America.”<sup>516</sup> Slavery was viewed with complacency and “it was commonly believed that the negro occupied a place in life somewhere above the animal, but also somewhat below the human.”<sup>517</sup> Whitefield directly challenged this

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<sup>513</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:495.

<sup>514</sup> Whitefield, “Letter III,” 13.

<sup>515</sup> Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 244.

<sup>516</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:498.

<sup>517</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:498.

state of mind by preaching to them and providing individual spiritual care. Dallimore quoted from an entry in Whitefield's journal where he said that he was convinced "that negro children, if early brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, would make as great proficiency as any white people's children."<sup>518</sup> Dallimore quoted Whitefield as saying that he did not doubt that "when the poor negroes are to be called, God will highly favour them" and that God will prove that he is no respecter of persons.<sup>519</sup> As a result, slaves often came to hear Whitefield preach, were converted under his ministry, and sought spiritual counsel from him. Gary B. Nash explained that "the advent of black Christianity" in Philadelphia occurred in November 1739 when the "spellbinding young George Whitefield, the generalissimo of the Great Awakening" swept the colonies. Nash estimated that Philadelphia's "approximately one thousand slaves" would have heard Whitefield's daily sermons preached at Christ Church and in the outdoors from the gallery of the courthouse.<sup>520</sup> Yet the picture that is portrayed of Whitefield might not be so pleasant. Thomas Kidd detected a "self-congratulatory tone" in Whitefield's statements about African Americans that implied that Whitefield "thought himself noble" for relating to them. However, as Dallimore and Kidd both note, Whitefield did believe that Africans shared a common Creator and that the gospel of the new birth applied to blacks and whites equally. As Kidd commented, "Whitefield was no

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<sup>518</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:499, citing George Whitefield, *The Journals of George Whitefield* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1960), 379.

<sup>519</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:499.

<sup>520</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 18. I owe this reference to Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 107.

social radical, but neither did he discourage all the egalitarian implications of the gospel.”<sup>521</sup>

Though Stein might not have been correct in his statement that Dallimore ignored the tension in Whitefield’s view of slavery, he did helpfully bring out other racially-oriented problems in Whitefield that Dallimore did not mention.<sup>522</sup> The earlier prophetic edge of Whitefield’s criticisms of slaveholders had “all but disappeared.” In 1747 he built Bethesda in Georgia with the benefits of slave-labour in South Carolina. In 1748 Whitefield was “agitating openly for the legalization of slavery in Georgia.” He corresponded with the colony’s trustees citing the success of his plantation in South Carolina to show that Georgia would benefit economically if it allowed for slavery. This was largely so that he could run Bethesda. As Stein commented, “Whitefield was proposing the extension of slavery in the name of altruistic ends, a suggestion markedly out of step with his earlier indictment of slaveholders.”<sup>523</sup> Yet, as Stein further observed, Whitefield’s concerns were not only economic. A large part of his racial perspective was rooted in “his deep-seated fear of the blacks.”<sup>524</sup> Stein gave two examples from Whitefield’s own writings that show this fear. The first occurred in early 1740 and took place in South Carolina on the way to Georgia. During a midnight horse trip to their

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<sup>521</sup> Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 53.

<sup>522</sup> In his essay on Whitefield and slavery Stein incorrectly argued that Whitefield had written the anonymous “A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America” (1743). Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 243. However, in a later article Stein realized that the author was actually the British Baptist Anne Dutton (1692-1765) who admitted to writing it. See Stephen J. Stein, “A Note on Anne Dutton, Eighteenth-Century Evangelical” *Church History* 44.4 (December 1975): 485-491. Dallimore nowhere mentioned either Stein’s earlier essay nor the anonymous letter written by Dutton.

<sup>523</sup> Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 245.

<sup>524</sup> Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 246.

lodging, Whitefield and his party made a wrong turn. When they saw a light in the woods ahead of them they rode up to it to discover what Whitefield called a “hut full of negroes.” After inquiring, the African Americans responded that they did not know the location of the lodging that Whitefield’s party was looking for. Whitefield commented, “From these circumstances, one of my friends inferred, that these negroes might be some of those who lately had made an insurrection in the province, and had run away from their masters. When he returned, we were all of this mind, and, therefore, thought it best to mend our pace.”<sup>525</sup> The insurrection that Whitefield referred to was the slave rebellion that happened in Stono River, South Carolina, in 1739, which precipitated fears among whites of other such revolts.<sup>526</sup> Later that night Whitefield’s party again encountered a fire and “imagining there was another nest of such negroes” made a circuitous path in the woods to avoid them. One of his friends “observed them dancing around the fire.” They soon found their way to the necessary road and finally found the plantation they were looking for, “expecting to find negroes in every place” along the way.<sup>527</sup> Stein noted the irony of the Whitefield who had been lauded as the “benefactor of the blacks” now compelled to sneak through the woods to avoid contact with “nests of Negroes.” Whitefield felt that they had avoided “great peril.” Three weeks later Whitefield wrote his open letter to the southern colonies on slavery. Stein observed that in that letter Whitefield’s fears crept in: “And tho’ I heartily pray God they may never be permitted to get the upper Hand; yet should such a Thing be permitted by Providence, all good Men

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<sup>525</sup> Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 246, citing *George Whitefield’s Journals (1737-1741)* (Gainesville, FL: Scholar’s Facsimiles and Reprints, 1969), 380.

<sup>526</sup> Peter Charles Hoffer, *Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>527</sup> Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 247, citing *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 380-381.

must acknowledge the Judgment would be Just.”<sup>528</sup> It is interesting that Stein opted to interpret Whitefield as being fearful of Africans as Africans, rather than those particular Africans as potential insurrectionists as such quotes would seem to indicate. Maybe Whitefield’s fears were not racially motivated, but rooted merely in the fears prompted by recent events.

Stein’s second example occurred during Whitefield’s third tour of America in 1748 when he took a break in Bermuda.<sup>529</sup> Though he suffered from ill health, he continued to preach to civil leaders and to an “abundance of negroes.” The black community on the island was particularly taken with Whitefield’s preaching. And though he preached powerfully on the reality of sin and judgment, he conspicuously left out any discussion of how masters should treat their slaves. Whitefield explained why: “If ever a minister in preaching need the wisdom of the serpent to be joined with the harmlessness of the dove, it must be when discoursing to negroes.” Stein observed that Whitefield did not want to suffer the accusation of causing a slave revolt.<sup>530</sup> For Stein, both of these examples make for a less than flattering view of Whitefield on African Americans and do not lend credence to his role as a humanitarian.

Other historians have shared views similar to Dallimore’s. In a 1989 essay entitled “The Great Sellout,” Allan Gally provided a rationale for why Whitefield advocated

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<sup>528</sup> Whitefield, “Letter III,” 14.

<sup>529</sup> Dallimore gave the wrong location of the church that Whitefield preached in while he was in Bermuda in 1748. Dallimore thought it was Christ Church (Presbyterian) in St. George, Bermuda, when it was in fact Christ Church in Warwick, as the plaque on the church there indicates. Cf. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 223. I am thankful to Digby James of Shropshire, England, for pointing this out to me.

<sup>530</sup> Stein, “Whitefield on Slavery,” 248. The Whitefield quote comes from John Gillies, *Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield, M. A.* (Salem, MA: Chushing & Appleton, 1801), 104. Stein has this incorrectly cited as page 80.

slavery that went beyond his desire for the Bethesda orphanage to succeed. After drawing at length from Whitefield's letter to the southern colonies on slavery, Gallay argued that the response to the letter from the southern public was outrage. He was immediately associated with the anti-slavery movement of Hugh Bryan in South Carolina. With Whitefield's help, Bryan started a school for slaves that was rumoured to be a place where they were instructed in rebellion. While this was not the case, Bryan did publicly condemn the harsh treatment of slaves, and was not well-received by his critics or the colonial authorities. Gallay commented, "If Evangelicals expected to alter their society and protect South Carolina from God's wrath, they would have to change their approach to slave reform." So Bryan and his fellow evangelicals developed a softer method and ceased warning the populace of God's judgment. Their new method was to create "Christian plantations."<sup>531</sup> There slaves were offered Christianity, were welcomed into evangelical churches, and could receive Christian rites like baptism, marriage, and burial. These plantations at times received a hostile response from the public, but eventually were tolerated. Gallay saw this change in tactic as a major reason for the success of evangelical slave reform. It was this change that Gallay said "convinced George Whitefield to become a slaveowner."<sup>532</sup> Whitefield's plantation in South Carolina was used as proof that the once radical evangelicals were now law-abiding slave-owners, all the while seeking to change the institution from within. Having Whitefield, who had once so publicly criticized slave-owners as now one himself added further credibility to the evangelicals' new position. Whitefield "altered his position on slavery as a result of

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<sup>531</sup> Gallay, "Great Sellout," 24.

<sup>532</sup> Gallay, "Great Sellout," 25.

political expediency.” He and his fellow evangelicals had to temper their views if they wished to evangelize slaves. Gally concluded his essay by saying, “Thus, Whitefield’s decision to become a proponent of the institution was a political measure that held the survival of the Evangelical movement to be more important than the immediate reform of society.”<sup>533</sup> Whatever one thinks of Gally’s conclusions, he mirrored sentiments shared by Dallimore:

The results were lasting and of many kinds. Not only was Bethesda in operation but the very existence of “America’s first charity” had awakened the Christian conscience to a new concern for orphans and for the needy of mankind in general. Whitefield’s efforts on behalf of the slave (while regrettably insufficient) had done much to elevate the black man in the mind of the public and had set in motion vigorous forces that laboured for his welfare.<sup>534</sup>

In a footnote to this quote Dallimore pointed to the role that Whitefield played in the thinking of Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), a Philadelphia Quaker and abolitionist who strongly opposed the slave trade. Benezet helped Whitefield with the Nazareth project, so much so that Dallimore claimed that it was Benezet who effectively ran it. The origin of Benezet’s anti-slavery views were rooted in Whitefield’s influence: “Benezet testified to the impetus which had come to his life as a result of Whitefield’s ministry at the time of this association in 1740.”<sup>535</sup> Dallimore did not provide a source for this statement and it is hard to find corroborating evidence in Benezet’s writings. While Benezet reprinted Whitefield’s letter to the southern colonies, and they discussed slavery in their correspondence, nothing seems to indicate that it was Whitefield who first gave Benezet

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<sup>533</sup> Gally, “Great Sellout,” 27.

<sup>534</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:588.

<sup>535</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 588n.1. For Benezet see Maurice Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

his abolitionist views. Whitefield is nowhere mentioned in his *Observations on the Inslaving, Importing and Purchasing of Negroes* (1759) and his published *Memoir* does not indicate that Whitefield was a major source for his abolitionism.<sup>536</sup> Extracts from the memoir show that it was Benezet who influenced Whitefield: “Benezet also corresponded with George Whitefield on this subject; and it was probably owing to this that the latter so freely exposed and condemned the ‘inhuman usage,’ as he termed it, interesting many of his followers in the negro’s behalf.”<sup>537</sup> While it is hard to determine whether Dallimore was right about Whitefield’s influence on Benezet, there is no doubt that the two were friends and shared similar sentiments—though to varying degrees—about slavery.

To return to Stein’s initial statement about Dallimore, he was right to say that Dallimore emphasized Whitefield’s humanitarian concerns about the well-being of slaves. However, the evidence of Dallimore’s own words denouncing Whitefield’s involvement in slavery shows that he did recognize the tension that Stein highlights and freely criticized Whitefield. Near the end of *George Whitefield* volume one Dallimore expressed that tension while trying to maintain Whitefield’s humanitarian efforts: “Whitefield’s efforts on behalf of the slave (while regrettably insufficient) had done much to elevate the black man in the mind of the public and had set in motion vigorous forces that laboured for his welfare.”<sup>538</sup> The fact that Anthony Benezet used Whitefield’s early writing on slavery as part of his abolitionist polemic is proof enough that what Dallimore said is true.

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<sup>536</sup> [Anthony Benezet,] *Observations On the Inslaving, Importing and Purchasing of Negroes* (Germantown, PA: Christopher Sower, 1759).

<sup>537</sup> Wilson Armistead, ed., *Anthony Benezet, from the Original Memoir: Revised, with Additions* (London: A. W. Bennett/Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott and Co., 1859), 51.

<sup>538</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 588.

## Conclusion

All of this is related to the bigger question of this thesis. If Dallimore's biography of Whitefield had been a hagiography, he would have omitted any discussion of slavery as Stein noted some other biographers had. Rather, Dallimore faced the issue and in strong terms condemned his hero for failing so greatly at a moment when America's first celebrity could have influenced a whole nation away from such an abominable practice. His interpretations fit better within the pietist stream of historiography that highlighted spiritual concerns over sociological ones. So long as Whitefield worked for the spiritual benefit of slaves, in spite of his major shortcomings, he could ultimately be exonerated.

### **Whitefield and the question of revival**

Though a minor point, one of Dallimore's critiques of Stout's *Divine Dramatist* involved the legitimacy of the word "revival." He said, "[Stout] speaks of Whitefield as putting on his revivals in town after town, but Whitefield never referred to the results of his work as 'revival' and virtually never used the word. He would have used the term, as biblically-oriented people have ever done, only as descriptive of a work done by God."<sup>539</sup> While it is true that Whitefield infrequently used the word—and this is owing more to the fact that it was a fairly new term in the eighteenth century—it cannot be substantiated that he *never* spoke of the results of his work as revival. Whitefield recorded in his *Journals* "that a great and glorious work has been wrought in New England and I trust and believe

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<sup>539</sup> Arnold Dallimore, "Review of *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*," *Reformation & Revival* 1.4 (Fall 1992): 128.

we shall see as glorious a revival.”<sup>540</sup> He also spoke of “wrestl[ing] strongly with God, for a Revival of his Work in these Parts”<sup>541</sup> and referred to the “late” or sometimes “remarkable revival of religion.”<sup>542</sup> What is also curious about Dallimore’s critique is that he himself referred to Whitefield’s work as revival. The subtitle of the two-volume biography speaks of “the life and times of the great evangelist of the eighteenth-century revival” and throughout both volumes he used the word regularly. Likewise, the thirteenth chapter of his shorter biography is titled “the revival at Cambuslang” in Scotland, detailing Whitefield’s itinerant involvement there, and is entirely devoted to the theme.<sup>543</sup> Why criticize Stout for using a word that basically every historian, including Dallimore, employed? Be that as it may, Dallimore’s larger point of criticism is that Stout viewed revival as a human work, whereas Whitefield (and Dallimore) saw it as divine. This gets to the nub of another area of difference in interpretation between professional and providential historians when dealing with the history of evangelicalism: What is the nature of revival?

This section explores this question by examining how the two types of historian understood revival. Such a discussion sets the context for Dallimore’s own conception of revival as expressed in his work on Whitefield (and later on the Wesleys)—he stood squarely in the providentialist camp and interpreted revival as a work of God. Though he was on board with Whitefield’s understanding of revival, it was not without criticism. There were certain aspects of Whitefield’s revivalism that Dallimore was uncomfortable

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<sup>540</sup> George Whitefield, *The Journals of George Whitefield* (Meadow View, UK: Quinta Press, 2009), 658.

<sup>541</sup> Whitefield, *Journals*, 603.

<sup>542</sup> Whitefield, *Journals*, 659, 665, 672, 674, 677, 679.

<sup>543</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God’s Anointed Servant*, 117-124.

with, most notably the evangelist's early charismatic expressions. In spite of this criticism, Dallimore also defended Whitefield against charismatic claims, to the degree that his bias may have shaped his historiography too much. This section concludes by relating the discussion to the larger one of a usable past and how Dallimore put forth Whitefield as a model for revival today.

### Revival and revivalism? Mapping two approaches

Just as there are two broad approaches to doing Christian history, there are (basically) two corresponding understandings of revival. For the providentialist historian, revival can be a legitimate way of interpreting God's dealings in history. It is how God intervenes to bring spiritual vigour to the church and mass conversion in society. For the professional historian, though it may be a fact that God does intervene in history, it is not the responsibility of the historian to peer into the hidden things of God. Revival should be observed from a sociological perspective. As methods of writing history can be viewed along a spectrum between natural and supernatural, so too can views of revival. Including those who were sceptical of revival, Kenneth J. Stewart also saw two distinct strands of historians sympathetic to it, namely those who were sharply critical of later "revivalism" and those willing to countenance revivalism though with certain criticisms.<sup>544</sup>

Since the eighteenth century multiple definitions of revival have been posited. As Stewart observed, the terms revival, awakening, revivalist and revivalism are all

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<sup>544</sup> Kenneth J. Stewart, *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 101. Stewart pointed to Iain Murray and Richard Lovelace as examples of those sympathetic to revival, but of different critical mindsets, and Darryl Hart as one who rejected the concept outright.

relatively new and have a history of different usages. For instance, though revival is typically considered to be an eighteenth-century phenomenon, some have looked back to movements in history such as the Reformation as pre-eighteenth-century manifestations. Due to the self-perceptions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theologians, who recognized the work of the Spirit in history in terms expressive of the concept, Stewart argued that it was not anachronistic to call such movements “revival.” Though the term itself is relatively new, the concept is much older. A search for the word revival on Early English Books Online (EEBO) at first takes the researcher down a wrong path. EEBO shows that its earliest publication to include the word was by William Farmer (*fl.* 1587-1614) in a 1587 work on planetary movements, particularly of the ‘reuiuell of the great coniunction of Saturne and Iupiter in anno 1583.’ Other uses were related to travel and politics. The first religious use of the term on EEBO was in 1678 by the English Puritan Bartholomew Ashwood (1622-1680) who spoke of the need for a “speedy revival of dying godliness.”<sup>545</sup> Stewart cited examples of nomenclature that gets at the concept of revival without using the terms such as “plentiful effusion of the Spirit,” “further Reformation,” and “descent of a Spirit of converting grace.”<sup>546</sup> John Owen, in a letter to the parliamentarian Charles Fleetwood (1618-1692), wrote,

The truth is, if we cannot see the latter rain in its season as we have seen the former, and a latter spring thereon, death, that will turne in the streams of glory unto our poor withering souls, is the best relief. I begin to feare that we shall die in this wilderness; yet ought we to labour and pray continually that the heavens would drop downe from above, and the skies poure downe righteousness—that the earth may open and bring forth salvation, and that righteousness may spring up together.

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<sup>545</sup> William Farmer, *A Prognostication for this yeere, 1587* (London: Richard Watkins, 1587); Bartholomew Ashwood, *The heavenly trade, or the best merchandizing the only way to live well in impoverishing times* (London: Samuel Lee, 1678).

<sup>546</sup> Stewart, *Ten Myths*, 104.

If ever I return to you in this world, I beseech you to contend yet more earnestly than ever I have done, with God, with my own heart, with the church, to labour after spiritual revivals.<sup>547</sup>

As for the word itself, Stewart pointed to definitions provided in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* (DOAE) that traced its historical uses. A revival was a “general re-awakening of or in religion in a community or some part of one” (OED), or “a period of renewed interest in and devotion to religion” (DOAE).<sup>548</sup> Revivalist was used after 1820 and predominantly referred to one who conducted or took part in a religious revival. Revivalism was briefly alluded to in 1815, but became more common after 1859. The OED gave one use as: “hysteria in connection with revivalism is now commonly produced and propagated by man.” Stewart noted that the terms revival and awakening are typically interchangeable and emphasize the conversion of unbelievers.<sup>549</sup>

Twentieth-century evangelical historians have reflected on revival and provided a range of definitions. From the providentialist perspective, revival is, as Ronald E. Davies said, “a sovereign outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon a group of Christians resulting in their spiritual revival and quickening, and issuing in the awakening of spiritual concern in outsiders or formal church members; an immediate, or, at other times, a more long term, effect will be efforts to extend the influence of the Kingdom of God both intensively in the society in which the Church is placed, and extensively in the spread of the gospel to

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<sup>547</sup> John Owen, “Letter to Charles Fleetwood,” in Peter Toon ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683): With an Account of His Life and Work* (Cambridge and London: James Clarke & Co., 1970), 159.

<sup>548</sup> Stewart, *Ten Myths*, 104.

<sup>549</sup> Stewart, *Ten Myths*, 105.

more remote parts of the world.”<sup>550</sup> In one of the best overall treatments of revival from one who is sympathetic to it, Stuart Piggin, after noting the various ways it can be understood, gave his own definition:

Revival is a sovereign work of God the Father, consisting of a powerful intensification by Jesus of the Holy Spirit’s normal activity of testifying to the Saviour, accentuating the doctrines of grace, and convicting, converting, regenerating, sanctifying and empowering large numbers of people at the same time, and is therefore a communal experience.

It is occasionally preceded by an expectation that God is about to do something exceptional; it is usually preceded by an extraordinary unity and prayerfulness among Christians; and it is always accompanied by the revitalization of the church, the conversion of large numbers of unbelievers and the diminution of sinful practices in the community.<sup>551</sup>

Many trace revival back through church history to the New Testament and argue that the first Christian revivals are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, especially in the early parts of the book, like Pentecost, where mass numbers were “added to the church daily” (cf. Acts 2:47). This was the case for those like Whitefield who likened revival experiences, like his at Moorfields, to “a glorious Pentecost” and would refer to “Pentecost seasons.”<sup>552</sup> It was also the case for recent historians. Gerald L. Priest, an anti-charismatic, observed three “principles of revival” to be taken from the second chapter of

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<sup>550</sup> R. E. Davies, *I Will Pour Out My Spirit: A History and Theology of Revivals and Evangelical Awakenings* (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Monarch, 1992), 15, cited in Ian M. Randall, *Rhythms of Revival: The Spiritual Awakening of 1857-1863* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>551</sup> Stuart Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord: The History of and Prospects for Revival in the Church and the World* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 11. I am grateful to Richard Snoddy of London, England, for pointing me to this reference.

<sup>552</sup> Cited in Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:118, 475. For a detailed historical study of Pentecost in early Methodism see Laurence W. Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism: Rediscovering John Fletcher as John Wesley’s Vindicator and Designated Successor* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002).

Acts. First, only certain features of Pentecost remain as a model for revival. “Signs and wonders” are not normative for the post-New Testament church and should be excluded from any modern notions of revival. Second, the revival emphasis of Pentecost was not on speaking in tongues, but on the numbers brought into the church. Third, Pentecost set the parameters for determining what genuine revival is. “To be a genuine work of God,” Priest wrote, “a revival must include a doctrinal preaching of the Word of God that is truthful.” Likewise, it must be an activity of God’s Spirit, and must produce repentance that leads to lasting conversion. Priest went on to say, “We may use these marks of the first revival in church history as criteria to help us discern what is a truly divine work in subsequent periods.”<sup>553</sup>

Collin Hansen and John D. Woodbridge concur about this New Testament precedent, “There is much we can and must learn about revival from Pentecost.” Though it may not be a “perfect paradigm,” there are identifiable patterns that fit with the rest of the biblical record. These include the Spirit’s equipping of Peter to preach, the large numbers added to the church, and the teaching of the apostolic message.<sup>554</sup> Likewise, Piggins wrote at length about revival in both the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament. Piggins highlighted patterns of decline and revival such as found in the book of Judges, as well as themes of promise and fulfillment in the Minor Prophets.<sup>555</sup> Like the others, Piggins also saw Acts 2:1-47 as a paradigm for revival. He observed that the pouring out of the Spirit was not unique even in the book as Acts 4:31; 8:14-17; 10:34-

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<sup>553</sup> Gerald L. Priest, “Revival and Revivalism: A Historical and Doctrinal Evaluation,” in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Fall 1996), 228-229.

<sup>554</sup> Collin Hansen and John D. Woodbridge, *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories that Stretch and Stir* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 27-28.

<sup>555</sup> Piggins, *Firestorm*, 29-30, 33-37.

48; 11:15-18 show. Piggin said, “Revival, although not the normal experience of the church, is the means of going back again to the God-given norm for the church. Pentecost was the God-given norm for the church in that it was then that the church was endowed with spiritual power.”<sup>556</sup> Because of this spiritual power it is not uncommon for providential historians who discern God’s work in revival to encourage longing for it. Regular expressions of longing are found in works like that by Erroll Hulse who wrote *Give Him No Rest* as a plea for Christians to pray for revival as an antidote to the perceived laxness of the church.<sup>557</sup> Leonard Ravenhill, initially writing in 1959, argued that revival tarries “because we lack urgency in prayer.”<sup>558</sup>

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was an influential proponent of revival among twentieth-century evangelicals. In 1959 he delivered an address at the Puritan Conference in London entitled, “Revival: An Historical and Theological Survey,” celebrating the centenary of the Revival of 1859 that swept through England, Wales, Ireland and America.<sup>559</sup> For Lloyd-Jones, revival was an experience in the life of the church whereby the Holy Spirit performed “an unusual work,” namely the reviving of believers.<sup>560</sup> Lloyd-Jones discerned two characteristics of revival. The first is this enlivening of believers,

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<sup>556</sup> Piggin, *Firestorm*, 41.

<sup>557</sup> Erroll Hulse, *Give Him No Rest: A Call to Prayer for Revival* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2006).

<sup>558</sup> Leonard Ravenhill, *Why Revival Taries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 1987), 61.

<sup>559</sup> D. M. Lloyd-Jones, “Revival: An Historical and Theological Survey,” in *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors, Addresses Delivered at the Puritan and Westminster Conferences, 1959-1978* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002), 1-22. For a detailed study see Ian M. Randall, “Lloyd-Jones and Revival,” in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of “The Doctor”* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2011), 91-113.

<sup>560</sup> Lloyd-Jones, “Revival,” 1.

and the second, a corollary of the first, is the conversion of masses of people.<sup>561</sup> By definition revival is “an enlivening and quickening and awakening of lethargic, sleeping, almost moribund church members.” This happens by the “sudden” power of the Spirit that comes upon believers whereupon they are brought into a deeper awareness of the truths of scripture. Lloyd-Jones provided an historical survey of revival, focusing primarily on evangelicalism since the seventeenth century. This survey included the Six Mile Water Revival in Northern Ireland, the Kirk O’ Shotts revival in Scotland, the smaller revival in Richard Baxter’s (1615-1691) Kidderminster, the Moravian awakenings, and the Great Awakening of Whitefield, the Wesleys, Rowland and Harris. It is also interesting that Lloyd-Jones included the transatlantic revivals of 1859 as genuine revival. He indicated that the major transition from these positive examples of revival to the more negative ones, what some have called “revivalism” due to the influence of Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), occurred in 1860, after the so-called ’59 Revival.<sup>562</sup> It is strange that he compared the two because, though they shared certain commonalities, the Six Mile Water Revival and the ’59 Revival, both in Northern Ireland, also had significant differences. Those who hold to the revival/revivalism distinction should, by their own criteria, view the latter more as an example of revivalism.<sup>563</sup>

Alongside the negative effects of Finney, Lloyd-Jones believed that there were a number of factors that contributed to the decline of evangelical interest in revival. These included the watering down of Reformed theology and the preponderance of seminaries.

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<sup>561</sup> Lloyd-Jones, “Revival,” 2.

<sup>562</sup> Lloyd-Jones, “Revival,” 4.

<sup>563</sup> For a comparison between the two revivals see Ian Hugh Clary, “‘Melting the Ice of a Long Winter’: Revival and Irish Dissent,” in Robert Davis Smart and Michael A. G. Haykin, eds., *Revival and the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage, forthcoming).

Of the latter, Lloyd-Jones believed that with a rising intellectualism in the church came a corresponding lack of interest in spirituality. He said, “As men become more and more learned they tend to pay less and less attention to the spiritual side of things...increase in theological seminaries may have been a factor in discouraging people from thinking about revival.”<sup>564</sup> It is curious that such a statement should come from one who helped found a seminary, namely London Bible College, (now London Theological Seminary) in 1977.<sup>565</sup> He also cited evangelicals’ aversion to the excesses of the Pentecostal movement “and its phenomena” as another factor why they were disinterested in revival.<sup>566</sup> He concluded that Reformed evangelicals should, of all people, be most interested in revival because it is a primary demonstration of the sovereignty of God and the helplessness of man.

Two of the most detailed studies of revival to come from a providential historian are both by Iain Murray. In 1994 he wrote *Revival & Revivalism* where he provided an historical survey of the way that American evangelicalism had been “made” and “marred” in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Four years later he published *Pentecost-Today?* where he provided a biblical rationale for his understanding of revival, littered with examples from evangelical history.<sup>567</sup> In both the indebtedness to

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<sup>564</sup> Lloyd-Jones, “Revival,” 6.

<sup>565</sup> Cf. Ian M. Randall, *Educating Evangelicalism: The Origins, Development and Impact of London Bible College* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000). Cf. Philip H. Eveson, “Lloyd-Jones and Ministerial Education,” in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, eds., *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of “The Doctor”* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2011), 176-196.

<sup>566</sup> For Lloyd-Jones and his positive views on Pentecostalism see Andrew Atherstone, David Ceri Jones and William K. Kay, “Lloyd-Jones and the Charismatic Controversy,” in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, eds., *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of “The Doctor”* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2011), 114-155.

<sup>567</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Revival & Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994); Iain H. Murray, *Pentecost-Today? The Biblical Basis for*

Lloyd-Jones' understanding of revival is apparent. Due to Murray's friendship with Dallimore, it is worth exploring his work in some depth.

In *Pentecost-Today?* Murray observed that the word revival was much used but had little common understanding amongst scholars and lay-people, as it had changed in meaning over time: "It has stood variously for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for any time of religious excitement, or simply for a series of special meetings."<sup>568</sup> For Murray, what is most important is the "thing itself" rather than the word, though he wanted to preserve "revival" in spite of the confusion surrounding it. Like other historians noted above, Murray traced the origins of revival back to the New Testament book of Acts and observed that the word could be found as early as 1662 in the writings of Henry Vane the Younger (*bap.* 1613-1662).<sup>569</sup> For Murray, revival should be understood pneumatologically as it has to do with the person and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit.

Murray sketched a taxonomy of three different views that historians take about revival. The first argued that modern notions of revival are not biblical. According to this view, Pentecost was a one time event and thus the idea of revival is superfluous. He cited the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper as an example.<sup>570</sup> At the other extreme, the second view holds that revival is entirely contingent upon human effort. There are two strains to this perspective, those like Finney who believed that revival can be secured by intense evangelistic effort, and those like the Canadian missionary and revivalist Jonathan

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*Understanding Revival* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1998). See also Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1998).

<sup>568</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 1.

<sup>569</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 3, n1.

<sup>570</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 7-8. Cf. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956), 127.

Goforth (1860-1936) who spoke of the need for repentance and holiness to bring about revival. Murray was concerned about both strains, though more-so with Finney, and argued that “the issue is whether it is our obedience in the use of means which *produces* revivals.”<sup>571</sup> For Murray, the answer was no, it was incorrect to say that there is any promise where a revival “must follow.”<sup>572</sup> Murray’s view was the third in his taxonomy—what he called the “old-school view” because of its historic precedent—that argued that revivals are “larger measures of the Spirit of God.”<sup>573</sup> This view traces revival back to Pentecost, and while agreeing with Kuyper that the Spirit was poured out once for all, it argued that he can be experienced in different measures and degrees at different points in history. This is the “extraordinary and not continuous” work of the Spirit.<sup>574</sup> In history the Spirit’s work can be viewed in two aspects: normal and extraordinary. The two differ not in kind but in degree. Revival is the reception by Christians of “more of what they already possess.”<sup>575</sup> The consequence of this is, for Murray, that the authenticity of revival is to be judged by the same tests that one would use to determine the genuineness of Christianity as a whole. Namely, revival should produce love to God, obedience to Scripture, holiness and compassion. Charismatic gifts of tongues-speaking or revelations are mistaken assessments of revival.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 10. Emphasis his. Murray gave a chapter-length treatment of Finney’s impact on revival. See Murray, *Pentecost*, 33-53.

<sup>572</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 11.

<sup>573</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 17.

<sup>574</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 17-18.

<sup>575</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 31.

<sup>576</sup> Murray, *Pentecost*, 31.

In the earlier *Revival & Revivalism* Murray took a more historical turn in his judgment of true and false revival. He argued that the last forty years of the nineteenth century saw a “new view” of revival that displaced the old. As a result a “distinctly different phase in the understanding of the subject began.” This brought with it a shift in terminology. Whereas the old view saw revival as a “surprising work of God,” and thus unpredictable, the new spoke about “revival meetings” where revivalists could guarantee results.<sup>577</sup> Instead of being distinguished, revival and revivalism became the same thing. Around 1958 or 1959 another phase of understanding revival began with the work of historians of early America, Bernard A. Weisberger and William G. McLoughlin.<sup>578</sup> These authors pled for a serious and scientific re-examination of revival. Murray saw their work as having important implications for the concept of revivalism, particularly for what he saw as unbiblical psychological practices. However, such modern authors also tended to conflate the ideas of revival and revivalism when they should have been opposed. Likewise, the “recent authors see the power of God in neither.”<sup>579</sup> For Murray, the period of American history under review in his book was “shaped by the Spirit of God in revivals of the same kind as launched the early church into a pagan world.” Such revivals were genuine and were opposed to what was “merely emotional, contrived or manipulated.”<sup>580</sup> Adherence to Scripture was the only safe-guard against wrong claims about the Spirit’s work. Those of this period saw the dangers of revivalism and openly

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<sup>577</sup> Murray, *Revival*, xviii.

<sup>578</sup> See, for instance, Bernard A. Weisberger, *They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and their Impact Upon Religion in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966); William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977*, Chicago History of American Religion (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1978).

<sup>579</sup> Murray, *Revival*, xviii-xix.

<sup>580</sup> Murray, *Revival*, xx.

criticized it when it occurred. Jonathan Edwards is an example of this, especially his writings reflecting on the Great Awakening and the true and false aspects of revival.<sup>581</sup>

Murray was not the first to bifurcate revival this way. Richard F. Lovelace, in his influential *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (1979) wrote, “[P]erhaps the root cause of the decay of evangelicalism in America was the replacement of the old comprehensive concept of *revival* with the post-Finney machinery of *revivalism*. ‘Holding a revival’ became synonymous with ‘using new methods to do mass evangelism.’”<sup>582</sup> This understanding of true and false revival is also common parlance in more recent historiography. Piggan, for instance, spoke of “revival and revivalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”<sup>583</sup> While distinguishing between the concepts of revival and revivalism can be helpful, David Bebbington—who called Murray an “accomplished recent representative of the providentialist school,”—cautioned that, “The received antithesis between revivals that seemed to have descended from on high and revivalism that was worked up from the below, between spontaneity and planning, is too simple.” While historians should not assume that revival and revivalism are the same thing, the distinction between the two can be drawn too sharply. Whether revivals were “surprising events” is also “open for enquiry.”<sup>584</sup> Like Stewart and Murray, Bebbington traced the variety of ways that revival can historically be understood, but to more measured

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<sup>581</sup> See the works included in Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed., C. C. Goen, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 4* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>582</sup> Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 51. Emphasis his.

<sup>583</sup> Piggan, *Firestorm*, 63.

<sup>584</sup> David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 268. Bradley Longfield shared a similar sentiment saying that though Murray’s basic distinction is “cogent” it is at times “overdrawn.” Bradley Longfield, “The American Evangelical Tradition,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48.3 (July 1997): 502.

conclusions. Revival could mean an “apparently spontaneous” event in a congregation, a planned mission in a congregation or town, a mainly spontaneous episode in an area larger than a congregation, or a development in a culture at large.<sup>585</sup> Not all revivals were “spontaneous and planned,” most were preceded by expectancy, often expressed by prayer calls. Revival in one country might begin after news of an earlier revival arrived through media or word of mouth. This is certainly the case with the ’59 Revival where print media was a major reason for its spread.

Such caution is reflective of professional historians’ approach to revival. Harry Stout, in *The New England Soul*, provided a good example of how professional historians have described revival.<sup>586</sup> Using Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards, as an example, Stout showed that though revival was accomplished through powerful preaching of the new birth, it also came by means. When Stoddard first became the minister at the church in Northampton, Massachusetts, there were fourteen adult members. “To bring in large audiences,” wrote Stout, “Stoddard revised established practices and assumptions regarding church admission and sacraments.”<sup>587</sup> This included the controversial Halfway Covenant that saw the Lord’s Supper as a “converting ordinance.” As a result, he built his church into the largest and most influential in the Connecticut River Valley.<sup>588</sup> Over the course of his ministry Stoddard oversaw five revivals in 1679, 1683, 1696, 1712, and 1718, where large numbers underwent the new birth. In this instance the distinction between revival and revivalism is not so sharp. This

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<sup>585</sup> Bebbington, *Victorian*, 3.

<sup>586</sup> Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>587</sup> Stout, *New England Soul*, 99.

<sup>588</sup> Stout, *New England Soul*, 99.

is not to say that Stoddard and Finney should be so compared as to blur the distinctions—Stoddard was a firm Calvinist, whereas Finney’s measures were “Arminian”—but it does indicate the effective use of means in early evangelical revival.

In greater detail Stout applied this critical approach to Whitefield, observing revivalist tendencies in his later ministry. From the early days of the revival in the 1740s through to the early 1750s Whitefield’s “dramatic itinerations” did not change. The language of revivalism appeared again and again in his writings as Whitefield sought to maintain society’s interest and fervour in the revival. But things had changed; most notably there was an absence of the conflict that Whitefield had been engaged in with the clergy. Stout argued that with this absence there emerged a transformation in the meaning of the word revival: “What had initially been a convulsive and mysterious force upsetting ordinary life and catching participants by surprise had become something different—a familiar event that could be planned in advance, executed flawlessly, and then repeated at the next stop.”<sup>589</sup> There was no longer a religious crisis that “inflated” the hopes and fears on the part of friends and enemies. This made for a radical redefinition of revival, the full implications of which, Stout argued, was never made clear to Whitefield. This was so because Whitefield “could not see beyond the numbers and the enthusiasm he attracted.” With this change in revival came a change in Whitefield also, turning him from being a “social firebrand” into a “culture hero.”<sup>590</sup> According to Stout, the later Whitefield-as-cultural-hero was stuck in the past—“nothing had changed.” The crowds remained the same in terms of size and enthusiasm and so for Whitefield “revivals were as regular and

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<sup>589</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 210.

<sup>590</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 210-211.

recurrent as the seasons of the year.” They were acceptable and unexceptional parts of the marketplace. The revivals, if defined traditionally as a “communal awakening, mass enthusiasm, obsession with religion in public discussions and heated controversy” had died. However, if revival was defined functionally as a large event in an open setting “orchestrated by a skilled performer” with the aim of raising the individual’s experience and passion, then Whitefield’s later revivals were as strong as ever.<sup>591</sup> Though it was not his intent, his revivals had become a kind of entertainment. Thus, in this sense, Stout discerned all of the hallmarks of what providentialist historians called “revivalism” in the later parts of the Great Awakening.

Alongside such historical re-visioning, biblical scholars have challenged the idea that modern concepts of revival can be traced back to the New Testament. Notably Max Turner, a New Testament scholar with a Pentecostal background, argued that what happened at Pentecost was different than the historical revivals of the eighteenth centuries and after.<sup>592</sup> While the term “revival” does not occur in the New Testament, neither does the modern concept. Turner examined two words that came closest to the concept, ἀνακαινόω (renewal) and ἀνάψυξις (refreshing) and concluded that neither “help us towards a NT understanding of the modern phenomenon of ‘revival.’”<sup>593</sup> Nor is Pentecost a paradigm. He argued that “Pentecost is *not* a story about the revitalisation—or re-intensification—of God’s saving work in a moribund church. It is *fundamentally* about the eschatological and Christological work of God, which first *creates* that total

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<sup>591</sup> Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 211.

<sup>592</sup> Max Turner, “‘Revival’ in the New Testament?” in Andrew Walker and Kirsten Aune, eds., *On Revival: A Critical Examination* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003): 3-21.

<sup>593</sup> Turner, “Revival,” 8.

transformation of God's people, which *begins to make them the 'church' of Christ.*"<sup>594</sup> Pentecost is about God's continuing reign through Jesus' presence via the outpouring of the Spirit. It functions as the Christocentric version of the "Spirit of prophecy" in Joel, which is God's empowering presence in the community of his people. It also demonstrates the normative way that the Spirit works in salvation and mission. Salvation is synonymous with the reception of the Spirit. The only sense of commonality that Turner saw between the New Testament and modern revival is found in the intensification of God's saving work that could be archetypical for the type and quality of his intervention seen in the eighteenth century. In spite of this, Turner argued, "The real importance of Luke-Acts is its implied call to what it regards as the 'normal' character of the experience of salvation in the church."<sup>595</sup>

This brief summary of the different ways that revival has been interpreted helps to set Dallimore's understanding of revival in a clearer light. As a Banner of Truth author it is not surprising that he stood squarely in the perspective articulated by Lloyd-Jones and Murray. Yet the cautions given by Bebbington and the perspective of authors like Stout and Turner should give pause before imbibing this view of revival wholesale as a paradigm for the church.

#### Dallimore on revival

Dallimore openly discerned God's hand directly intervening providentially in history and used the term "providence" a number of times throughout his work. For instance,

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<sup>594</sup> Turner, "Revival," 14. Emphasis his.

<sup>595</sup> Turner, "Revival," 18.

providence guided Whitefield's travels as when Whitefield suffered an extended wait in England due to the British government's fear over a potential war with Spain, as this allowed Whitefield the opportunity to help Wesley foster unity amongst the Calvinist and Arminian factions within Methodism.<sup>596</sup> Elsewhere, in a discussion of Howell Harris' controversial relationship with Madam Sidney Griffith (d. 1752) Dallimore chalked her death up to providence.<sup>597</sup> As a providential historian he saw revival as a sovereign work of God's Spirit in the life of the church and society, it was, in the words of Whitefield, "a Divine work."<sup>598</sup>

Though Dallimore's friendships with Lloyd-Jones and Murray surely fuelled his understanding of revival, he learned about its significance earlier than when he first met them in the mid-twentieth century. It would have been as a student at Toronto Baptist Seminary that he first heard about the contours of revival from somebody who experienced it first hand. In the early years of his ministry at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, T. T. Shields experienced what many deemed a revival. During the 1920s, in the heat of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, Jarvis Street saw remarkable growth. Extended prayer meetings began in 1921, were held three times a week, and saw large numbers in attendance, as did the new Sunday school program that was reported to be the largest in Canada. Throughout 1922 the church held a total of 156 prayer meetings on week nights. *The Gospel Witness* reported in the summer of that year that "everywhere about us there are signs of revival...many conversions and additions to our membership...[the] prayer meeting room was crowded to the walls...large numbers are

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<sup>596</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:386.

<sup>597</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:301.

<sup>598</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:400.

being convicted of sin, and some have been definitely converted...the tide is coming in!”<sup>599</sup> In 1924 Shields invited J. Frank Norris (1877-1952), a Fundamentalist preacher from Fort Worth, Texas, to preach a series of evangelistic sermons at Toronto’s Massey Hall.<sup>600</sup> It was estimated that a total of over 50,000 attended the meetings. In a taunt to the Modernists and moderates who questioned his claims of revival, Shields wrote, “They may say what they like about revival by compromise; but I challenge the men of compromise to show me their revival. Where is it? Where are the fruits of it?”<sup>601</sup> Shields likewise preached on and prayed for revival. For example, in a sermon titled, “O Lord, Revive Thy Work,” based on Habakkuk 3:2, he spoke of the great need for revival in his day. Revival must always begin with prayer. Further, Shields said, “The work of revival is always God’s work. If we are to be what we ought to be, if love is to be rekindled in our hearts, if power is to be given us for service, if we are to follow on to know the Lord, if grace and peace are to be multiplied to us through the knowledge of God, and of Christ Jesus our Lord—it will be because God Himself is at work in our lives.”<sup>602</sup>

Between Shields on the one hand and Lloyd-Jones and Murray on the other, one can see where the importance of revival in Dallimore’s mind would have developed. Dallimore openly described revival as a work of God. This is seen in the title of his condensed biography of Whitefield, whom he called “God’s anointed servant.” In an article for the journal *Methodist History*, using language that would have pleased Lloyd-Jones, Dallimore described revival in Wales thusly: “It was mighty in the hands of God in

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<sup>599</sup> Cited in Tarr, *Shields of Canada*, 86-87.

<sup>600</sup> For Norris see Barry Hankins, *God’s Rascal: J. Frank Norris & the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

<sup>601</sup> Cited in Tarr, *Shields*, 90.

<sup>602</sup> T. T. Shields, “O Lord, Revive Thy Work!” *The Gospel Witness* (August 25, 1983).

Wales, and there today the names of Griffith Jones, Howell Harris, and Daniel Rowland are held in high remembrance as the men whom God raised up in this extraordinary work.”<sup>603</sup> He also distinctly linked revival to the work of the Holy Spirit. Whitefield’s hearers would at times cry out in terror when he preached on God’s wrath or the reality of hell. Dallimore noted such vocalizations “arose from the fact that the Spirit of God had wrought an overwhelming conviction in many hearts, causing sinners to cry out.”<sup>604</sup> In a summary of the Cambuslang revival, Dallimore gave a nine point summary of what amounts to a description of the nature of “true spiritual Revival.” First, revival was not something “humanly planned” but was the “sovereign work of the Holy Spirit of God.”<sup>605</sup> Second, and particular to Cambuslang, it began under the preaching of a man who did not have great homiletical skills, but was used of God anyway. Third, revival was the fruit of prayer. Fourth, there was no sensationalism or showmanship, revival was produced out of the teaching of the great doctrines of the faith. Fifth, revival involved the declaration of such doctrines and produced “a deep consciousness of the reality and character of God” and an awareness of sin on the part of those who heard. This resulted in “deep and everlasting” repentance. Sixth, again more directed to Cambuslang, the revivals were strongest during the solemnities of the communion services. Seventh, “bodily distresses” were discouraged, and when they did happen were only considered of value if they arose from sorrow for sin. Eighth, those who professed conversion were examined as to the reality of their profession. Ninth, there were reports of “scores and even hundreds” of

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<sup>603</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, “A Bicentennial Remembrance of George Whitefield,” *Methodist History* (January 1971), 17.

<sup>604</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God’s Anointed Servant*, 142.

<sup>605</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:135.

those who were genuinely saved. As for Cambuslang, because these nine factors were involved, “we are forced to admit that it is in no way explicable on the basis of human causes.” Rather, it was “indeed a divine work.”<sup>606</sup>

Though Dallimore used providential language, it was not replete throughout his work. Often when mentioning the work of God, Dallimore spoke of it from the perspective of the historical figure rather than from his authorial opinion. Even in his description of the Cambuslang revival, when referring to the preacher William McCulloch, Dallimore described the contents of his sermon as that which spoke of “the character of God—God glorious in majesty, God terrible in holiness, God all-seeing and all-knowing, God the judge of all the earth—and it was the awesome sense of the reality of God as it was experienced under McCulloch’s preaching and deepened under that of Whitefield which was the basis of this work.”<sup>607</sup> As a minister, Dallimore would have sympathized with McCulloch’s statements about God, but in the narrative Dallimore merely described what McCulloch said. Though it may appear sympathetic, it was only a faithful rendering of the structure and content of McCulloch’s sermon. Aside from the occasional summary like that of Cambuslang noted above, a search through his biographies of Whitefield more often than not show that the word “God,” or “Spirit” appear in quotations from the work of an historical figure like Whitefield, or as descriptive of that figure’s mindset, rather than Dallimore’s own theological opinion.

### **Charismata and conversion**

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<sup>606</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:135-136.

<sup>607</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:129.

This chapter has defended Dallimore against claims of hagiography both in terms of his willingness to see errors in Whitefield's early ministry, particularly as it related to pride, attacks on unconverted ministers, and the inflation of numbers. It also demonstrated Dallimore's willingness to be strongly critical of Whitefield on the problem of slavery. This section looks at the way Dallimore's theological bias may or may not have shaped a particular understanding of Whitefield's thought, particularly as it relates to charismatic phenomena. In one instance, Dallimore was willing to criticize Whitefield, and in another, he potentially succumbed to his own theological bias.

Though Dallimore was largely in line with Whitefield on the question of revival, there were areas of Whitefield's revivalism that Dallimore was critical of. This had to do with the evangelist's early theology that Dallimore claimed led some to understandably conclude that Whitefield was "something of an extremist," namely, Whitefield's "speaking about impressions." As we have seen, and as the chapter on Edward Irving points out in greater detail, Dallimore was an anti-charismatic and viewed the Pentecostal and charismatic movements with concern. It is not surprising, therefore, that he would view Whitefield's "impressions" with alarm. According to Dallimore, Whitefield spoke of these impressions "in such a way as to suggest that they were revelations from heaven."<sup>608</sup> Words from God were pressed upon Whitefield's heart, oftentimes they were passages from scripture. He also made statements about the future as though they were God-given predictions. Dallimore pointed to a number of Whitefield's contemporaries, such as Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge, who thought that such talk of impressions was "very unwise." Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), who was largely unfavourable to the

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<sup>608</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:342.

revival, was also critical of Whitefield for them. Intimating the rise of the charismatic movement in the twentieth-century, Dallimore said, “Doubtless many people to-day will see little about which to complain in Whitefield’s reliance on his impressions. Several writers, however, have pointed to it as a grievous fault and have made it appear that it continued throughout his life. Yet it was but a temporary trait; he soon outgrew it and such men as Watts and Doddridge came to hold him in high esteem.”<sup>609</sup> Though Dallimore was critical of Whitefield’s allowance of impressions, he recognized that these occurred early on in Whitefield’s ministry and that Whitefield himself was critical of them later in life. This follows a general pattern where Dallimore picked up on the mature Whitefield’s self-criticism and reiterated it as his own. In this case, Dallimore would have been more than happy to agree with Whitefield as a means of offering a critique of twentieth-century Pentecostals, as he would do in greater detail in his biography of Irving.

However, Dallimore also defended Whitefield against the possibility of giving a charismatic interpretation of his pneumatology. This is seen in the interchange between Dallimore and Graham Harrison (1935-2013), a minister from Newport, Wales, who was heavily indebted to Lloyd-Jones’ understanding of “sealing of the Spirit.” Briefly, Lloyd-Jones taught that after conversion the Christian could undergo a second experience—not dissimilar to the charismatic idea of a second blessing—that he called the “sealing of the Spirit.” This was evident in the preaching series he did on Ephesians 1, first delivered in 1954-1955 and later published as a commentary.<sup>610</sup> He interpreted the biblical word for

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<sup>609</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:344.

<sup>610</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God’s Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998).

“seal” (σφραγίζω) as having three senses: authenticity, authority and ownership. It is the last sense, of the Spirit’s ownership of believers, that Lloyd-Jones argued Paul meant in Ephesians. Believers are branded by the Spirit. Sealing was something that went “beyond the initial experience of forgiveness; this is God, if I may so express it, endearing us and showering His love upon us, overwhelming us.”<sup>611</sup> This two-tiered experience of the Spirit taught that “you can be a believer, that you can have the Holy Spirit indwelling in you and still not be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>612</sup> Lloyd-Jones saw a precedent for his view in a strand of English Puritanism, particularly Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) and John Flavel (*ca.* 1627-1691), as well as evangelicals like Jonathan Edwards. The debate over whether Lloyd-Jones was a charismatic was in large part due to his teaching on the Spirit’s sealing. Cessationist Iain Murray argued against understanding Lloyd-Jones’ theology in any kind of charismatic way, whereas Erroll Hulse, also a cessationist, saw elements of such in the Doctor’s theology and was critical of it.<sup>613</sup> Others sympathetic to charismatic or second-blessing theology openly embraced this side of Lloyd-Jones’ thought, most notably Graham Harrison.

The debate over the sealing of the Spirit played out in the late 1970s between Harrison and Dallimore, this time over Whitefield. It was spurred by criticisms of Lloyd-Jones’ view of sealing of the Spirit that Harrison had read in Hulse’s magazine *Reformation Today*. In *God’s Ultimate Purpose*, his commentary on Ephesians 1, Lloyd-

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<sup>611</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *God’s Ultimate Purpose*, 284.

<sup>612</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable* (Easbourne, UK: Kingsway, 1995), 23, cited in John Brencher, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) and Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 201.

<sup>613</sup> Cf. Iain H. Murray, “Martyn Lloyd-Jones on the Baptism with the Holy Spirit,” *Banner of Truth* 257 (February 1985): 12, 14-15; Erroll Hulse, “Tertullian—A Present Day Parallel?” *Reformation Today* 48 (March-April 1979), 1.

Jones had quoted from Whitefield's *Journals* to support the notion of second blessing: "After a long night of desertion and temptation, the Star, which I had seen at a distance from before, began to appear again, and the Day Star arose in my heart. Now did the Spirit of God take possession of my soul and, as I humbly hope, seal me unto the day of redemption."<sup>614</sup> Lloyd-Jones argued that Whitefield had been a believer for some time by this point and that this quote signalled a subsequent-to-conversion experience of sealing with the Spirit. *Reformation Today* reprinted a critique of Lloyd-Jones by Donald MacLeod of the Free Church College in Edinburgh. In an editorial comment to this review Hulse mentioned a discussion that he had with Dallimore about the nature of Whitefield's conversion and whether he had a second experience of the Spirit:

While in Canada during February, I discussed the subject with Pastor Arnold Dallimore, whose second and final volume on the life of George Whitefield is due to appear at the end of 1979...Arnold Dallimore maintains firmly that it is impossible to establish a second blessing construction for George Whitefield. He was simply endued with power over and over again.<sup>615</sup>

This comment encouraged Harrison to re-read Dallimore's first volume on Whitefield to see how he treated Whitefield's conversion. Harrison found what appeared to be a discrepancy in the account. In his section detailing Whitefield's conversion Dallimore quoted from the 1756 revision of the *Journals* where Whitefield said,

God was pleased to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold of His dear Son by a living faith, and by giving me the Spirit of adoption, to seal me even to the day of everlasting redemption. O! with what joy—joy unspeakable—even joy that was full of and big with glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my disconsolate soul! Surely it was the day of mine espousals—a day

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<sup>614</sup> Whitefield, *Journals*, 58, cited in Lloyd-Jones, *God's Ultimate Purpose*, 277.

<sup>615</sup> Erroll Hulse, "Editorial Comment," *Reformation Today* 48 (March 1979), 3.

to be had in everlasting remembrance! At first my joys were like a Spring tide, and overflowed the banks!<sup>616</sup>

Dallimore followed this with another quote by Whitefield, from a sermon entitled “All Men’s Place” preached in 1769, the year before he died. Whitefield said, “I know the place! It may be superstitious, perhaps, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to that place where Jesus Christ first revealed Himself to me and gave me the new birth.”<sup>617</sup> Dallimore placed these two quotes together as a reference to Whitefield’s single conversion experience.

Harrison questioned Dallimore’s use of the sermon. He argued that there was “sufficient evidence in Whitefield’s writings,” including the passage quoted by Dallimore, that gave “a fair degree of conclusiveness that the place and time of Whitefield’s conversion was not the place and time of his sealing with the Spirit.”<sup>618</sup> For Harrison, the description from the *Journals* was actually Whitefield’s experience of the sealing of the Spirit, not conversion. He challenged the notion that Whitefield’s reading of Henry Scougal’s (1650-1678) *Life of God in the Soul of Man* was the beginning of his conversion experience, as Dallimore and other biographers claimed.<sup>619</sup> Rather, for Harrison, Whitefield had been converted beforehand and the latter experience “was indeed his sealing of the Spirit.”<sup>620</sup> Harrison argued that at a number of points before this

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<sup>616</sup> Whitefield, *Journals*, 58.

<sup>617</sup> Cited in Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:77.

<sup>618</sup> Graham Harrison, “When Was George Whitefield Converted?” (nine page unpublished manuscript, n.d. [ca. 1979]), 3. Emphasis his.

<sup>619</sup> Cf. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:73. Cf. Henry Scougal, *The life of God in the Soul of Man, or, The Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion with the Method of Attaining the Happiness it Proposes* (London: Charles Smith and William Jacob, 1677).

<sup>620</sup> Harrison, “Whitefield Converted,” 5.

statement of his conversion quoted by Dallimore one could say that “this man must be a Christian.”<sup>621</sup> He based this on the seriousness with which Whitefield took religion at the age of 16, and the religious exercises he performed at Oxford when he was 18. As well, Whitefield would share the new birth with his family and others—even to the conversion of a family suffering in jail. At this time Whitefield indicated that he did everything to the glory of God, this in spite of the tremendous spiritual suffering that he underwent. Whitefield saw this suffering as God allowing Satan to sift him, though through it the Spirit was “purifying my soul.”<sup>622</sup> Though Whitefield had been confused in his theology after his earlier conversion experience, largely due to the influence of the as-yet-converted Wesleys, his “heart was right in the sight of God.”<sup>623</sup>

On top of this evidence to Whitefield’s earlier conversion, Harrison pointed out that Dallimore had misquoted two sources. Charles Wesley had given Whitefield the Scougal book in 1732. Thus, when Whitefield spoke about going superstitiously back to Oxford, to the spot where Christ had given him the new birth, he referred not to the 1735 experience of what Harrison called the “sealing of the Spirit,” but to an occasion of conversion “some months earlier.” What is strange is that when Dallimore quoted the 1769 sermon, he redacted it quite significantly. Dallimore’s quote reads,

God showed me that I must be born again, or be damned! I learned that a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian. How did my heart rise and shudder, like a poor man that is afraid to look into his account-books, lest he should find himself a bankrupt.

“Shall I burn this book? Shall I throw it down? Or shall I search it?” I did search it; and, holding the book in my hand, thus addressed the God of heaven and

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<sup>621</sup> Harrison, “Whitefield Converted,” 5.

<sup>622</sup> Harrison, “Whitefield Converted,” 7.

<sup>623</sup> Harrison, “Whitefield Converted,” 6.

earth: “Lord, if I am not a Christian, or if I am not a real one, for Jesus Christ’s sake, show me what Christianity is that I may not be damned at last!”

God soon showed me, for in reading a few lines further, that, “true religion is a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us,” 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 become a new creature.<sup>624</sup>

Compare this with the original:

...but, blessed be God, he stopped me in my journey. I must bear testimony to my old friend, Mr. Charles Wesley, he put a book into my hands, called the Life of God in the Soul of Man, whereby God showed me, that I must be born again or be damned. I know a place; it may be superstitious, perhaps, but whenever I go to Oxford, I cannot help running to that place where Jesus Christ first revealed himself to me, and gave me the new birth. As a good writer says, a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet, my brethren, not be a Christian. How did my heart rise, how did my heart shudder, like a poor man that is afraid to look into his account-books, lest he should find himself a bankrupt; yet shall I burn that book, shall I throw it down, shall I put it by, or shall I search into it? I did, and holding the book in my hand, thus addressed the God of heaven and earth: 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. I read a little further, and the cheat was discovered. O, says the author, they that know anything of religion, know it is a vital union with the Son of God, Christ formed in the heart; O what a ray of Divine life did then break in on my poor soul, I fell a writing to all my brethren, to my sisters, talked to the students, as they came in my room, put off all trifling conversation, put all trifling books away, and was determined to study to be a saint, and then to be a scholar; and from that moment God has been carrying on his blessed work in my soul.<sup>625</sup>

A simple comparison between the two indicates significant differences in quotation, Dallimore’s is more of a summary of the original (he did this with Irving as will be seen in the next chapter). More importantly, the original contained the statement about Whitefield going superstitiously back to the place in Oxford where he was born again, which occurs not in the context of the 1735 conversion (as per Dallimore) but when he

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<sup>624</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:73.

<sup>625</sup> George Whitefield, “All Men’s Place,” in *Sermons on Important Subjects* (London: Baynes, 1825), 702.

was first given Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man* by Charles Wesley in 1732. Dallimore quietly lifted this statement out of the quote. All of this then appears to place Whitefield's conversion experience earlier than 1735, against Dallimore's contention.

Dallimore was significantly nonplussed by Harrison's criticism and replied in strong terms. He countered that an understanding of Whitefield's conversion was not merely dependent upon the testimony of it provided in the *Journals* and sermon, but also in those places where Whitefield expressed the nature both of conversion and sealing with the Spirit.<sup>626</sup> He referenced Whitefield's sermons *Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost* and *The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of all Believers* where the preacher recognized conversion, the indwelling of the Spirit, and the sealing of the Spirit as the same experience.<sup>627</sup> On an historical level, and arguing from silence, Dallimore asked why John Wesley did not mention Whitefield's two-stage view (if he had one). Wesley himself taught a two-stage experience in his doctrine of Christian perfection, why would he not have attacked Whitefield for inconsistency on this score in their debates over entire sanctification? Likewise, the Querists, Whitefield's opponents in America, and the Seceders, his critics in Scotland, would surely have taken the opportunity to criticise his theology if he held to a second experience of the Spirit. Whitefield's friends would have too, but there is only silence. When Charles Wesley penned a poem about Whitefield's conversion, he nowhere mentioned a second sealing of the Spirit, nor do any of Whitefield's biographers mention it, including Gillies who knew

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<sup>626</sup> Arnold Dallimore, "Whitefield's Concept of the Sealing with the Spirit," (nine page unpublished manuscript, n.d. [ca. 1979]).

<sup>627</sup> Dallimore, "Whitefield," 1-2. Cf. George Whitefield, "Marks of Having Received the Holy Ghost," in Lee Gatiss, ed., *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 187-199; George Whitefield, "The Indwelling of the Spirit, the Common Privilege of All Believers," in Lee Gatiss, ed., *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 115-128.

Whitefield personally.<sup>628</sup> Dallimore also pointed to Whitefield's own testimony from the early days that indicated that he saw himself as an unbeliever prior to 1735—he said that he still needed to be renewed before he could see God. Dallimore concluded that Whitefield was a “disciplined legalist” as a member of the Holy Club, not a convert.<sup>629</sup> In the midst of his response he accused Harrison of using Whitefield in the service of a “widely misleading movement today,” in reference to the growing charismatic and Pentecostal movements.<sup>630</sup> Dallimore also accused Harrison's view of tending toward “easy-believism”—a kind of antinomianism that was common in twentieth-century evangelicalism that taught that Christ could be someone's “saviour” but not “Lord.”<sup>631</sup> Like his later criticisms of Harry Stout, Dallimore could be acerbic with his words when it came to defending Whitefield.

As for the matter of misquoting Whitefield, Dallimore chalked it up to Harrison's misunderstanding of the nature of Whitefield's diaries and *Journals*, and how he revised them. The early diary was written by a youth who could at times inflate numbers and speak imprecisely about events in his life. There were times when Whitefield was particularly emotive and would become “much excited” and “repetitive, sometimes using four or five pages to report a single day, and referring to his experiences over and over in imprecise language.” It was such a diary that Whitefield composed his published *Journals* from. When the *Journals* underwent “severe criticism,” Whitefield revised them

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<sup>628</sup> Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 2-4. Dallimore presumably referred to Charles Wesley, *An Elegy on the Late Reverend George Whitefield, M. A.* (Bristol, UK: William Pine, 1771).

<sup>629</sup> Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 5.

<sup>630</sup> Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 2.

<sup>631</sup> Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 5. For a treatment of “easy-believism” from a perspective similar to Dallimore's see Ernest C. Reisinger, *“The Carnal Christian”? What Should We Think of the Carnal Christian?* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991).

in 1756 to make the language more precise. Regarding “All Men’s Place,” this was a sermon preached just before Whitefield’s death when he was worn out and “almost incapable of preaching at all.” His sermons from this period were often “rambling” and contained many reminiscences of his early life. They were not published by Whitefield, but were taken down in shorthand by Joseph Gurney (1744-1815). When Whitefield read one he said, “It is not verbatim as I delivered it. In some places it makes me speak false concord, and even nonsense; in others the sense and connexion is destroyed by the injudicious disjointed paragraphs, and the whole is entirely unfit for the public view.”<sup>632</sup> Therefore both the early journal and the sermon must be used with care. This is why, according to Dallimore, he used the 1756 journal and “viewed the account given in the sermon in the light of the plain statements in these revised *Journals* and also in the light of the doctrinal position manifest through Whitefield’s life” as seen in the sermons noted above. In a footnote Dallimore acknowledged that Harrison was right to point out that he listed “a citation as coming from the sermon, whereas it is actually from the Journals [*sic*]. I am thankful for this correction, but the mistake in the footnote does not in any way affect the statement in the text despite Mr. Graham’s [*sic*] attempt to make it appear that it does.”<sup>633</sup> Dallimore also expressed concern that by replying to Harrison it would appear that he was being critical of Lloyd-Jones—he “did not want to seem to identify [Lloyd-Jones] with the rather far-fetched and, at times snide nature of Mr. Harrison’s remarks.”<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> Quoted in Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 7.

<sup>633</sup> Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 9 n.7.

<sup>634</sup> Dallimore, “Whitefield,” 8.

A final surrejoinder came from Harrison where he reasserted the claim that Dallimore misread Whitefield's conversion: "I am afraid that Dr. Dallimore's rather scolding reply leaves me unconvinced."<sup>635</sup> He began by responding to Dallimore's historical challenges. John Wesley would not have called Whitefield out on his two-stage view because it was completely different than that offered in Christian perfectionism. Whitefield's critics did not "pounce upon" his view because they were not as disturbed by it as Dallimore was. They would have seen that such a view had a pedigree stretching back to the English Puritans, and so would have found it unremarkable as a point of criticism. Whitefield's friends were silent on the matter because, Harrison argued, they shared similar sentiments. For instance, Watts wrote, "Dost Thou not dwell in all Thy saints,/And seal the heirs of heaven?"<sup>636</sup> As well, Doddridge wrote, "O may Thy Spirit seal our souls,/And mould them to Thy will."<sup>637</sup> Charles Wesley wrote, "Where the indubitable seal/That ascertains the kingdom mine/The powerful stamp I long to feel."<sup>638</sup> Harrison believed that such quotes from the great evangelical hymn-writers indicated that they might believe that a man may be a Christian and not yet sealed with the Spirit. Of course, this is an assertion, not an argument, and does not prove Harrison's point. Though he ignored Whitefield's other biographers like Gillies, Harrison argued that Luke Tyerman did not deal adequately with Whitefield's theology of conversion because he was a Wesleyan and was thus not definite about the issue. Harrison did not want to claim

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<sup>635</sup> Graham Harrison, untitled reply (unpublished 7 page manuscript, n.d. [ca, 1979]), 1.

<sup>636</sup> Isaac Watts, "CXLIV," in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Three Books: Corrected and Accommodated to the Use of the Church of Christ in America* (Brookfield, MA: E. Merriam & Co., 1812), 49. Watts indicated that this hymn was based on Romans 8:14, 16, and Ephesians 1:13, 14.

<sup>637</sup> Philip Doddridge, "Conformity to Christ," in Henry Stebbing, ed., *Sacred Poetry: Consisting of Selections from the Works of the Most Admired Writers* (London: Scott, Webster, and Geary, 1832), 432.

<sup>638</sup> Charles Wesley, "Hymn 280," in John Wesley and Charles Wesley, eds., *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (London: J. Paramore, 1780).

originality for the interpretation, as Dallimore implied, rather, “In this matter I shall have to yield the palm to Dr. Lloyd-Jones from whose lips, I must confess, I first heard the suggestion.”<sup>639</sup> Harrison pointed to Howell Harris as an example of one who clearly held to the two-stage view. Harris was close with Whitefield, and was allowed to preach for him while on his itinerant trips to America. Whitefield never pointed out the inconsistency in Harris’ theology. Harrison argued that if he was absurd to countenance a two-stage view, by Dallimore’s own standard, Whitefield must be absurd too.

Of Dallimore’s statement about the “literary history” of Whitefield’s *Journals*, though they were interesting, Harrison believed they were irrelevant to the discussion. Dallimore “slides” over the issue of mistaken quotations, “But this does not meet the force of my criticism at all.”<sup>640</sup> Harrison gave four reasons why this was the case. First, Dallimore took two separate references from two separate sources (the 1769 sermon and the *Journals*) and put them together as from the sermon. Second, the quotation from the 1769 sermon was incomplete as the “most significant passage,” about Whitefield’s superstitious trip to Oxford, was redacted out. If Dallimore had not removed the quote, it would have been clear in the sermon that Whitefield “was referring his conversion to his reading of Scougal’s book.” Dallimore gave no indication that the omission happened, nor did he use common literary devices such as an ellipses to indicate that text had been removed—“the unsuspecting reader would be totally unaware that something vital is missing.” Third, there is no manuscript evidence to justify taking the missing sentence and transposing to the event that Harrison claimed was Whitefield’s sealing experience.

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<sup>639</sup> Harrison, untitled reply, 3.

<sup>640</sup> Harrison, untitled reply, 5.

Harrison claimed that Dallimore's "is not responsible writing at this point." While not wanting to "impute sinister motive," it remained unchanged that Dallimore "juggled with the evidence." Fourth, if Whitefield's preaching in later life was rambling and imprecise, why would Dallimore choose to use it at all? It is even stranger that Dallimore would take such an imprecise statement and interpolate it into a clearer text without indication. Harrison said, "[I]t is one of the cardinal principles of a historian's use of his documentary sources that he does not manipulate them to make them say what he thinks the character in question would have wanted them to have said instead of what they do say. Still less is it permissible to make the character say what the historian thinks he ought to have said." History must be written "warts and all."<sup>641</sup> Because of all of this, Harrison remained unable to believe that Whitefield conflated his sealing of the Spirit with his conversion, even though Harrison greatly valued the first volume of Dallimore's biography, and would not let this dispute colour his reading of the second volume when it finally appeared.

What should be made of this dispute? First, Harrison was right to point out Dallimore's error when it came to changing Whitefield's quote about going to Oxford to the place of his conversion. It is, as Harrison said, inexplicable, and Dallimore did not give a reason why he did it. Was it his anti-charismatic bias that drove him to it? He claimed that he was unaware of any claim that Whitefield distinguished between his conversion and sealing with the Spirit—he wrote the first volume in 1969 and only first heard of this new interpretation in 1979. Yet Dallimore must have been aware of Lloyd-Jones' view as the Doctor expressed them as early as the mid-1950s. Would Lloyd-Jones

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<sup>641</sup> Harrison, untitled reply, 6. Emphasis his.

not have asked Dallimore's opinion about them when they first met at the Carlton Club? Second, Harrison's responses to Dallimore's historical justifications are plausible. It could very well be that Whitefield's contemporaries did not find a two-stage view incompatible with evangelical theology—especially as Puritans like Goodwin held the view. Third, Harrison did not reply to Dallimore's argument that other works of Whitefield, like his sermons on the Spirit, argued for a single-stage view. If it was the case that Whitefield taught that sealing of the Spirit happened at conversion, would this not strongly support Dallimore's case? Fourth, this whole debate serves as an important reminder to historians to always make sure that they use their sources honestly and be aware of any potential bias that might negatively effect their interpretations. There is indication—as in the case of Irving—that Dallimore could manipulate quotations to serve a purpose. If that is the case in this situation, he has dealt irresponsibly with Whitefield, which could undermine trust in the entire biography. This brings us to further discussions of what constitutes a usable past. So, while Harrison may not be correct about Whitefield's view of the sealing of the Spirit, the debate led to a helpful clarification of Dallimore's use of sources.

### **Whitefield, revival and the usable past**

In the final chapter of his second volume Dallimore explored Whitefield and the “measure of the man.” He explained that a true man is only known by his inner-self and so, taking all that he had written in the two volumes, Dallimore sought to reveal

Whitefield's motives, aims and desires in a flurry of short expositions.<sup>642</sup> Briefly, Dallimore's survey of Whitefield's life reveals the evangelist as a man who sought the glory of God in the midst of overwhelming temptations to pride; was humble enough to publicly admit errors; was one who preached extensively on both sides of the Atlantic; had widespread appeal across denominational and class demographics; was steadfast in his vocation; was the one person who gave the revival an "intercontinental character"; and shaped subsequent evangelical doctrine. These are to name just a few of the ways that Dallimore saw the influence of Whitefield. He then asked, "What is Whitefield's place upon the field of history?" His answer was threefold. In the first place, Whitefield was a great orator who must be placed among the greatest orators from antiquity to today. Second, Whitefield's prodigious labours altered the course of history. The role he played in the revival changed the life of nations. Third, though Whitefield lacked the exegetical and theological gifts of men like Jonathan Edwards, John Owen or John Gill, he was superbly equipped to do the work of an evangelist. Of these gifts, "Whitefield deserves the primacy often accorded to him."<sup>643</sup> In the midst of such accolades, Dallimore was also keen to give criticisms and pointed out some of Whitefield's faults. These included Whitefield's youthful egotism in light of the rapid pace of his fame; his "sword-brandishing" against "unconverted ministers"; the tendency to place too much emphasis on "impressions"; his failure to be discriminating in his public dealings; his excessive use of "your Lordship" or "your Ladyship" in letters to bishops and members of the aristocracy; and finally Whitefield's failure to recognize the evil of slavery.<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:517.

<sup>643</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:535-536.

<sup>644</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:519-520.

After these copious lists of Whitefield, good and bad, Dallimore gave advice on how twentieth-century evangelicals can learn from this eighteenth-century evangelist. This advice is an example of a pietistic understanding of Whitefield, where the emphasis that Dallimore places on Whitefield's significance is entirely spiritual. For Dallimore, Whitefield pre-eminently "speaks to us about the power of the Gospel." This was not the "social gospel," but the gospel of "redeeming grace." According to Dallimore, the gospel was the "need of this present hour" and Whitefield's example could bring Christians "back to the Gospel in its fullness and therewith its power!"<sup>645</sup> Whitefield also "speaks to us about the primacy of preaching." Dallimore was concerned that many in his day saw preaching as passé, and that it should give way to dialogue and discussion. Whitefield exemplified biblical preaching—it was the declaration of an authoritative message of "thus saith the Lord." What is curious about this lesson is that Dallimore nowhere in his two-volume biography provided a detailed analysis of Whitefield as a preacher. Readers do not find out how Whitefield preached, what methods he followed, what sermonic structure he followed, whether he was innovative in his style, or whether he was reflective of the preaching of his day.<sup>646</sup> In fact, none of Dallimore's biographies have any examination of the preaching of his subjects, which is odd when one considers that they were each some of the most respected preachers in church history. Finally, "Whitefield speaks to us about true Revival." Revival in the twentieth century, according to Dallimore, was nothing more than human attempts to bring God down, resorting to showmanship, sensationalism, musical entertainment and the effort to evoke confession

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<sup>645</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:536.

<sup>646</sup> For Whitefield as a preacher see Clary, "George Whitefield"; John Carrick, *The Imperative of Preaching: A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2003).

without any doctrinal depth. Modern revival was a “brief flurry of excitement” followed by failure. Whitefield’s life, on the other hand, taught that revival is the “sovereign work of God, a supernatural work, a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.” Whitefield’s revival preaching brought a deep sense of an awareness of sin, and the need to flee to Christ for salvation, resulting in joy based on the assurance of having done so. “Such,” Dallimore commented, “will ever be the nature of true Revival.”<sup>647</sup>

### **Dallimore’s Whitefield: Meeting historical standards**

This chapter has highlighted a number of ways that Dallimore offered criticism of Whitefield. Most strongly were his words about Whitefield and slavery, but there were other areas of criticism including Whitefield’s celebrity-motivated pride, and those faults listed in the section above. Thus, Dallimore did not limit his criticisms of Whitefield to just the chapter on his rights and wrongs or on the chapter dealing with slavery. As well, other critiques are peppered throughout the two volumes. For instance, Dallimore spoke of Whitefield’s insensitivity when he wrote to Elizabeth Delamotte, who was eventually to become his wife. In a series of early letters to her, where he explained the nature of marriage in order to woo her, he came across as a “heartless individual, quite insensitive to the feelings of a refined young woman.”<sup>648</sup> There were times when Whitefield had to sacrifice his wife for his ministry that came across as harsh and unloving. Whitefield unnecessarily believed that loving Elizabeth too much was a kind of disloyalty to God. As Dallimore said, “[T]hat love for Elizabeth would necessarily have constituted such

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<sup>647</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:537.

<sup>648</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:363.

disloyalty must be regretted.”<sup>649</sup> Of particular concern to Dallimore was the “foible” of Whitefield’s letter of proposal to Delamotte that revealed “a very human Whitefield.”<sup>650</sup> The letter began by adopting an aloof attitude to Delamotte wherein he expressed his fear that she, as an “earthly object,” would take his heart away from the work of ministry.<sup>651</sup> The implication of the letter, according to Dallimore, was that Delamotte was a hindrance to Whitefield. He surmised that Whitefield’s proposal, which was “cold and formal,” must have left Delamotte “wounded and confused.”<sup>652</sup>

Though not a critique per se, Dallimore was also open about Whitefield’s struggles with depression. This would occur at times when Whitefield spent lengthy periods of time in relative loneliness, particularly on board ships sailing across the Atlantic where he would express “severe sorrow and struggle.” He recorded Whitefield as writing of the “agonies” of his “poor soul” and how he would “groan daily” about being weary and heavy-laden. Whitefield once wrote, “Had I not known that my Redeemer liveth...I must have sunk in despair.” At times he wished to die. Of these entries Dallimore commented, “[C]oming from one who had otherwise known little but triumph, they reveal an extraordinary condition indeed.”<sup>653</sup> Things became so severe for Whitefield due to his struggles with pride and depression that, in the words of Dallimore, “he had thoughts of leaving ministry.”<sup>654</sup> He even came close to giving up corresponding with others through letters. From a perusal of Dallimore’s own writings, as seen in chapter two, he likely felt

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<sup>649</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:368.

<sup>650</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:467.

<sup>651</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:468.

<sup>652</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:473, 469.

<sup>653</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:401.

<sup>654</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:403.

an affinity with Whitefield at this point. Dallimore himself left ministry and disappeared for three months to upstate New York due to depression. In the next chapter Dallimore's treatment of Spurgeon's struggles with depression is also noted. From both men Dallimore likely took some encouragement as he suffered through his own mental struggles.

As Dallimore's biography is written with sympathy and admiration for Whitefield, the remarks made by Maddock that opened this chapter are understandable. Especially when one considers the problems in Dallimore's use of sources pertaining to Whitefield and the sealing of the Holy Spirit. However, when Dallimore's criticisms of Whitefield are collated together, it is apparent that his biography is not strictly a hagiography. Though it may fit well as a filiopietistic account of Whitefield in that Dallimore wrote admiringly and "that ye may believe," but Dallimore was more than willing to criticise Whitefield and in some cases, as with slavery, in strong language. As well, the final chapter in his two-volume biography shows that Dallimore researched and wrote everything he did with the express conviction that twentieth-century evangelicalism has something to learn from Whitefield.

CHAPTER 5  
EDWARD IRVING AND CHARLES SPURGEON: ANACHRONISTIC  
AGENDAS

The lesser biographies

Dallimore's original two-fold purpose in writing the Whitefield biography was only partially realized, for as the book grew in popularity in Britain and North America, Whitefield's name became better-known both by historians who studied the eighteenth century and Christians who were interested in church history. But Dallimore wrote not only to popularize Whitefield but also to provide income for his family. The financial burden was lessened after publication but it was not taken away. Dallimore believed that his pension from the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists of Canada (FEBC) was of little consequence, and fearing that he would precede his wife to glory, he hoped that royalties from other books would soften any financial difficulties for her. So he continued to write. It must be remembered that financial reasons were not the only ones that lay behind his continued written output; as argued in chapter three, he believed that writing church history was part of his larger call to gospel ministry.

It took Dallimore thirty years to research and write his two-volume biography of Whitefield. In the fifteen years before his death he went on to write seven others, though only six were published. These are what may be called his "lesser biographies" due to their shorter length. His life of T. T. Shields remains in manuscript form and the biography of his friend and fellow Canadian pastor Jack Scott, published by a small

Ontario publisher, had relatively small circulation.<sup>655</sup> Of the remaining five books, three were the fruits of his Whitefield research—namely the biographies of Susanna and Charles Wesley, and a condensed version of the Whitefield volumes. His other two were researched freshly and had their own purposes for publication. These are his biographies of Edward Irving and Charles Spurgeon. This chapter and the next explores these lesser biographies. It is noteworthy that as a man of the pulpit, Dallimore would spend much of his time writing about influential preachers, with the exception of Susanna Wesley. The Wesley brothers and Whitefield were powerful evangelists of the Great Awakening, Irving was a renowned orator, Spurgeon was the Victorian “Prince of Preachers,” and Shields and Scott were respected preachers among twentieth-century Ontario Baptists.

Dallimore’s concerns, however, were not merely to bring well-known preachers to public attention in the twentieth century, he also wrote to encourage his audiences to embrace certain theological perspectives. As much as he was an apologist for Whitefield and offered a positive treatment of the Grand Itinerant’s vision for revival, Dallimore also used history to combat what he thought were theological errors in his own age. This was certainly the case with his concerns over John Wesley’s character and theology.

Dallimore’s usable past is also very evident in his biography of Edward Irving, whom Dallimore styled the “forerunner of the charismatic movement.”<sup>656</sup> This chapter evaluates Dallimore’s biography of Irving by looking at the way his anti-charismatic theology shaped his writing. The question also needs to be asked whether he treated his subject

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<sup>655</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *Thomas Todhunter Shields: Baptist Fundamentalist* (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.); Dallimore, *Only One Life*.

<sup>656</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, *Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement: The Life of Edward Irving* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983).

with the same care that he did with Whitefield. How much did historical fallacies like anachronism play a part, particularly as it related to anti-charismatic polemic?

### Canadian charismatics

In order to gauge Dallimore's antipathy to the charismatic movement, it is important to understand his context both as a student in Toronto in the 1930s and as an evangelical Baptist pastor in Ontario in the mid-twentieth century. This section considers his context and how it shaped his theological concerns as a lead-up to how he wrote the history of Irving.

When the FEBC first took shape in 1953, it did so by not only distinguishing itself theologically from the growing liberalism of other Baptists in the mainline Convention from which it had split, but also from other conservative Protestant groups in Canada like the Pentecostals. In many respects Baptists and Pentecostals enjoy theological commonalities such as belief in the classical doctrines of God and christology, soteriological doctrines like justification by faith alone, ecclesiastical distinctives like believer's baptism by immersion and independent local churches, as well as belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture. It was not uncommon that Pentecostals, due to a lack of theological self-reflection, were unaware that they were part of the stream of orthodox theology that stems from the early church. As Keith Warrington said, "As with many other evangelicals, Pentecostals have traditionally identified themselves as Trinitarian and thus (often unknowingly) affirmed the classical creeds, adopting the

orthodox beliefs of the Western Church, as defined by the Council of Nicea.”<sup>657</sup> In spite of this shared orthodoxy, there have been a number of noteworthy differences between traditional Baptist and Pentecostal theologies, particularly related to the “extraordinary” gifts of the Spirit like divine healing, words of knowledge, and speaking in tongues.<sup>658</sup> As Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas explained, Pentecostals “share exuberant worship, an emphasis on subjective religious experience and spiritual gifts, claims of supernatural miracles, signs, and wonders—including a language of experiential spirituality rather than of theology—and mystical ‘life in the Spirit’ by which they daily live out the will of God.”<sup>659</sup>

Canadian Baptist concern was heightened due to the rapid growth of groups like the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) in the twentieth century.<sup>660</sup> Pentecostalism, as Robert A. Wright explained, “distinguished itself as the fastest growing branch of Canadian Protestantism in the early twentieth century.” It was also one of “the most aggressively evangelistic groups in Canadian Protestantism.”<sup>661</sup> In 1911,

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<sup>657</sup> Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 29.

<sup>658</sup> Grant Wacker, “The Pentecostal Tradition,” in Ronald L. Numbers and Darrel W. Amundsen, eds., *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 520-521.

<sup>659</sup> Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, “Introduction,” in Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), xvii.

<sup>660</sup> For the origins of Canadian Pentecostalism, see Michael Di Giacomo, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Canada: Its Origins, Development, and Distinct Culture,” in Michael Wilkinson, ed., *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 15-38. For the history of the PAOC, see Gloria Grace Kulbeck, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Toronto: Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958).

<sup>661</sup> Robert A. Wright, “The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945,” in George A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990* (Montreal, QC/Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 168.

when they first appeared in the Canadian census, there were only 515 Pentecostals in the country, but by 2001 they numbered 369,475.<sup>662</sup> They experienced their greatest growth after 1951—around the same time that FEBC was founded. This reflects their worldwide growth that by 1990 saw an estimated 14,000 different groups of Pentecostals in 230 countries with 372 million people who identified with the movement. Roughly 21% of the world's Christian population was Pentecostal.<sup>663</sup> Alongside Pentecostalism were various charismatic and neo-charismatic churches, loose groupings that were non-cessationists like the Pentecostals when it came to the gifts of the Spirit.<sup>664</sup> By 2001 these three groups together totaled some 4,425,000 adherents, which was approximately 15% of the population of Canada.<sup>665</sup> One early prominent Canadian charismatic was Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), born near Ingersoll, Ontario. Ordained as an evangelist for the Assemblies of God in 1919, by 1921 she had founded Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, California, that held fifty-three hundred people. In 1927 this became the International Church of the Four Square Gospel. Her services were theatrical, like those of her contemporary Billy Sunday (1862-1935). For instance, she once rode into church on a motorcycle dressed as a police officer.<sup>666</sup>

One of the reasons for Pentecostal growth was its role in the growing evangelical movement in Canada. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) was founded in

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<sup>662</sup> Michael Wilkinson, *The Spirit Said Go: Pentecostal Immigrants in Canada* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 16.

<sup>663</sup> Wilkinson, *Spirit Said Go*, 15. A thorough study of worldwide Pentecostalism is Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, trans. R. A. Wilson (London: SCM Press, 1972).

<sup>664</sup> Cf. Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

<sup>665</sup> Wilkinson, *Spirit Said Go*, 15-16.

<sup>666</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister*, Library of Religious Biography (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 261.

Toronto on February 16, 1965, by a group of pastors predominantly from Presbyterian and Anglican churches, but was originally led by a PAOC pastor named J. Harry Faught (d. 2005). With a doctor of theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary, an important evangelical seminary in the United States, and membership on the General Executive of the PAOC, Faught's leadership indicated a growing acceptance of Pentecostalism in mainstream evangelicalism.<sup>667</sup> He was responsible for organizing a speaking tour across Canada for Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003), an influential American evangelical.<sup>668</sup> Yet many were suspicious of Pentecostalism's role. For instance, in 1963 the Board of Governors of Toronto Bible College (TBC), which is now Tyndale University College and Seminary, met to consider the appointment of Faught to the school's faculty. Stewart L. Boehmer, the president of the college from 1962-1973, expressed apprehension about forming links between the PAOC and TBC. He asked, "Would this denominational affiliation be harmful to the welfare of the College?"<sup>669</sup> Historically the school had no official contact with any Pentecostal denomination. Ultimately Faught was not hired, and links between Pentecostalism and TBC would not occur for some years. Twice in 1965 and 1966 he was scheduled to speak at meetings for the EFC in the Maritime Provinces but when a number of evangelicals refused to attend because of his Pentecostalism these offers were withdrawn. On the other hand, Faught's own denomination was concerned about his relationship with evangelical churches. They feared that he "was compromising on the principle of baptism in the Holy Spirit, and they

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<sup>667</sup> John Stackhouse Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 166.

<sup>668</sup> Cf. Gregory Alan Thornbury, *Recovering Classic Evangelicalism: Applying the Wisdom and Vision of Carl F. H. Henry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

<sup>669</sup> Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, 234-235.

attacked him from the right.”<sup>670</sup> This did not stop the EFC from deepening its ties with Canadian Pentecostalism. From 1977 to 1983 Charles Yates, the general secretary of the PAOC, was president and in 1983 the leadership was taken over by Brian Stiller, an ordained minister in the denomination.<sup>671</sup>

### Canadian Baptist reactions

For many Canadian Baptists the theological emphases of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement were cause for alarm. Typically Baptists are cessationist with respect to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, affirming that charismatic phenomena such as speaking in tongues and divine healing were only for the apostolic age.<sup>672</sup> Pentecostals and charismatics went beyond seeing the gifts only as apostolic signs by asserting their normativity in church life. The reaction of Canadian Baptists against growing Pentecostalism of the early twentieth century was strong. As early as 1924, in a sermon preached at Jarvis Street Baptist Church and subsequently published in *The Gospel Witness* magazine, T. T. Shields asked, “What is the explanation of so-called Pentecostalism? It is nothing but an orgy of emotionalism. It is the Herod spirit: ‘let me see a miracle’—but not the miracle of a reformed life.”<sup>673</sup> In 1930, when Dallimore was a

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<sup>670</sup> Ronald A. N. Kydd, “Canadian Pentecostalism and the Evangelical Impulse,” in George A. Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of Canadian Evangelical Experience* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 298-299.

<sup>671</sup> Kydd, “Canadian Pentecostalism,” 299.

<sup>672</sup> A very influential book arguing for cessationism published around the time of Dallimore’s work on Irving was John F. MacArthur Jr., *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993).

<sup>673</sup> T. T. Shields, “The Supernatural Storm,” *The Gospel Witness* (March 13, 1924), 1.

student at Toronto Baptist Seminary, Shields actually taught that Pentecostalism was a cult.<sup>674</sup>

This negative perspective continued well into the century. Just before the founding of the FEBC in 1953, John F. Holliday (1901-1990), editor of *The Fellowship Evangel*, the mouthpiece of the Independent Baptists, called the claims of divine healing “extravagant” and “spectacular” and reported that the magazine had received reports from “good people” who were “being disturbed and deceived by the semi-Scriptural popular appeals of fanatical healing preachers.”<sup>675</sup> Holliday argued that though God can indeed heal, the “miraculous manifestations...are not true Divine healings but fanatical cures.” He called them superstition, fanaticism, and error, and linked Pentecostalism with the healing relics of the Roman Catholic Church and Christian Science.<sup>676</sup> That same year *The Fellowship Evangel* published a sermon by Donald A. Loveday that was preached at Central Baptist Church in Brantford, Ontario, entitled “The Christian and Divine Healing.” He decried faith healers and asked rhetorically that if they “possess the ability to cure the sick, why do they not walk down the aisles of our overcrowded hospitals and exercise their talents?”<sup>677</sup> A year later the same magazine published an advertisement for Jack Pickford’s booklet, *This Is Not That*, which treated the doctrine of baptism in the

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<sup>674</sup> *The Gospel Witness* (January 30, 1930), 1; *The Gospel Witness* (July 2, 1931), 6.

<sup>675</sup> John F. Holliday, “Modern Healing Movements Under the Searchlight,” *The Fellowship Evangel* 19.5 (June 1952), 3. For Holliday see Richard Holliday, “Dr. John F. Holliday,” in Fred A. Vaughan, ed., *Fellowship Baptist Trailblazers: Life Stories of Pastors and Missionaries* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2002), 2:173-178; Michael A. G. Haykin and Ian Hugh Clary, “O Lord, Thy Word is Settled in Heaven”: *A Celebration of the History of Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, 1920-2013* (Toronto, ON: Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, 2013), 34-37.

<sup>676</sup> Holliday, “Modern Healing,” 3.

<sup>677</sup> Donald A. Loveday, “The Christian and Divine Healing,” *The Fellowship Evangel* 19.8 (October 1952), 3.

Spirit.<sup>678</sup> Pickford was a Baptist leader in western Canada and taught at Northwest Baptist Theological College.<sup>679</sup> The advertisement for his book read, “If any of our readers are troubled over the ‘tongues’ question or related subjects, be sure to get this work.”<sup>680</sup>

An entertaining story that illustrates the Canadian Baptist confrontation with Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement comes from another article in *The Fellowship Evangel*, written by John E. Boehmer, who pastored High Park Baptist Church in Toronto, Ontario. Between June 13 and 29, 1952, the well-known faith healer Oral Roberts (1918-2009) conducted a revival at Exhibition Park in the Ontario capital.<sup>681</sup> Boehmer attended the meeting held on June 17 with W. Gordon Brown, Dean of Central Baptist Seminary. Near the end of the service Roberts declared that any in attendance who had been sick were now healed. Suspicious, Brown approached Robert F. DeWeese (1910-1989), Roberts’ crusade director, to ask for the names and addresses of all who had been healed. DeWeese was unwilling to give them, which indicated to Boehmer that the healings were spurious. Boehmer called Robert L. Rex, the Chairman of the Toronto Committee that brought Roberts to the city and, like Brown, asked for names and addresses. According to Boehmer, “Mr. Rex said that this was not their policy because

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<sup>678</sup> J. H. Pickford, *This Is Not That: What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? The Charismatic Experience* (n.p.: 1953). Pickford wrote on this subject again in the 1960s with *A Fresh Breeze or a False Belief: How Scriptural is the Modern Tongues Movement?*, *The Charismatic Experience* (Vancouver, BC: Northwest Baptist Theological College, n.d.). See also J. H. Pickford, “Baptists and the Charismatic Movement,” *Evangelical Baptist* (December 1969), 76.

<sup>679</sup> Ian C. Bowie, *Jack and Alberta Pickford: Builders of a Baptist Legacy* (Richmond, BC: The Baptist Foundation of B. C., 1999).

<sup>680</sup> *The Fellowship Evangel* 20.7 (September 1953), 9.

<sup>681</sup> I am thankful for Roger V. Rydin, Archivist of the Oral Roberts University Archives, for confirming these dates. For Roberts see David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).

many who claimed to be cured were not! Doesn't Oral Roberts know this too?"<sup>682</sup>

Boehmer concluded his article saying, "It is my personal conviction that believers need to reject faith healing as practiced today. 'Faith healers' are possibly sincere but woefully mistaken. Their practices are contrary to the Scripture and contrary to experience."<sup>683</sup> One can see from such examples that Canadian Baptists in the early part of the twentieth century were resolutely opposed to any assertion that the extraordinary gifts were for today.

Similar sentiments were shared in the latter half of the twentieth century. In the 1980s two Canadian critiques were published on the gifts of the Spirit, both by Ronald E. Baxter, a FEBC pastor who ministered in a number of Ontario cities including Toronto, Brantford, and Whitby.<sup>684</sup> He believed that "gift theology" developed a "mythology" about the gifts of the Spirit. Perhaps unwittingly Baxter used the language of New Testament critic Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) in his argument that the gifts needed to be "demythologized." Citing Fuller Theological Seminary professor C. Peter Wagner as an exponent of gift theology, Baxter wrote that when brought to a "logical conclusion" this theological perspective would "so downgrade [an] objective understanding of the Scriptures, as to make the Bible second to one's own subjective position."<sup>685</sup> For Baxter, gift theology radically subjectivized the seat of Christian authority moving it from the bible to the individual. Thus the bible became subservient to the person, no longer functioning as the authoritative rule for faith and practice. He predicted that this

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<sup>682</sup> John E. Boehmer, "Is It a Sin To Be Sick?" *The Fellowship Evangel* 19.7 (September 1952), 5.

<sup>683</sup> Boehmer, "Is It a Sin To Be Sick?" 13.

<sup>684</sup> Ronald E. Baxter, *Charismatic Gift of Tongues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1981); Ronald E. Baxter, *Gifts of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1983).

<sup>685</sup> Baxter, *Gifts*, 17.

subjectivism would logically lead to a denial of biblical authority.<sup>686</sup> This was not just a debate about differences of worship style, but the ground of authority in the life of the church. Baxter summed up his perspective in the opening to his 1981 book *Charismatic Gift of Tongues*: “[L]et us remind ourselves that we must seek objective truth. What we determine must be upon the basis of God’s Word and not subjective experience. We do not examine the Bible in the light of experience; but we do examine experience in the light of the Scriptures. Experience, and not the Bible, is the object to be verified.”<sup>687</sup>

On the other side of the country, Alex L. Shook, a FEBC pastor in Victoria, British Columbia, published *Spiritual Gifts: A Study of 1 Corinthians 12-14*.<sup>688</sup> Though small and not as widely circulated, the book reflects similar concerns to those of Baxter and serves as an indicator of the general anti-charismatic perspective of Fellowship Baptists across Canada. In the introduction Shook explained the urgency that lay behind the publication of his book. He complained that his was “a day of considerable confusion” in the church “with respect to the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit.” According to Shook, the claims of “supernatural manifestations” and “subjective experience” had become the test of fellowship in the church and in the interpretation of scripture. He argued, on the contrary, that “[i]t is the Word of God that must interpret, vindicate or condemn experience.” The claims of modern prophecies, revelations and “interpreted tongues” received more attention than the bible.<sup>689</sup> His view was softer than Shields’ in the first part of the century as he did not question the validity of certain experiences or the genuine faith of

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<sup>686</sup> Baxter, *Gifts*, 20.

<sup>687</sup> Baxter, *Charismatic*, vii.

<sup>688</sup> A. L. Shook, *Spiritual Gifts: A Study of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Victoria, BC: Saanich Baptist Church, 1980).

<sup>689</sup> Shook, *Spiritual Gifts*, 1.

charismatics. However, the burden of his book was to show that such experiences must not be equated with the experiences of the apostles.

It is this context that shaped Dallimore's own understanding of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. With his fellow Baptists, Dallimore worried that the objective content of the faith would be eroded by an emphasis on subjective experience. These concerns were expressed early in his research on Whitefield. On one of his trips to England he stayed in the home of Stan and Marian Hogwood, who attended Cuckfield Baptist Church in West Sussex where Erroll Hulse, at the time involved with Banner of Truth, was pastor. Hulse would visit the Hogwoods and their Canadian guest for meals where the three would listen to Dallimore describe in detail facets of eighteenth-century evangelical life. Hulse also traveled with Dallimore across the English capital tracking down resources on the life of Whitefield. In correspondence with this author, Hulse recalled one occasion "travelling on the London underground with Arnold who gave me a thorough examination over Pentecostal doctrines and claims. I confess at that stage that I was not as clear-thinking about it as I should have been. The train was full as usual and so we were standing. With complete concentration Arnold straightened me out so that I did not have a leg to stand on, which of course is metaphorical, because I needed both legs to stay steady on the tube train. I have never forgotten the force and clarity with which Arnold spoke. Subsequently in memory of that I gave extra care to think biblically about Pentecostal issues."<sup>690</sup> Interestingly, Hulse appears in *Engaging with Martyn-Lloyd*

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<sup>690</sup> Erroll Hulse, email message to author, August 15, 2012. Hulse could not remember the exact date of this trip.

*Jones* as a critic of Lloyd-Jones' views on the experience of the Spirit, a critique whose substance, it now appears, he first learned from Dallimore.<sup>691</sup>

### **Edward Irving: Proto-charismatic?**

Edward Irving (1792-1834), whom David Bebbington called “the doyen of Romantic evangelicals,” was born in Annan, Scotland, and educated at the University of Edinburgh.<sup>692</sup> While a school teacher in Kirkcaldy he became friends with Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), a friendship that lasted, with ebbs and flows, until Irving's untimely death. In 1819 Irving became assistant minister to the influential Calvinist theologian Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) at St. John's Parish in Glasgow, a Church of Scotland congregation.<sup>693</sup> Irving had success as a preacher in Scotland before taking up a charge at the National Scotch Church of Regent Square, London, in 1822. He was expelled from the Scottish church for his heterodox christology—he taught that the Son assumed sinful human flesh—after which he helped found the charismatic Catholic Apostolic Church.<sup>694</sup> Here Irving became a celebrity whose preaching, shaped as it was by Romanticism and

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<sup>691</sup> Andrew Atherstone, David Ceri Jones and William K. Kay, “Lloyd-Jones and the charismatic controversy” in Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, eds., *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of ‘the Doctor’* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2011), 145. For Hulse's work on charismatic experience see Erroll Hulse, *The Believer's Experience: Maintaining the Scriptural Balance Between Experience and Truth* (Laurel, MS: Audobon Press, 2006).

<sup>692</sup> David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 179; A recent life of Irving is Tim Grass, *The Lord's Watchman: A Life of Edward Irving (1732-1834)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012). See also Ralph Brown, “Victorian Anglican Evangelicalism: The Radical Legacy of Edward Irving,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58.4 (2007): 675-704.

<sup>693</sup> For Chalmers see Stewart J. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>694</sup> Cf. C. G. Flegg, *Gathered Under Apostles: A Study of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

its ethos, drew some of England's literary heroes such as William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832).<sup>695</sup> In a dictionary entry on Irving Graham McFarlane wrote that his charismatic theology and his christology made him both "renowned and caricatured."<sup>696</sup> This chapter explores the degree that Dallimore's biography may have contributed to both of these identities.

### "Instructions and warnings": Irving and lessons from the past

In 1983 Dallimore published *Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement: The Life of Edward Irving* a joint endeavour by Banner of Truth in Britain and Moody Publishers in the United States. In an interview with this author, May Dallimore, without recalling who, indicated that it was during a research trip to Britain that her husband was requested to write on Irving, "because of Pentecostals."<sup>697</sup> Thus from its conception Dallimore's book was intended to be a polemic against the charismatic movement.

In the introduction Dallimore explained his purpose for writing: "I endeavour to show the manner in which [Irving] came into those [charismatic] beliefs and to portray the gifts in action in his church. Likewise, I report the disappointments he faced from the

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<sup>695</sup> Bebbington described Irving's look, which matched the Romanticism of his day, thus: "His capacity for self-dramatisation was enhanced by a striking physical presence—an athletic figure standing six feet two inches, with a strong, rich bass voice. In his later years the hair, in the manner of an artistic genius, was parted right and left so as to hang down on his shoulders 'in affected disorder.'" David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 78-79.

<sup>696</sup> Graham McFarlane, "Irving, Edward (1792-1834)," in Trevor Hart, ed., *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 2000), 275.

<sup>697</sup> Clary, Interview with May Dallimore, 9. It is interesting to note, incidental though it may be, that both Irving and Whitefield were derisively nicknamed "Dr. Squintum." For Irving as Dr. Squintum see David Allen, "A Belated Bouquet: A Tribute to Edward Irving (1792-1834)," *The Expository Times* 103.11 (August 1992), 328.

‘tongues’ and ‘prophecies.’ His story culminates in the tragedy of his unfulfilled expectancy of being healed.”<sup>698</sup> Tragedy is an apt description of Dallimore’s view of Irving: “How sad to realize that so good and sincere and capable a man as Irving was drawn aside from the simplicity of the gospel!”<sup>699</sup> As with Whitefield, Dallimore’s purpose in writing was to give a true rendering of Irving’s life and to use Irving as an example for Christians. In this case Dallimore wanted to warn the church about perceived problems with the charismatic movement from its origins—if the foundation is faulty the structure falls. Dallimore was aware of the need for historical objectivity when conducting his research and for his historical interpretation. “I have tried to write as a historian,” he wrote in the introduction, “I have done my best to fulfill the historian’s responsibility of writing without bias and of presenting historic truth with honesty and accuracy, and I trust that to readers of all persuasions the sincerity of my effort may be apparent.”<sup>700</sup> Yet he argued that there were lessons to be learned from Irving’s failures: “Irving’s life provides much more than a fascinating account from the past. It contains warnings and instructions for the present and may well serve as a guide in one of the most important matters facing evangelical Christians today.”<sup>701</sup> Dallimore reiterated his purpose at the end of the book saying that readers “must not let the instructions and warnings inherent in Irving’s experiences pass by unnoticed... Throughout this book the attempt has been made simply to present the facts of his life and let them speak for

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<sup>698</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 7-8.

<sup>699</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 81.

<sup>700</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 8.

<sup>701</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 8.

themselves. But we do well, before we leave the study, to review some of those facts and let them repeat their lessons.”<sup>702</sup>

As this chapter argues, the theological preconceptions that Dallimore had before writing the book so shaped his historiography that the result was an anachronistic reading of the life and thought of Irving. Dallimore’s twentieth-century anti-charismatic context and the theological commitments of Baptists against Pentecostal and charismatic theology drove him to conclusions that affected his reading of sources and so he imported the problems of his own context into the era of Irving. While there is a true likeness of Irving to be found in the book, this portrait is shaded so that readers do not get a clear rendering.

#### Historical bias: Sources, Charismata, Coleridge, and the sinlessness of Christ

There are a number of areas where Dallimore’s theological commitments coloured his interpretation of Irving. For the purposes of this thesis, four are highlighted. In the first, Dallimore’s use of sources, which were largely older, secondary, and critical of Irving is explored. Second, the all-important question of how Dallimore interpreted Irving and charismatic phenomena is addressed. How did his anti-charismatic bias affect the way he understood Irving? Third, Dallimore’s understanding of the eighteenth-century poet and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the perceived negative influence of his friendship on Irving is examined. Finally, the fourth relates to the way Dallimore handled Irving’s

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<sup>702</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 194.

controversial christology. He paid very little consideration to it in comparison to the attention given to Irving's charismatic theology.

### Source selection

In a review of *Forerunner*, published in *Churchman* in 1984, Randle Manwaring described it as “an extremely well-documented book, very readable and intensely moving.”<sup>703</sup> While the last observation is subjective, and the second-to-last is undoubtedly true, we might ask if it is the case that Dallimore's book is well-documented. A strong argument can be made for the opposite conclusion. A cursory read of the footnotes and an examination of the bibliography indicate that much of the Irving biography is reliant on secondary sources. Instead of using primary sources like diaries and correspondence, as he did with Whitefield, Dallimore most often quoted from later biographies. It would appear that he did not read through Irving's *corpus*, or at the very least, his major works. There are only four bibliographical entries on Irving in *Forerunner*. Despite the fact that the first entry is Irving's five-volume collected *Works*, there is no direct quotation from any of the volumes in the entire book. In fact, in one-hundred and ninety-seven pages one of Irving's works only appears directly cited in the footnotes four times.<sup>704</sup> Instead, Dallimore is indebted to two secondary sources from the period, both of which are critical of Irving. Dallimore recognized the discrepancy at the beginning of the book when he acknowledged that “two authors have been cited with noticeable frequency.”

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<sup>703</sup> Randle Manwaring, “Review of *The Life of Edward Irving: The Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement*,” *Churchman* 98.1 (1984), 78.

<sup>704</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 54, 75, 98, 127.

These are the Scottish novelist Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) and the English man of letters, Thomas Carlyle. Dallimore called Oliphant's 1862 biography *The Life of Edward Irving* "the best biography of Irving ever written."<sup>705</sup> The importance of Irving's first biographer is generally acknowledged in modern studies of him, particularly because she knew him, had first-hand access to his friends, acquaintances and critics, and also had access to his journals and correspondence.<sup>706</sup> While Oliphant had sympathies with her subject, she was critical of his theology and of his charismatic experiences, and, as David W. Dorries has pointed out, she was less objective in dealing with Irving's latter years.<sup>707</sup> Oliphant was concerned that his "extreme devotion" had overrun the "skeptical tendency" that Irving typically displayed.<sup>708</sup> Her work also contained a number of factual errors, enough that her contemporary, David Ker, wrote a book detailing them.<sup>709</sup> On the other hand, Carlyle, in his *Reminiscences*, devoted one hundred and thirty-seven pages to his friendship with Irving based primarily on the time they spent together in 1824-1825.<sup>710</sup> Like Oliphant, Carlyle was unsympathetic to Irving's theology and spoke of Irving's

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<sup>705</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 11. Margaret Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving: Minister of the National Scotch Church, London. Illustrated by his Journals and Correspondence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862).

<sup>706</sup> David Dorries claimed that of Irving's many biographies, "none have surpassed the classic work of Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant," David W. Dorries, *Edward Irving's Incarnational Christology* (Fairfax, VA: Xulon Press, 2002), 65. Cf. David Dorries, "Nineteenth Century British Christological Controversy, Centering Upon Edward Irving's Doctrine of Christ's Human Nature" (Phd dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1987).

<sup>707</sup> Dorries, *Edward Irving's Incarnational Christology*, 65.

<sup>708</sup> Oliphant, *Life of Irving*, 40.

<sup>709</sup> David Ker, *Observations on Mrs. Oliphant's Life of Edward Irving and the Correction of Certain Misstatements Therein* (Edinburgh: Thomas Laurie, 1863). Judith van Oosterom-Pooley described Oliphant's book on Irving as an "enthusiastic life, which captures well if not always accurately Irving's dynamic complex personality." Judith van Oosterom-Pooley, *The Whirligig of Time: Margaret Oliphant in Her Later Years*, European University Studies (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 348.

<sup>710</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Reminiscences* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932).

“extravagances” and “aberrations.”<sup>711</sup> He also admitted that his memoir was “more about myself than him [Irving].”<sup>712</sup> As Peter Elliott observed about both sources,

Both Oliphant and Carlyle made the assumption that something must have gone “terribly wrong” for someone of Irving’s abilities to end up as he did, and explaining the disparity between Irving’s abilities and his sad relegation and early death has vexed Irving scholars ever since. As two major nineteenth century interpreters of Irving, both of whom knew him personally, the only significant possible interpretation of Irving’s “decline” that Oliphant and Carlyle have in common that is not contradicted by other internal evidence is the possibility of credulity—implicitly theological credulity—although neither of them engaged in a theological assessment.<sup>713</sup>

The next most cited source by Dallimore was A. L. Drummond’s 1934 contextual study of Irving that focused on his friendships.<sup>714</sup> Dallimore used it in sections dealing with Coleridge and in Irving’s complicated relationship with Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-1866).<sup>715</sup> Though Drummond’s study is helpful in determining the nature of Irving’s connections, it too suffers from openly negative biases against its subject. For instance, when it came to Irving’s growing anti-Catholicism, Drummond commented, “We see here the growth of that fanaticism which was ultimately to darken his life by driving out the spirit of enlightenment.”<sup>716</sup> When it came to assessing Irving’s relationship to the charismata, Drummond was as unforgiving, saying that Irving “could scarcely differentiate between the genuinely inspired and those weak-willed, suggestible people who are so often the passive victims of revival mania...Irving’s faith was simple and

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<sup>711</sup> Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, 254.

<sup>712</sup> Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, 307.

<sup>713</sup> Peter Elliott, “Edward Irving: Romantic Theology in Crisis,” (PhD dissertation, Murdoch University, 2010), 68.

<sup>714</sup> A. L. Drummond, *Irving and his Circle* (London: James Clarke, 1934).

<sup>715</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 66-68.

<sup>716</sup> Drummond, *Irving and his Circle*, 71.

absolute: he had neither historic sense nor knowledge of the maze of motives and cross-currents which are found in men's minds and hearts."<sup>717</sup> Elliott, speaking of Drummond's work, has observed: "As Drummond's book draws to a close, there is a sense of struggle as he tried to reconcile his chosen position of Irving as fanatic with the evidence."<sup>718</sup> It is wholly appropriate to use sources that are critical of a subject, but they must be balanced by opposing and neutral perspectives in order for the historian to establish his or her own interpretation, rather than relying solely on those of others. There were a number of other early biographies or reminiscences from the nineteenth century that, alongside Oliphant and Carlyle, would paint a well-rounded portrait of Irving. For instance, Washington Wilks, in the preface to his biography, expressed what he called "warm, yet unsectarian, admiration" for Irving.<sup>719</sup>

While it is important for historians to take into account the opinions of contemporaries of their subject, the passage of time allows for further reflection by experts who are not coloured by personal bias. More recent biographical works would also be of some use. For instance, J. C. Root's 1912 biography, though not a theological study, provided insights on Irving that benefit from a lack of personal prejudice.<sup>720</sup> It is curious that Dallimore did not refer to H. C. Whitley's study of Irving's life and thought, as it would have aligned with his basic thesis of Irving as a tragic figure.<sup>721</sup> Even more significant is *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* (1973) by Gordon Strachan—

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<sup>717</sup> Drummond, *Irving and his Circle*, 155-156.

<sup>718</sup> Elliott, "Edward Irving," 74.

<sup>719</sup> Washington Wilks, *Edward Irving: An Ecclesiastical and Literary Biography* (London: William Freeman, 1854), i.

<sup>720</sup> J. C. Root, *Edward Irving: Man, Preacher, Prophet* (Boston: Sherman, French & Co., 1912).

<sup>721</sup> H. C. Whitley, *Blinded Eagle: An Introduction to the Life and Teaching of Edward Irving* (Chicago: A. R. Allenson, 1955).

what Elliott calls a “watershed in Irving studies”—which is only once quoted or referenced by Dallimore in his footnotes. In fact, Strachan, alongside Drummond, is one of only two sources not from the nineteenth century listed in the bibliography.<sup>722</sup> Strachan’s sympathetic study looked at Irving the theologian through the eyes of the growth of Pentecostalism and the various charismatic offshoots, and provided a necessary balance to Dallimore’s thesis. Had the Baptist historian constructively interacted with it, even if from a critical position, it would have strengthened Dallimore’s work and would have made it a more solid contribution to the growing body of work on Irving. Strachan gave Irving credit as a theologian, observing in his thought a “coherent theological system” and calling him “the first Reformed-Pentecostal theologian.”<sup>723</sup> He also helped reframe the various misconceptions of the charismatic outbreaks in Irving’s church, and sided with Irving against his detractors.<sup>724</sup> Elliott cited Strachan against Dallimore over the issue of whether Irving burned bridges after he was expelled from the Regent’s Square church—Dallimore said yes, whereas Strachan demonstrated that this was not the case.<sup>725</sup> It should be noted, contrary to what Elliott implied, that Dallimore did say immediately after this that some eight hundred left with Irving after his expulsion.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>722</sup> Strachan, *Pentecostal Theology*. Other sources not already cited in this thesis that were available to Dallimore include Paul Ewing Davies, “An Examination of the Views of Edward Irving Concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ” (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1928); T. C. Gordon, “Edward Irving 1792-1834,” in R. S. Wright, ed., *Fathers of the Kirk* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 142-155; and Plato Ernest Shaw, *The Catholic Apostolic Church: Sometimes Called Irvingite* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1946).

<sup>723</sup> Strachan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 15, 21.

<sup>724</sup> Cf. Strachan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 17.

<sup>725</sup> Elliott, “Edward Irving,” 79.

<sup>726</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 164.

## **Dallimore on the charismatics**

Of concern to this thesis is the question pertaining to Dallimore and the search for a usable past. This section, therefore, looks at how Dallimore's theological outlook shaped the way he interpreted Irving and the gifts of the Spirit. It also considers whether it is appropriate to nominate Irving as the forerunner to the charismatic movement, as Dallimore claimed.

*Forerunner* is structured in two parts that are based on perceived shifts in Irving's life and thought. The first part documented Irving's "upward moving career" between 1792 and 1828, cataloguing his birth, upbringing and education, as well as his ministry in Scotland with Chalmers. In the second part Dallimore followed Irving's "downward course" between 1829 and 1834, including his move to London, his heresy trial, personal family tragedy, the rise of his millennial and charismatic interests, and his early death. Setting the stage for later failures, Dallimore described the young Irving as one who "was often moved by impulse and soaring imagination and high idealism that could overrule for him the dictates of logic and reason."<sup>727</sup> Dallimore here is helping the reader understand why Irving could be so incredulous toward the charismata of speaking in tongues and prophecy. According to Dallimore, Irving went through a period of transition between 1824 and 1828 where he developed strong millenarian views: "Throughout the next four years—that is, until 1828, at which time he took up the charismatic teachings—Irving devoted his ministry very largely to the interpretation of

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<sup>727</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 38.

prophecy.”<sup>728</sup> It was this shift that moved Irving onto a downward course that saw him earnestly seek a charismatic experience that contributed to the ruin of his ministry, or as Elliott described it, Dallimore’s “key to Irving’s decline.”<sup>729</sup>

The first person in Irving’s circle of influence to speak in tongues was the disabled Mary Campbell in Scotland in 1830, who was healed as a result. Eventually tongues-speaking spread throughout the region of Gare Loch. Others, like George, James and Margaret (another who struggled with disability) MacDonald began to experience it, as well as healing and prophecy.<sup>730</sup> To inform readers of the errors of the charismata, Dallimore outlined “[t]hree facts about those phenomena that must have our special attention.”<sup>731</sup> The first was that the “gift of tongues” in Scotland did not come unexpectedly or suddenly as an outpouring from heaven but was something expected and looked for. It came gradually “as the oft-experienced ecstatic speech gave way to incomprehensible sounds.”<sup>732</sup> This expectation was illustrated by John McLeod Campbell (1800-1872), the minister in Row (now Rhu), who had hoped that Mary Campbell’s tongues experience were of divine origin. After hearing James MacDonald, who “broke out into incomprehensible sounds,” an interpretation was given by George MacDonald

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<sup>728</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 74. A good study of Irving’s eschatology and how it relates to other aspects of his theology is Tim Grass, “Edward Irving: Eschatology, Ecclesiology and Spiritual Gifts,” in Crawford Gribben and Timothy C. F. Stunt, eds., *Prisoners of Hope? Aspects of Evangelical Millennialism in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1880*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004), 95-121. A number of Reformed evangelicals who had been influenced by Irving’s millenarianism include those whose works the Banner of Truth have reprinted like Andrew Bonar (1810-1892). See Crawford Gribben, “Andrew Bonar and the Scottish Presbyterian Millennium,” in Gribben and Stunt, eds., *Prisoners of Hope?*, 177-202.

<sup>729</sup> Elliott, “Edward Irving,” 87.

<sup>730</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 115-123.

<sup>731</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 123.

<sup>732</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 123.

who said, “Behold He cometh—Jesus cometh.”<sup>733</sup> For MacDonald, this was proof enough of their reality. Dallimore was unconvinced that this was a legitimate language due to their lack of linguistic grounding.

Not long before *Forerunner* was released a number of academic studies of glossolalia were published arguing for some plausibility for the language based either on glossographia or psychology. William J. Samarin, a professor of anthropology at the University of Toronto, in his book *Tongues of Men and Angels*, published in 1972 by Macmillan, took a socio-linguistic approach to the question.<sup>734</sup> At the outset of his study he warned that “[y]ou can’t explain why people engage in unintelligible speech before you understand exactly what it is they produce. This should be a perfectly obvious point of view, but it seems to have escaped most people.”<sup>735</sup> In his definition of glossolalia, Samarin agreed that it did not have meaning in the grammatical sense. But, as he explained, glossolalia was grammatically “meaningless but phonologically structured.” It was a “human utterance believed by the speaker to be a real language but bearing no systematic resemblance to any natural language, living or dead.”<sup>736</sup> Though the language may have no grammatical meaning, Samarin argued that there is religious significance behind it, namely the sense of comfort, well-being, and personal strength that resulted. D. A. Carson made a similar point from an exegetical perspective in his book *Showing the Spirit*, published four years after *Forerunner*. Carson wrote,

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<sup>733</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 122.

<sup>734</sup> William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels: A Controversial and Sympathetic Analysis of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Macmillan, 1972). See also the psychological approach of John P. Kindahl, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

<sup>735</sup> Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, xii.

<sup>736</sup> Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, 2.

[T]here is a category of linguistic phenomenon that conveys cognitive content, may be interpreted, and seems to meet the constraints of the biblical descriptions, even though it is no known human language. Of course, this will not do for the tongues of Acts 2, where the gift consisted of known human languages; but elsewhere, the alternative is not as simple as “human languages” or “gibberish,” as many noncharismatic writers affirm. Indeed, the fact that Paul can speak of different *kinds* of tongues (12:10, 28) may suggest that on some occasions human languages were spoken (as in Acts 2), and in other cases not—even though in the latter eventuality the tongues were viewed as bearing cognitive content.<sup>737</sup>

With the written glossolalia, Samarin also recorded that Campbell transcribed her tongues “in an unknown system” that was described as having the “likeness to those [characters] one sees on Chinese tea-sets.”<sup>738</sup> Dallimore noted Campbell’s written glossolalia as well, but did not believe that this was evidence that she experienced any kind of real language, explaining that they were produced in a trancelike state. While not proof one way or another as to the veracity of the tongues speaking, studies such as Samarin’s and Carson’s place some burden of proof on the critics to provide a reasoned argument against the phenomena. Interaction with the arguments from the other side of the question of charismatic gifts, especially as some of them come from outside of the church and have the appearance of greater objectivity, would strengthen the case against the phenomena. The same can be said for Dallimore’s lack of interaction with those inside the Christian tradition who argued that the experiences of Campbell and the MacDonalds were genuine. In 1953 Maurice Barnett, a student of New Testament scholar T. W. Manson at the University of Manchester, published *The Living Flame*, a study of charismatic phenomena from a biblical perspective. Barnett argued that the MacDonalds were men of unimpeachable character, calmness, and understanding, and that their re-

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<sup>737</sup> D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 86-87.

<sup>738</sup> Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, 186.

telling of their experiences was reliable.<sup>739</sup> Dallimore nowhere interacts with any of Barnett's arguments.

The second fact that Dallimore advised readers to observe was that the Scottish tongues experience did not occur amid expositional and doctrinal preaching. He again cited McLeod Campbell whose preaching Dallimore said was noted for its fervour, as well as A. J. Scott (1805-1866) who emphasized the gifts, and Irving himself who was taken up with millennial concerns. For Dallimore, these were proof of a shallow, uninformed Christianity. It should be noted that these examples do not prove that there was a lack of biblical exposition, nor that there was a lack of doctrinal content in the sermons. His third warning was that the religious condition of the region was characterized by emotion, not biblical learning.<sup>740</sup> These facts recall four other warnings Dallimore cited in reference to Mary Campbell from three pages earlier. In these the readers are told, first, that the area where she lived was filled with religious fervour; second, Irving's visits raised the emotions of the people in light of the close return of Christ; third, Scott taught about "baptism with the Holy Ghost" and apostolic gifts; and fourth, she was told that sickness was of the devil and can be overcome by faith.<sup>741</sup> In both sets of warnings Dallimore did not provide documented proof of his assertions, nor did he answer the question why religious fervor is self-evidently bad. It should be observed that if there was no exposition or doctrine among these various leaders, how was it that Scott admittedly emphasized the doctrine of the gifts and Irving was

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<sup>739</sup> Maurice Barnett, *The Living Flame: Being a Study of the Gift of the Spirit in the New Testament, with Special Reference to Prophecy, Glossolalia, and Perfection* (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), 123.

<sup>740</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 123.

<sup>741</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 120.

discussing eschatology? And when Scott preached for Campbell in Row, he did so preaching from 1 Corinthians. Scott's ideas were later expressed in a study of 1 Corinthians 14 titled *Neglected Truths* (1830), where he focused on the Pauline emphasis to "make love your aim, and earnestly desire spiritual gifts."<sup>742</sup> Does this not constitute exposition? We are not told. What is curious about Scott is that when he joined Irving in London as his assistant, he did not experience the charismatic gifts himself (nor did Irving), and he did not see them as proof of any divine inspiration.<sup>743</sup>

Another distinctive that has marked Pentecostalism is the doctrine of Spirit baptism, which is a second blessing that comes to the believer and is accompanied by speaking in tongues—this is often called "baptism with fire," reflective of the disciples' experience on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2:3. This was also an important part of the Irvingite charismatic experience. Holy Spirit baptism was first experienced by Robert Baxter, a member of Irving's church who later repudiated the entire movement and its theology. In his defense of Whitefield against the second blessing of the "sealing of the Spirit," Dallimore was critical of Spirit baptism. Therefore he dedicated an entire chapter to Baxter and the criticisms that he leveled at Irving. As Elliott rightly observed, "While Baxter's view is valuable as a contemporary and intimate of Irving, Dallimore was unbalanced in not giving equal billing to those whose conclusions were the opposite."<sup>744</sup> Elliott went on to cite the Trustees of the church who continued to allow glossolalia in the church, indicating that they were not convinced of Baxter's arguments.

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<sup>742</sup> A. J. Scott, *Neglected Truths* (London: 1830).

<sup>743</sup> For more on Scott see J. Philip Newell, "A. J. Scott and His Circle," (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1981).

<sup>744</sup> Elliott, "Edward Irving," 87.

### **Irving as forerunner**

Dallimore's interest in Irving is essentially linked to his claim that Irving was the "forerunner of the charismatic movement." In the final chapter of the book he sought to demonstrate the truthfulness of this claim. He began by arguing that Irving had been generally overlooked since his death. Even the denomination he helped found, the Catholic Apostolic Church, never "accorded Irving the position and honor he deserved."<sup>745</sup> Due to Irving's sad final condition, marked by a "mind [that] had begun to slip," Dallimore observed that "there seemed little reason that Irving should be remembered."<sup>746</sup> However, in the mid-twentieth century circumstances changed and due to the rise of the Pentecostal denomination the views of Irving were again being recalled. Though the movement did not arise from a direct knowledge of Irving, it shared much with his theology and practice. To prove this, Dallimore quoted from Gordon Strachan who said that "[t]he beliefs and experiences of the various branches of contemporary Pentecostal Churches are so similar to those of Irving and his followers that one might suspect they had been handed down by word of mouth."<sup>747</sup>

It is likely that Dallimore concluded that Irving was a forerunner to Pentecostalism prior to his reading of Strachan. Ronald E. Baxter, the Fellowship Baptist pastor mentioned earlier in this chapter, quoted W. Gordon Brown, the former dean of Central Baptist Seminary and Toronto Baptist Seminary, who made the same point. It will be

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<sup>745</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 191.

<sup>746</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 191.

<sup>747</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 193. Quoting Strachan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 19.

remembered that Dallimore sided with Brown, his seminary professor, during the latter's split with T. T. Shields in the late 1940s.<sup>748</sup> In a thesis presented to Winona Lake School of Theology in 1961 Brown argued for the link between Irving and Pentecostalism. In it he said, "[T]he movement most like the Pentecostalism of this century was led by Edward Irving." Brown, like Dallimore, linked the advent of tongues-speaking "in an obscure part of Scotland in 1828 with Mary Campbell." Such experiences gradually "came to the Irvingites about three years later." Brown also observed that Irvingite "claims are certainly in line with those we shall find in Pentecostalism."<sup>749</sup> Commenting on this, Baxter wrote that there "can be no doubt that Irving is the source of much of today's Pentecostal interpretation of faith and practice."<sup>750</sup> It is curious that Dallimore did not quote his former professor, who had significant standing among Ontario Baptists, directly in *Forerunner* as it would have given credence to his contention. It could be that Dallimore had forgotten the source of his view of Irving.

Ronald Baxter also cited the medical doctor A. T. Schofield (1846-1929) and his book *Christian Sanity* as another authority who linked the Irvingites to Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement.<sup>751</sup> Like Dallimore, Schofield pointed directly to Robert Baxter, and what he called "Baxter's awful experience" as a first-hand source explaining

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<sup>748</sup> In 1946 Brown published a book titled *Pagan Christianity* that, reflecting Shields' teaching noted earlier, linked Pentecostalism with cults. W. Gordon Brown, *Pagan Christianity: Studies in Modernism and Modern Cults With Which is Incorporated an Examination of Pentecostalism*, Rev. Ed. ([Toronto]: Toronto Baptist Seminary, 1946).

<sup>749</sup> W. Gordon Brown, "Pentecostalism—An Examination of Its History and Its Distinctives," (BD dissertation, Winona Lake School of Theology, 1961); quoted in Baxter, *Charismatic Gift*, 116-117.

<sup>750</sup> Baxter, *Charismatic Gift*, 117.

<sup>751</sup> A. T. Schofield, *Christian Sanity* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1908).

the dangers of the movement.<sup>752</sup> There is little in the way of argumentation in Schofield's chapter on Irving since it is taken up with a lengthy quotation of a document written by Robert Baxter telling of his involvement and departure from the Irvingites.<sup>753</sup> As with Brown, it should be observed that though Schofield's book is similar to that of Dallimore's and served a similar purpose, it is not listed in the latter's bibliography nor referenced in the main body of his text.

It is reasonable to surmise that Dallimore first got the idea of the link between Irving and Pentecostalism from his mentor Brown, but where did the language of "forerunner" come from?<sup>754</sup> It is not a stretch to believe that Dallimore developed the term of his own accord. However, in 1973 a Lutheran named Larry Christenson published an essay entitled "Pentecostalism's Forgotten Forerunner" in a book about Pentecostal and charismatic origins.<sup>755</sup> Christenson, like Dallimore, observed that Irving "is today little more than a name to most students of church history, somewhat vaguely identified with speaking in tongues, prophecy and other sundry fanaticisms."<sup>756</sup> Christenson approached Irving much more sympathetically and located Irving's interest in charismatic experience and in pastoral care. A number of members in Irving's church experienced tongues-speaking and Irving wanted to determine the nature of it in order to give them proper spiritual oversight. Initially a skeptic about charismatic expressions,

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<sup>752</sup> Schofield, *Christian Sanity*, 91.

<sup>753</sup> Schofield, *Christian Sanity*, 77.

<sup>754</sup> Manwaring said that the title of Dallimore's book was "surely, mainly a marketing slogan." Manwaring, "Review," 78.

<sup>755</sup> Larry Christenson, "Pentecostalism's Forgotten Forerunner," in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975). I owe this source to Larry L. Morton of Peterborough, ON.

<sup>756</sup> Christenson, "Pentecostalism's Forgotten Forerunner," 20.

Irving eventually concluded that the manifestations were of divine origin. Christenson explained that this was how Irving began his foray into exploring and promoting charismata. Due to the rise of Pentecostalism in the twentieth-century, Christenson believed that Irving's name would come back into the church's collective memory. He described Irving as "a man ahead of his time, pointing to things yet future for the great body of the Church. He was a forerunner not only of the Catholic Apostolic church in a direct sense, but of the entire pentecostal [*sic*] phenomenon of the twentieth century. The things he said and did, his emphases and concerns, largely rejected in his own day, have become commonplace in the pentecostal [*sic*] movement of our time."<sup>757</sup> While there is no historically organic connection from Irving to Pentecostalism, there is a discernable correlation in terms of precedent. Later in the essay Christenson wrote,

The correlation between pentecostalism [*sic*] and the Catholic Apostolic church (i.e. Edward Irving) suggests the possibility that both movements, independently of one another, apprehended a common area of truth. The points of comparison between the two movements do not root out of a connection in history, but out of a common origin beyond history. The cluster of similarities is neither causally related nor is it accidental."<sup>758</sup>

Christenson's essay was published eight years before Dallimore's *Forerunner*, but there is no mention of it in the book, making it hard to determine whether Dallimore was aware of it or used it in any way. It would make sense if he did, as it validates his thesis that Irving was a forerunner of the charismatic movement.

Was Dallimore correct to conclude that Irving was Pentecostalism's forerunner? Scholars generally agree with the notion expressed by Dallimore, Baxter, Christenson,

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<sup>757</sup> Christenson, "Pentecostalism's Forgotten Forerunner," 20.

<sup>758</sup> Christenson, "Pentecostalism's Forgotten Forerunner," 25.

Brown and Schofield, that Irving was in some sense a precursor to the modern Pentecostal and charismatic movements. Though Pentecostalism originated in Los Angeles at the Azusa Street revival in the early twentieth century, and had its roots more directly in the Wesleyan holiness tradition, there is little doubt that Irving and the Catholic Apostolic Church set a pattern for tongues-speaking, prophecy, and divine healing.<sup>759</sup> John Thomas Nichol in his book *Pentecostalism* argued, “There are some rather striking similarities between the Irvingites and the Pentecostals who flourished seventy years later.” This was so for four reasons. The first was due to the Irvingite belief that manifestations of glossolalia were in direct accord with the day of Pentecost mentioned in Acts 2. As with later Pentecostalism, the Irvingites believed that tongues-speaking was a prerequisite for obtaining the gifts of the Spirit. They also insisted that the charismata were a permanent possession of the church. The final reason, though somewhat strained, was due to Irving’s expulsion from the Presbyterian Church and his founding of the Catholic Apostolic Church. This new denomination was a model for later movements.<sup>760</sup>

### **Coleridge and christology**

The second aspect of Dallimore’s Irving biography to be considered is the broader interpretation of Irving’s Romantic context, particularly his friendship with the poet and essayist Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Dallimore sought to locate the problems in Irving’s

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<sup>759</sup> Cf. Joe Creech, “Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History,” *Church History* 65.3 (September 1996): 405-424; Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997).

<sup>760</sup> John Thomas Nichol, *The Pentecostals*, Rev. Ed. (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 24.

theology in Coleridge's negative influence, claiming that the poet had drawn Irving away from orthodox faith. That Irving was close with Coleridge in his early life is undisputed. But to what degree did Coleridge negatively influence Irving?

Irving himself made clear his indebtedness to Coleridge in a dedication to his published sermon, *For Missionaries After the Apostolical School*, in 1825. This came during the period of transition that Dallimore marked as a negative turning-point in Irving's thought. Dallimore quoted from this dedication in order to prove the relationship, though he did not give the clearest rendering of the passage. In it Irving wrote to Coleridge saying, "[y]ou have been more profitable to my faith in orthodox doctrine, to my spiritual understanding of the Word of God, and to my right conception of the Christian Church than any or all the men with whom I have entertained friendship and conversation." A few sentences later Irving continued, "I do presume to offer you the first fruits of my mind since it received a new impulse towards truth, and a new insight into its depths from listening to your discourse."<sup>761</sup> Without citing his source, though it is probably from Oliphant's biography, Dallimore quoted from the dedication thus: "He [Irving] stated he had learned more of 'orthodox doctrine' from Coleridge than from 'all the men with whom I have entertained friendship and conversation' and that from him his 'mind received a new insight into the depths of truth.'"<sup>762</sup> He reiterated the substance of the quote again in his discussion of Irving's problematic christology—placing the blame for this teaching at Coleridge's feet—saying, "We have noticed that Irving's statement that he had learned more about true Christianity from Coleridge than from all other men

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<sup>761</sup> Quoted in Margaret Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving, Minister of the National Scotch Church* (London: Hurst and Blackett Publishers, 1862), 1:205.

<sup>762</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 60.

he had ever met.”<sup>763</sup> As he did with Whitefield, and as the next chapter shows, he did with the Wesleys, Dallimore did not give an exact rendering in his quotation from Irving’s dedication. Irving saw Coleridge as a significant influence on his thinking. The differences between Irving’s quote and Dallimore’s depiction are subtle but important. Dallimore’s statement is much firmer in its insistence that Coleridge was Irving’s sole teacher in the faith, while Irving simply indicated that Coleridge helped him in his love for orthodox doctrine as it pertained to the church. From Dallimore it would seem that Coleridge was Irving’s source of moving away from orthodoxy, while Irving saw his friend helping him maintain and sharpen his faith. The context of the quotation concerns ecclesiology, not Irving’s theology as a whole. The work that the dedication was prefixed to makes this clear. In *For Missionaries After the Apostolical School* Irving argued that the five offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher listed in Ephesians 4:11 were to be “for all time.”<sup>764</sup> David Bebbington wrote, “The substance of [Irving’s] exalted ecclesiology was Coleridgean.”<sup>765</sup> It was this reading of Ephesians 4:11 that formed his ecclesiology in the emergence of the Catholic Apostolic Church.<sup>766</sup> Coleridge returned the favour and dedicated his *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830) to Irving, calling him a modern-day Martin Luther. It was not long after that Coleridge and Irving’s friendship cooled—in large part because of Irving’s teaching on the incarnation. Ted Underwood likewise agreed about the influence of Coleridge, but rooted it in Coleridge’s conception of religious history. Underwood cited Irving’s use of the term

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<sup>763</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 93.

<sup>764</sup> Edward Irving, *For Missionaries After the Apostolical School: A Series of Orations in Four Parts* (New York: E. Bliss & E. White, 1825), xx.

<sup>765</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 80.

<sup>766</sup> Grass, “Edward Irving,” 104.

“prophetic growth” of God’s word, which was “the central innovation of dispensational theology.”<sup>767</sup> He set his understanding of Coleridge’s influence against “Irving’s clerical biographers” like Dallimore, whom he explicitly cited. Such views saw “Coleridge mainly as a Unitarian drug addict [and] tend to blame him for all of Irving’s departures from orthodoxy.”<sup>768</sup>

As Underwood indicated, Dallimore perpetuated the idea that Coleridge “never fully [overcame] his Unitarian beliefs.”<sup>769</sup> Yet this was not the case; Coleridge embraced Trinitarian theology. Coleridge’s twentieth-century biographer W. Jackson Bate of Harvard wrote, “His former Unitarian base, so open and welcome to new insights, was being replaced by something else...another part of him, with equal openness, was discovering new reasons for moving conservatively from Unitarianism to more traditional theologies.”<sup>770</sup> Likewise, Ronald C. Wendling demonstrated that Coleridge finally accepted classic Christianity.<sup>771</sup> Wendling described Coleridge’s Christianity as “his eventual acceptance of the historical Christ as his divine model and savior, his developing Trinitarian understanding of God, and his fairly complete adherence by his middle forties to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.”<sup>772</sup> Dallimore’s misinterpretation of

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<sup>767</sup> Ted Underwood, “If Romantic Historicism Shaped Modern Fundamentalism, Would That Count as Secularization?” *European Romantic Review* 21.3 (June 2010), 336-337.

<sup>768</sup> Underwood, “If Romantic Historicism Shaped Modern Fundamentalism,” 336.

<sup>769</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 61.

<sup>770</sup> W. Jackson Bate, *Coleridge* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts/London, England: Harvard University Press, 1987), 113-114. Cf. J. Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 85-104.

<sup>771</sup> Ronald C. Wendling, *Coleridge’s Progress to Christianity: Experience and Authority in Religious Faith* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1995). I am thankful to Scott Masson of Toronto, ON, for drawing this to my attention. See also Luke Savi Herrick Wright, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Anglican Church* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

<sup>772</sup> Wendling, *Coleridge’s Progress*, 11.

Coleridge led him to infer that Irving's theology tended to Unitarianism as well. He argued that Coleridge's "concept of Christ was a hazy transcendental idea to the effect that Christ's nature was something less than divine... This estimate of Christ undoubtedly had a basic part in Coleridge's talk, and Irving shortly enunciated a similar view."<sup>773</sup> This is simply untrue. Concurring with Wendling, Graham McFarlane, speaking of Irving's ministry in Hatton Garden, wrote, "For it was with this congregation that he began to defend his doctrine of God against the increasing Unitarian interpretation of God... It would be true to say that at this point Irving simply unpacks a doctrine of God inherited from the Puritan [John] Owen and Irving's mentor [Richard] Hooker."<sup>774</sup> Seeking to isolate a reason for Irving's decline, Dallimore found one in Coleridge. The supposed influence of Coleridge's heterodoxy on Irving is simply not grounded in fact. Indeed, it would appear that Irving resisted his friend's earlier christological problems, strongly asserting Christian orthodoxy and rejecting Unitarianism.

What does need careful consideration in any treatment of the life and thought of Edward Irving is his understanding of the incarnation.<sup>775</sup> In the preface to his study of Irving's christology, Byung Sun Lee rightly observed that his subject "exercised a profound effect on developments in nineteenth-century theology within the English-speaking world."<sup>776</sup> This influence is still being felt today. In Irving's own day, while

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<sup>773</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 61.

<sup>774</sup> Graham McFarlane, "Irving, Edward (1792-1834)," in Trevor A. Hart, ed., *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Milton Keynes, UK/Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press, 2000), 275.

<sup>775</sup> A helpful survey of the issues surrounding Irving's christology and its later influence is Donald MacLeod, "The Doctrine of the Incarnation in Scottish Theology: Edward Irving," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 9.1 (Spring 1991): 40-50.

<sup>776</sup> Byung Sun Lee, *"Christ's Sinful Flesh": Edward Irving's Christological Theology Within the Context of His Life and Times* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013), ix.

many were concerned about his interest in charismatic phenomena, British evangelicals were much more strident about his christological errors. Sue Zemka wrote, “Despite the scandal occasioned by the glossolalia in his church, it was his teachings on Christ’s nature, and not his endorsement of apostolic gifts, that brought about Irving’s dismissal from his native Presbytery in Annan.”<sup>777</sup> The dismissal was occasioned by Irving’s work *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of Our Lord’s Human Nature* (1830), which taught that the Son of God had assumed sinful human flesh in the incarnation. He posited that Christ’s human flesh was no different than any other sinner’s. While denying that Jesus did succumb to carnal temptation, due to his divine nature, Irving was adamant that Christ assumed a depraved human nature. This was so that he could truly be one with his people. If he did not have a fallible human nature, he could not have been tempted as sinners are. Nor could he have healed them or reconciled them to God. As he stated on one occasion, “[Christ] took his humanity completely and wholly from the substance, from the sinful substance, of the fallen creatures which he came to redeem!”<sup>778</sup> However, Christ remained sinless in spite of his human nature: “The soul of Christ did ever resist and reject the suggestions of evil.”<sup>779</sup> Irving’s christology resulted in him being defrocked as a minister in the Church of Scotland in 1833. Since then, opinions about Irving’s orthodoxy have been divided. Many agreed and reflected the opinion of Henry F.

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<sup>777</sup> Sue Zemka, *Victorian Testaments: The Bible, Christology, and Literary Authority in Early-Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 58.

<sup>778</sup> Edward Irving, *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving, in Five Volumes*, ed., G. Carlyle (London: Alexander Strahan, 1865), 5:5. This quote comes originally from his 1828 work *The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened in Six Sermons in Collected Writings*, 3-446. See also Edward Irving, *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of Our Lord’s Human Nature* (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1830); idem, *The Opinions Circulating Concerning our Lord’s Human Nature* (London: Baldwin & Cradock, 1830); and idem, *Christ’s Holiness in Flesh: The Form, Fountain Head, and Assurance to us of Holiness in Flesh* (Edinburgh: John Lindsay & Co., 1831).

<sup>779</sup> Irving, *Collected Writings*, 5:126, see also 129 and 137.

Henderson who said, “From a logical as well as from a Christological point of view, his position was untenable.” Ultimately, not all have been negative in their assessment as opinions about Irving began to change in his native land at the turn of the century. As William W. Andrews said, “Scotland, if we may judge from her journals, has reversed her judgment of her noble son. She would not depose him to-day, if she could stand at her bar, for what in her ignorance and rashness she then called heresy.”<sup>780</sup> A number of important Scottish theologians in the twentieth-century, such as Thomas F. Torrance and J. B. Torrance, sympathized with aspects of Irving’s christology.<sup>781</sup>

Dallimore stood with those who continued the criticisms of Irving’s christology. However, his treatment could have had greater depth and nuance. He claimed that Coleridge was the key influence on Irving’s view, which is historically untenable. He also neglected the historical pedigree that certain aspects of Irving’s theology might have. Recently there has been discussion of the theological precedent of Irving’s teaching on Christ’s fallen human nature that, without having to agree, should be considered. Theologian Stephen Holmes has drawn a link between Irving and Puritans like John Owen (1616-1683), and evangelicals like Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758): “The peculiarly Anglophone Reformed tradition of Christology that may be found in such writers as Richard Sibbes, John Owen and Edward Irving, then, may be regarded as a

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<sup>780</sup> Henry F. Henderson, *The Religious Controversies of Scotland* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1905), 145; William W. Andrews, *Edward Irving: A Review* (Glasgow: David Hobbs and Co., 1900), 88. Both quotes cited in Dorries, *Edward Irving’s Incarnational Christology*, xv-xvi.

<sup>781</sup> T. F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Jesus Christ: The Auburn Lectures 1938/39* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001); J. B. Torrance, “The Vicarious Humanity of Christ,” in T. F. Torrance, ed., *The Incarnation* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981), 127-147. This largely concerned the influence of Karl Barth (1886-1968), whose christology had certain sympathies with Irving’s. See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics 1.2: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, eds., Geoffrey W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 154. See also Donald MacLeod, “Dr T. F. Torrance and Scottish Theology: A Review Article,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 72.1 (2000): 57-72.

radicalisation of the basic Reformed position, in that it introduced doctrinal innovation with the intention of defending the same point, the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.”<sup>782</sup> Owen taught that the union of natures in Christ was wrought not immediately, but through the Holy Spirit. Holmes said that Irving agreed with Owen, only adding that the human nature that was assumed was fallible but preserved from sinning by the Spirit. Holmes also believed Edwards agreed with Owen’s view and thus anticipated Irving.<sup>783</sup> In a sermon on Luke 22:44 Edwards wrote, “Christ, who is the Lord God omnipotent...did not take the human nature on him in its first, most perfect and vigorous state, but in that feeble and forlorn state which it is in since the fall.”<sup>784</sup> Edwards had written in *Miscellanies* 664, “[T]he [angels] saw him in the human nature in its mean, defaced, broken, infirm, ruined state, in the form of sinful flesh.”<sup>785</sup> Commenting, Holmes observed, “These latter two quotations contain language that could have been found in one of Irving’s pronouncements (although perhaps only one of the more temperate!).”<sup>786</sup> Colin Gunton (1941-2003), Holmes’ mentor, traced this emphasis on the human nature of Christ farther back past Owen to John Calvin (1509-1564). In an essay

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<sup>782</sup> Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 136.

<sup>783</sup> Holmes quotes Edwards’ *Miscellanies* 487 titled, “Incarnation of the Son of God and Union of the Two Natures of Christ”: “In Jesus, who dwelt here upon earth, there was immediately only these two things: there was the flesh, or the human nature; and there was the Spirit of holiness, or the eternal Spirit, by which he was united to the Logos.” Holmes, *God of Grace*, 136-137, quoting Jonathan Edwards, *Miscellanies* YE13, 528-532. Holmes called this “Owenite Christology.”

<sup>784</sup> Jonathan Edwards, “Occasional Sermons: Sermon VI,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 2:866.

<sup>785</sup> Holmes, *God of Grace*, 137. This *Miscellanies* entry was not yet available when Holmes’ book was first published. The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University has made it available online. See Jonathan Edwards, “The ‘Miscellanies,’ (Entry Nos. 501-832),” *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online, Volume 18*, ed., Ava Chamberlain, (New Haven, CT: Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University, 2008), 208. Accessed May 21, 2014.

<sup>786</sup> Holmes, *God of Grace*, 137.

titled “Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving’s Christology” Gunton argued that Irving’s christology was essentially in line with the patristic maxim that what Christ did not assume he did not redeem.<sup>787</sup> He quoted Irving as saying, “I am unfolding no change in the eternal and essential divinity of the Son, which is unchangeable, being very God of very God; but I am unfolding certain changes which passed upon the humanity, and by virtue of which the humanity was brought from the likeness of fallen sinful flesh, through various changes, unto that immortality and incorruption and sovereign Lordship whereunto it hath now attained, and wherein it shall for ever abide.”<sup>788</sup> Not all would agree with these readings of historical theology. Kelly Kopic came to a different conclusion arguing against Gunton, his mentor, that Irving and Owen have different understandings of the Spirit’s role in the incarnation of the Son.<sup>789</sup> Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott disagree with this reading of Edwards. According to them, “Edwards seems to have accepted only what W. Ross Hastings calls a metaphysically fallen nature, not a morally fallen nature. That is, Christ inherited a human nature that was subject to physical decay but was ‘morally impeccable.’”<sup>790</sup>

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<sup>787</sup> Colin Gunton, “Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving’s christology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41.3 (August 1988): 359-376, reprinted in Colin E. Gunton, *Theology Through the Theologians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003), 151-168. This is also affirmed in Thomas G. Weinandy, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh: An Essay on the Humanity of Christ*, Scholars Editions in Theology (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 58.

<sup>788</sup> Edward Irving, “The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened,” in Gavin Carlyle, ed., *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1865), 5:133. Cf. Gunton, *Theology Through the Theologians*, 164-165.

<sup>789</sup> Kelly M. Kopic, *Communion with God: The Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 99-105. Kopic specifically referred to the preface that Gunton wrote for Weinandy’s book where Gunton argued that Owen anticipated Irving. Kopic, *Communion with God*, 99.

<sup>790</sup> Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 258.

Others have offered theological criticisms of the doctrine of Christ's fallen human nature. Oliver D. Crisp has pointed out the unorthodox entailments of the view. For instance, if Christ had a sin nature, he would not be able to be redeemer. Likewise, his sinful nature would make him despised in the eyes of God thus making him susceptible to eternal punishment because of his corruption. For Crisp it would also be "metaphysically impossible" for the divine nature, which is impeccable, to be joined in a hypostatic union with a sinful human nature. Such a position as Irving's was ultimately Nestorian and denied the Chalcedonian Definition.<sup>791</sup> Donald MacLeod likewise argued that Irving's christology had no answer to Nestorianism. MacLeod agreed with Free Church theologian A. B. Bruce (1831-1899), Irving's contemporary, who argued that Irving's view would necessitate believing that Christ inherited original sin, though MacLeod noted that Irving held back from taking this step.<sup>792</sup> Thus, there was undoubtedly more that could have been discussed concerning Irving's christology than readers of Dallimore's *Forerunner* are led to believe.<sup>793</sup>

Another problem with *Forerunner* has to do again with source material. In his chapter "Accused of Heresy: 'Christ's Sinful Flesh,'" Dallimore sparsely quoted from Irving and depended almost entirely on the account of Irving's opponent Henry Cole in the latter's *A Letter to the Rev. Edward Irving in Refutation of the Awful Doctrines of the*

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<sup>791</sup> Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111-114.

<sup>792</sup> Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 228-229.

<sup>793</sup> For a more general overview of the history of interpretation on whether Christ assumed a fallen human nature, and that deals with Irving, see Kelly M. Kopic, "The Son's Assumption of a Human Nature: A Call for Clarity," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3.2 (July 2001): 154-166.

*Sinfulness, Mortality and Corruptibility of the Body of Jesus Christ.*<sup>794</sup> Dallimore gave a seven-point summary of Irving's teaching without footnote or quotation. This does not allow readers to evaluate Irving for themselves, and puts them at the mercy of the author. It would have been helpful if he provided quotes by Irving who sought to defend himself against the charge of heresy like: "The soul of Christ did ever resist and reject the suggestions of evil...I believe it to be necessary unto salvation that a man should believe that Christ's soul was so held in possession of the Holy Ghost and so supported by the divine nature, as that it never assented unto an evil suggestion, and never originated an evil suggestion." And that Jesus "differed from all men in this respect, that He never sinned."<sup>795</sup>

### **Conclusion: Irving and the usable past**

Not surprisingly, Irving scholars have been strong in their criticisms of Dallimore. Dorries called *Forerunner* a "superficial condemnation of [Irving's] doctrine."<sup>796</sup> Ted Underwood said, "I wouldn't go so far as some of Irving's clerical biographers, who, seeing Coleridge mainly as a Unitarian drug addict, tend to blame him for all of Irving's departures from orthodoxy (Dallimore, 61)."<sup>797</sup> Elliott concluded, "In the end, Dallimore was simply using Irving to serve the purpose of being an anti-charismatic object lesson, that is: charismatics end up in a ministry back-water and dead at the age of forty-two.

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<sup>794</sup> Dallimore, *Forerunner*, 93-98. Cf. Henry Cole, *A Letter to the Rev. Edward Irving, in Refutation of the Awful Doctrines of the Sinfulness, Mortality, and Corruptibility of the Body of Jesus Christ* (London: J. Eedes, 1827).

<sup>795</sup> Irving, *Collected Writings*, 5:126, 129, 137.

<sup>796</sup> Dorries, *Edward Irving's Incarnational Christology*, xvii.

<sup>797</sup> Underwood, "Romantic Historicism," 336.

This reductionist polemic is intellectually dishonest and unfair to Irving, who deserves a less constrained interpretation.<sup>798</sup> In spite of their harsh words, it must be agreed that Dallimore's overall portrayal of the failures of Irving, for the sake of warning the church, is a manipulation of the past to serve a perceived good. Contrary to what he wrote about objectivity in his introduction, Dallimore did not merely present facts "without bias," but engaged both in anachronism and historicism. In the words of K. S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis, Dallimore "surrender[ed] the disinterested status of the discipline."<sup>799</sup> Dallimore came to his study of Irving with twentieth-century theological preconceptions: that the charismatic movement was something to be concerned about and that Irving was a proto-charismatic. This coloured his historiography in at least two ways: his interpretation of facts and his selection of sources. For historians the usable past should not mean sacrificing objectivity for the sake of pragmatism.<sup>800</sup>

### **Charles Spurgeon: Remembered but forgotten**

Reasons for writing: Links to the Dallimore past

In the year following the publication of his Irving biography, Dallimore published *Spurgeon: A New Biography* (1984) with Moody Publishers. It was reprinted the

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<sup>798</sup> Elliott, "Edward Irving," 88.

<sup>799</sup> Brown and Hamilakis, "Cupboard of Yesterdays?" 1. This is different than the historicism discussed in Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 92ff.

<sup>800</sup> For historians and objectivity see Carl R. Trueman, *Histories and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 27-28.

following and subsequent years by Banner of Truth.<sup>801</sup> Alongside his work on Whitefield, the Spurgeon book has remained one of his most widely-read biographies. Our treatment of this biography will be significantly shorter than that of Irving for two reasons. First, Dallimore shared the same theological outlook as Spurgeon—namely, evangelicalism, Calvinism, and Baptist ecclesiology—and therefore was less critical of his subject. The Spurgeon biography is much closer in kind to his biography of Whitefield and would be more susceptible to the charge of hagiography than it would of anachronism. He did not feel the need to shape Spurgeon along a particular interpretation as he did with Irving. The lessons that Dallimore wanted readers to learn from history in the life of Spurgeon, with a few exceptions, are positive and written from a shared theological perspective and ministerial experience. Dallimore and Spurgeon shared the vocation of pastor, and this gives the lessons of the book a pastoral tone. Dallimore wrote for the church and her leaders and wanted to encourage a greater sense of the importance of pastoral ministry and the theology that he believed should undergird it. Second, in this regard, Dallimore said little that is new about Spurgeon. Rather he offered a generally reliable account of Spurgeon's life that, though it does not push forward Spurgeon studies, works well as a basic introduction. Dallimore told a life-story that is true to historical events with little in the way of controversial opinion. This is not to say that Dallimore did not approach Spurgeon without a theological agenda, rather this agenda fit with Spurgeon and so did not result in a skewed interpretation. The issue of a usable past comes less in the

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<sup>801</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A New Biography* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1984); Arnold A. Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A New Biography* (Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985). This thesis quotes from the later Banner edition.

interpretation of Spurgeon and more in the choice of subject. Why did Dallimore opt to write on Spurgeon a year after Irving?

In the preface, Dallimore gave three reasons for writing. First, he wanted readers to have a truer picture of the Victorian preacher than what had been given by biographers up to and through the twentieth century. Dallimore observed that though evangelicals discussed Spurgeon often, they had little understanding of his person and career.<sup>802</sup> As he said, “Because [Spurgeon’s] burning earnestness and unyielding theological convictions are so little known it is assumed that he was much like the average evangelical of today.” Dallimore believed that his biography gave “a more satisfactory account” by making clear how remarkable Spurgeon’s ministry was and how his theology gave shape to that ministry. Second, Dallimore the preacher wanted “a more definitive treatment given to his theological and preaching methods.”<sup>803</sup> As Spurgeon was first and foremost a preacher, it was this part of his past that Dallimore wanted to highlight for the benefit of his readers. He believed that good preaching was hard to find in twentieth-century evangelicalism, and Spurgeon’s example would prove to be an antidote. Third, Dallimore wanted to “present something of the inner man—Spurgeon in his praying, his sufferings and depressions, his weaknesses and strengths.” Thus the application of Spurgeon’s life goes beyond the preacher to every Christian who has struggled.<sup>804</sup> As Dallimore believed that the latter two stated aims are what made his book a more “satisfactory account” when compared to others, this section evaluates whether or not he met that goal. Did he

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<sup>802</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, ix.

<sup>803</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, x.

<sup>804</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, x.

give a definitive statement of Spurgeon’s preaching and theology? And did he provide a presentation of Spurgeon’s inner man?

One final observation regarding the *raison d’être* of the book needs to be made. This is seen in the book’s dedication: “In memory of my mother, Mabel Buckingham Dallimore, who as a small child was frequently taken by her father, William Buckingham, to the Metropolitan Tabernacle to hear the preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon.”<sup>805</sup> Spurgeon played an important part of Dallimore’s Christian identity, linked as the great preacher was not only to his mother, but as seen in chapter three, also his father. Here Dallimore was drawing a personal connection through his family’s past back to Spurgeon. When Dallimore wrote of the influence that the young Spurgeon’s mother had on her son—James Spurgeon said, “She was the starting point of all the greatness and goodness any of us, by the grace of God, have ever enjoyed”<sup>806</sup>—Dallimore may well have had his mother Mabel in mind.

### *Spurgeon* and source material

Like the other smaller biographies, *Spurgeon* is short in length. The Banner of Truth edition is 252 pages including appendix, bibliography and index. It is divided into four sections and its twenty chapters average ten pages. It is best to view this less as a comprehensive biography and more as an introductory taster. The book is useful for those

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<sup>805</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*.

<sup>806</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 8.

with little or no knowledge of Spurgeon, which, coupled with its engaging style, are reasons for its enduring popularity.<sup>807</sup>

Dallimore's *Spurgeon* has a very different tone than his Irving biography. Whereas Dallimore had deep concerns over the latter's theology, he was clearly an open admirer of Spurgeon. In his introduction, Dallimore enthused, "Here indeed was a mighty man of God, one of the greatest preachers of all Christian history. I confess the difficulty I have experienced in portraying so tremendous a personality. Nevertheless, I will have succeeded if many come to know him better and are both instructed and inspired by his powerful example."<sup>808</sup> Dallimore traced Spurgeon's life from his early love of books, particularly Puritan authors, through to his ministry, first at Waterbeach, then at what became the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. He evaluated the impact that Spurgeon's work had on the social conditions of London through his pastor's training college, orphanage and almshouses, and his wife Susannah's (1832-1903) book fund for poor pastors. The book concludes with Spurgeon's conflict in the Baptist Union—the Downgrade Controversy—that led to his separation from it and his final years spent in ill health. Interspersed are discussions of Spurgeon's personal characteristics, with a focus

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<sup>807</sup> After reading *Spurgeon*, those interested in further exploring the preacher's life and thought might want to turn to more substantial works. Two recent Spurgeon studies that should be consulted are Tom Nettles' *Living By Revealed Truth* and Peter J. Morden's *Communion With Christ and His People*, both of which are accessible and provide substantial detail written at a more scholarly level. Cf. Tom Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Fearn, Ross-Shire: Mentor, 2013); Peter Morden, *Communion with Christ and His People: The Spirituality of C. H. Spurgeon* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013). Though Lewis A. Drummond's (1926-2004) large biography *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* fills out many of the details that Dallimore can only hint at, it is, in the words of Morden, "seriously flawed" due to "factual inaccuracies." Likewise, as Morden also observed, it did not offer much in the way of critical interaction with Spurgeon. Cf. Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992); Morden, *Communion with Christ*, 5.

<sup>808</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, x.

on his battle with depression, as well as Spurgeon's writings, and church life experienced by members of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

While Dallimore was not as thorough in his research in *Spurgeon* as he was for *George Whitefield*, he was not as beholden to secondary sources as he was in his study of Irving. For sources, Dallimore relied primarily on the abridged Banner of Truth edition of Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, initially edited by Susannah Spurgeon and his secretary J. W. Harrald.<sup>809</sup> In the twentieth century it was reduced by Iain Murray from its initial generous four volumes to two.<sup>810</sup> Dallimore quoted both the original and the abridged versions. He also made use of a number of early biographies, especially G. Holden Pike's six-volume *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*.<sup>811</sup> Episodically Spurgeon's magazine *The Sword and Trowel* appears, and curiously, less frequently his sermons from the massive *New Park Street Pulpit* and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* series. His use of secondary sources can sometimes be frustrating. For instance, in a discussion about Spurgeon's parting from the Baptist Union, Dallimore quoted a religious newspaper that is critical of Spurgeon for not naming names in the controversy. Instead of quoting directly from the paper, or at least providing the bibliographic information for it, the reader is referred only to Pike's *Life and Works*.<sup>812</sup> This happens on numerous occasions and makes it difficult for a serious student of Spurgeon to track down original sources, though for the casual reader this is not a significant problem.

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<sup>809</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*, 4 vols., ed., Susannah Spurgeon and J. W. Harrald (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1897-1899).

<sup>810</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Early Years* ed. Iain H. Murray (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962); C. H. Spurgeon, *The Full Harvest*, ed., Iain H. Murray (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973).

<sup>811</sup> G. Holden Pike, *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 6 vols. (London: Cassel, 1898).

<sup>812</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 218.

In these, and the other sources that Dallimore used less frequently, it should be noticed that they are all from the late nineteenth century or early-twentieth century—of the latter, there is only one. The exception is the singular citation of Eric W. Hayden’s twentieth-century history of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.<sup>813</sup> One omission is Patricia Stallings Kruppa’s *Charles Haddon Spurgeon* that was published two years before Dallimore’s work. Though it suffers from numerous flaws, up to this point it was the only full-length academic biography of Spurgeon.<sup>814</sup> Part of the reason why Dallimore did not pour his energies into researching Spurgeon (or Irving) as he did with Whitefield likely had to do with his age. He was much younger when he travelled to Britain to research Whitefield. He was seventy-three years old when *Spurgeon* was published making any thoughts of extensive research overseas in England highly improbable. However, the failure to use secondary sources does not suffer from the same problem as Dallimore lived close to the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario, and could have procured works like Kruppa’s through inter-library loan.

In keeping with Dallimore’s open admiration for Spurgeon, the biography was by and large a consistently positive account, though there were moments of criticism that, at the very least, demonstrated Dallimore’s views on various social matters. Dallimore, in keeping with the practices of Fellowship Baptists in general, abstained from drinking alcohol and smoking. Therefore it is not surprising that his criticisms of Spurgeon

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<sup>813</sup> Eric W. Hayden, *A History of Spurgeon’s Tabernacle* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Press, n. d.).

<sup>814</sup> Patricia Stallings Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher’s Progress* (New York: Garland, 1982). In a very critical review, William Poe highlighted her failure to use important sources, and argued that she does little to push forward our understanding of Spurgeon from where it was at the time of publication. Thus her work as well contributes to the “forgotten Spurgeon.” See William Allen Poe, “Review of *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher’s Progress*,” *Review & Expositor* 81.2 (March 1984), 323-324.

reflected his own personal convictions. The first criticism of Spurgeon was his penchant for cigar smoking. In his chapter on Spurgeon's personal characteristics, Dallimore recounted the story of George F. Pentecost's (1842-1920) visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1874.<sup>815</sup> After Spurgeon had preached a sermon on giving up sin, he invited Pentecost to come to the pulpit to speak about how to apply the principles Spurgeon had just laid out. Pentecost ascended the pulpit and told a personal story of giving up sin, namely of breaking a cigar-smoking habit. Dallimore described it thus, "Throughout [Pentecost's] words ran the idea that smoking was not only an enslaving habit, but that the Christian must look on it as a sin."<sup>816</sup> He commented that this must have been an embarrassing moment for Spurgeon who famously loved cigars. Spurgeon's response to Pentecost, however, did not reveal any embarrassment:

Well, dear friends, you know that some men can do to the glory of God what to other men would be a sin. And, notwithstanding what Brother Pentecost has said, I intend to smoke a good cigar to the glory of God before I go to bed to-night... I wish to say I am not ashamed of anything whatever that I do, and I don't feel that smoking makes me ashamed, and therefore I mean to smoke to the glory of God.<sup>817</sup>

Dallimore referred to a "lengthy open letter addressed to Spurgeon and published in pamphlet form"—though he did not say who wrote it or where it was published—saying that in a "calm manner" and with strong reasoning it told Spurgeon "he was doing himself not physical good but physical harm by smoking." The letter also reminded its recipient of the bad example he was setting for the children of Christian parents.<sup>818</sup>

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<sup>815</sup> P. C. Headley, *George F. Pentecost: Life, Labors, and Bible Studies*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: James H. Earle, 1880), esp. 118-119 for the meeting with Spurgeon.

<sup>816</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 180.

<sup>817</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 180-181.

<sup>818</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 181.

Dallimore concluded his section on Spurgeon's smoking saying, "Many of us today cannot but wish he had never undertaken the practice."<sup>819</sup> Spurgeon never finally gave up smoking.<sup>820</sup>

Another perceived social vice that Dallimore noticed in Spurgeon's life was alcohol consumption. For much of his life, Spurgeon drank recreationally. Later, through the influence of temperance movements in Britain, he became a teetotaler and spoke against the evils of alcohol abuse. Drummond noted that Spurgeon never believed that "alcohol was inherently evil." He changed his position so that his example would "encourage alcoholics, or potential alcoholics, to do the same."<sup>821</sup> Of these two practices Dallimore wrote, "we see that Spurgeon was very human—a man of his times...I reported these matters regarding Spurgeon with much reluctance. They seem sadly regrettable in the life of so righteous a man, yet in the name of either Christian honesty or scholarly accuracy they could not be omitted."<sup>822</sup> There are other aspects of Spurgeon's life that would deserve some critical comment. Spurgeon was notoriously corpulent, which was surely a contributing factor to his early death. Why point to smoking or alcohol consumption and not equally this obvious matter? As well, Spurgeon's removal from the Baptist Union did not receive careful consideration. The question could be asked, "Was Spurgeon right to leave the Union?" Dallimore argued that it was right for Spurgeon to leave due to the decline the denomination faced after his departure, and though he referenced statistics of

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<sup>819</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 181.

<sup>820</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, Letter to unknown recipient, April 27, 1880 (private collection of Gary W. Long).

<sup>821</sup> Drummond, *Spurgeon*, 439-440.

<sup>822</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 182-183.

decreasing church attendance, he did not provide them or the sources for them.<sup>823</sup> It could be argued that Spurgeon's departure helped precipitate decline and had he stayed, the Union might have taken a more conservative course. As the reader will recall Dallimore himself experienced a number of denominational splits. The first happened in 1927 when T. T. Shields left the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and formed the Union of Regular Baptist Churches. In the late 1940s Shields split from the Union who merged with the Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches to form FEBC in 1953. With this personal experience, Dallimore's insights on the nature of church unity would have been apposite.

#### The problem of the "forgotten Spurgeon"

What is curious about *Spurgeon*, in light of Dallimore's stated aims, is that it offers no evaluation of its subject as a preacher nor is there any examination of Spurgeon's theology. Although there is a chapter on "Spurgeon as an Author" there is no "Spurgeon as a Preacher."<sup>824</sup> For one who put an emphasis on preaching and who was a committed Calvinist, Dallimore's failure to provide a chapter on analysis of Spurgeon's most well-known sermons or theological works is surprising. Dallimore was strong in his affirmations of Whitefield's Calvinism versus Wesley's Arminianism; would it not have been appropriate to explore Spurgeon's thinking on the doctrines of grace? This would be especially pertinent when one considers that Spurgeon's important book, *All of Grace*,

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<sup>823</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 203.

<sup>824</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 189-198. As noted previously, Dallimore did not give a detailed study of the preaching of any of his biographical subjects.

dealt with Calvinism.<sup>825</sup> There is also very little in the way of historical interaction. For instance, there is little discussion of the influence that church history had on Spurgeon's thought.<sup>826</sup> A study of the way Spurgeon was shaped by past authors would have been appropriate as quotes from the Reformers and Puritans were in abundance in his sermons and written works. Dallimore should have been aware of Ernest W. Bacon's 1967 treatment of the influence of Puritan theology on Spurgeon, though it was not cited.<sup>827</sup> Aside from the brief chapter on social conditions in Spurgeon's time, the cultural context of Victorian England is also virtually absent. Though Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and *Origin of Species* (1859) are mentioned briefly, as is the rise of Higher Criticism, there is no discussion of the major cultural shifts occurring in Western thought and how that influenced Spurgeon.<sup>828</sup> It is noteworthy that, like Thomas Chalmers, Spurgeon held to the ruin-reconstruction view of origins—thus making him an old earth creationist who affirmed animal death before the fall. What were the influences that led him to this conclusion?<sup>829</sup> Answers to this question would be helpful in light of the rise of Darwinism. Why did Dallimore omit such important topics? Due to a lack of hard evidence this is a difficult question to answer. A possibility could be that Dallimore wanted to make Spurgeon palatable to an audience that initially might have been

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<sup>825</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *All of Grace: An Earnest Word with Those Who Are Seeking Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892).

<sup>826</sup> Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 6.

<sup>827</sup> Ernest W. Bacon, *Heir of the Puritans* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967).

<sup>828</sup> For Darwin and Higher Criticism see Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 204. A very helpful study of Spurgeon's Romantic context is Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004).

<sup>829</sup> See Spurgeon's remarks reflecting the ruin-reconstruction view in C. H. Spurgeon, "Election," in *The New Park Street Pulpit: Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, Minister of the Chapel During the Year 1855* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892), 1:13.

uncomfortable with his Reformed theology. In this sense, if Dallimore's aims were successful, the reader would continue on to read Spurgeon's own works and discover Calvinism more directly. This does not, however, account for the lack of homiletical discussion. Nor does it account for why Dallimore would stress the importance of preaching and Calvinism in his preface, indicating that it is an examination of these themes that set his book apart from others.

All of this points to a greater problem in Spurgeon studies. As Morden has observed, "Spurgeon has not received anything like the scholarly coverage he deserves."<sup>830</sup> Biographies of Spurgeon have been a veritable cottage industry since the first book-length treatment of him in 1857.<sup>831</sup> Yet, by and large, such biographies trod the same ground, offering not much that was new and not giving any in-depth study of his thought. The case is much the same today. When a study of Spurgeon is published, it typically evaluates one of three areas of Spurgeon's life or thought: his pastoral/preaching ministry;<sup>832</sup> his role in the Downgrade Controversy;<sup>833</sup> or accounts of his Calvinism.<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>830</sup> Morden, *Communion with Christ*, 4.

<sup>831</sup> G. J. Stevenson, *A Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Reverend C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Blakeman, 1857).

<sup>832</sup> Larry J. Michael, *Spurgeon on Leadership: Key Insights for Christian Leaders from the Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2010); R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "A Bee-line to the Cross: The Preaching of Charles H. Spurgeon," *Preaching* 8.3 (1992): 25-26, 28-30; Craig Skinner, "The Preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon," *Baptist History and Heritage* 19.4 (October 1, 1984): 16-26; Jay E. Adams, *Sense Appeal in the Sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, Studies in Preaching 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1975); Horton Davies, "Expository Preaching: Charles Haddon Spurgeon," *Foundations* 6.1 (January 1963): 14-25.

<sup>833</sup> R. J. Sheehan, *C. H. Spurgeon and the Modern Church: Lessons for Today from the 'Downgrade' Controversy* (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1985); Ernest A. Payne, "The Down Grade Controversy: A Postscript," *Baptist Quarterly* 28.4 (October 1979): 146-158; David P. Kingdom, "C. H. Spurgeon and the Down Grade Controversy," in *Good Fight of Faith: Papers Read at the Westminster Conference, 1971* (Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Tentmaker Publications, 1972).

<sup>834</sup> Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1771-1892: From John Gill to C. H. Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2006), 337-356; Iain H. Murray, *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism: The Battle for Gospel Preaching* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1995); J. C. Rountree III, "Charles Haddon

While this is understandable due to Spurgeon's primary vocation as a preacher and pastor who defended Reformed evangelicalism amidst controversy, there is much more to his thought than the inordinate focus on these three areas would have readers believe. Again, as Morden said, "Over a hundred years after Spurgeon's death, both a comprehensive study of his theology and a definitive critical biography are badly needed."<sup>835</sup> The works by Morden and Nettles, and to a lesser extent the work by Kruppa, have made some headway to filling that lacuna. The recent dissertation by Christian T. George, while as yet unpublished, is a major study of Spurgeon's christology that has the distinction of being the first treatment of an aspect of Spurgeon's systematic theology.<sup>836</sup>

### Conclusion

The reception of *Spurgeon* by reviewers was somewhat tepid when compared with the Whitefield volumes. Philip E. Hughes, himself a noteworthy Reformed polymath, wrote: "Arnold Dallimore has given us a fine two-volume life of George Whitefield; but this work on Spurgeon, while it covers the ground and gives the facts of his life (and is of course much briefer), is not of the same quality and does not come to life in the same way. Nonetheless, it will be of worth to those who wish to learn about this remarkable

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Spurgeon's Calvinist Rhetoric of Election: Consulting an Elect," *Journal of Communication & Religion* 17.2 (1994): 33-48.

<sup>835</sup> Morden, *Communion*, 6.

<sup>836</sup> Christian T. George, "Jesus Christ, The 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)" (PhD dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2012). See also George's helpful and appropriately critical treatment of Spurgeon's doctrine of scripture, Christian T. George, "'Playing with Fire': Spurgeon's Use (and Abuse?) of Scripture" (Lecture, delivered to the Evangelical Theological Society, 2013).

man and the great things that the grace of God achieved through him.”<sup>837</sup> While there is no comparison between the Whitefield and Spurgeon biographies, Hughes is right to say that it is of use for those wanting to know about Spurgeon. Due to its size, readability, and faithfulness to history, it serves as a good introduction to Spurgeon and is worth reading.

When examining Dallimore and the search for a usable past a consistent pattern in Dallimore’s historiography is discernable. With his use of Whitefield in promoting Calvinism, Dallimore chose another figure from the Reformed past to encourage Reformed thinking for the future. In the case of Spurgeon, strangely, Dallimore did not make his Calvinism as explicit. As for his stated aims, Dallimore was very effective at getting to the heart of Spurgeon’s pastoral concerns, and readers can discern something of the “real man,” as he indicated in his preface. However, concerning the promotion of Spurgeon as a preacher, or an evaluation of his theology, both are inexplicably missing.

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<sup>837</sup> Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, “Review of *Five Pioneer Missionaries* by John Thornbury and *Spurgeon: A New Biography* by Arnold Dallimore,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 50.2 (Fall 1988), 386.

CHAPTER 6  
CHARLES AND SUSANNA: THE GOOD WESLEYS  
JOHN WESLEY: THE BAD

The discrepancy between Dallimore's large Whitefield biography and his slim work on Irving was made clear in the previous chapter. Although his Spurgeon biography is not ground-breaking in terms of pushing scholarship forward, and it contributed to the problem of the "forgotten Spurgeon," it serves as a good introduction to its subject and thus brings the quality of Dallimore's writings back up to a historical standard that was not met with Irving. Yet, in his return from Romanticism to the Classical period of the eighteenth-century Dallimore continued to subtly reflect some of the historiographical agendas that were more openly on display in his work on Irving.

This chapter evaluates two more of Dallimore's lesser biographies. The first, *A Heart Set Free*, is of the Methodist hymn-writer Charles Wesley. Though he had long expressed a desire to write a biography of John Wesley, Dallimore chose to write on his brother Charles instead. Continuing with the theme of determining Dallimore's idea of a usable past, how did his theological proclivities effect how he viewed the Wesleys, particularly as he set them against Whitefield? The second biography under consideration, *Susanna Wesley*, is, as the title indicates, on the life of John and Charles' mother. In two major sections each biography is considered with an eye to determining why Dallimore chose the subjects that he did, and if his twentieth-century concerns shaped his historiographical approach. In a third section, Dallimore's opinions about John Wesley are considered—though he did not write a biography of the more famous Wesley, he provided enough fodder on the elder Wesley brother for a study to be warranted. In

particular, this final section looks at how Dallimore interpreted key events and thoughts in Wesley in light of his anti-charismaticism and his admiration for George Whitefield. Each of the three sections highlight a common theme: conversion. As an evangelical writing on evangelicals it is not surprise that Dallimore spent some time thinking about the three Wesleys' conversion experiences. Each one offers, to varying degrees, insights on the way he wrote history.

### **Charles Wesley: A heart set free**

The obvious answer to the question of why Dallimore chose to write a biography of Charles Wesley has to do with timing. The year 1988 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of the death of Charles and the two hundred and fiftieth of the evangelical conversions of the Wesley brothers. With these occasions in mind, Dallimore published *A Heart Set Free*.<sup>838</sup> The temptation for Dallimore to produce a hagiography would not be as strong in the case of either Wesley brother as it would be for Whitefield. His affinities for the Wesleys were much less, though he was more sympathetic to Charles than he was John. A large part of this sympathy was likely due to the friendship between Whitefield and the younger Wesley. From their early days as students at Oxford until the end of Whitefield's life, save for the disruption of the predestinarian controversy, they were close. Charles played a significant part in Whitefield's conversion, giving him a copy of Henry Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*. Maintaining an historical memory of this friendship was a concern for Dallimore, who went so far as to criticize an article on

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<sup>838</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, *A Heart Set Free: The Life of Charles Wesley* (Wheaton, IL/Darlington, UK: Crossway/Evangelical Press, 1988).

Charles Wesley's engagement in the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*. This article erroneously interpreted a statement in a letter by Wesley calling Whitefield a "messenger of Satan." Dallimore sufficiently proved in his reply that Charles was not speaking about Whitefield but someone else.<sup>839</sup> He concluded his criticism by commenting on the friendship saying, "It is to be regretted that their happy relationship has been so often overlooked."<sup>840</sup>

In the introduction to *A Heart Set Free* Dallimore told his readers, "I have not shunned to recognize [Charles Wesley's] faults but, in keeping with the evidence, his abilities and accomplishments far outweigh any failings. I have endeavoured to understand his times and to enter into his thinking."<sup>841</sup> Following in the vein of biography written "that ye may believe," Dallimore explained his purpose for writing: "I send this book forth with the prayer that some measure of the blessing that rested so bountifully on Charles Wesley's ministry may also rest on this effort to retell the story of his heroic life."<sup>842</sup> In its evaluation of Dallimore's work on Charles, this study endeavours to see if he did "understand his times" by looking at Charles' conversion and his theology.

In most respects, Dallimore's biography of Charles Wesley is a straightforward and conventional story that, like that of Spurgeon, makes for a faithful retelling of the Methodist's life and functions as a good introduction. It is clearly written and engaging and portrays its subject as an "heroic celebrity," like Whitefield. Frank Baker said in a

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<sup>839</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, "Note on 'Charles Wesley's Engagement,'" *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 37.3 (1969), 90.

<sup>840</sup> Dallimore, "Note," 90.

<sup>841</sup> Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 7.

<sup>842</sup> Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 8.

review, “Dr. Dallimore’s research incorporates many details from little known sources, and he keeps the narrative alive by numerous personal anecdotes and quotations.”<sup>843</sup> Similarly, Frederick Maser said that it had “been well researched,” though not as thoroughly as his “masterly biography of Whitefield.” Maser believed that the fault with *A Heart Set Free* was its polemical tone, “arguing in favor of the author’s views about Charles Wesley rather than allowing the story to unfold naturally.”<sup>844</sup> In spite of this, Maser said that the book was an “excellent antidote” to those works that diminished “the importance of the conversion experiences of the Wesley brothers.”<sup>845</sup> While Baker and Maser are right in their evaluation of the work, there are interpretational issues that mirror those found in his Whitefield and Irving biographies. It is ironic, in light of Maser’s comment about the Wesleys’ conversions, that Dallimore’s interpretational issue in his Charles Wesley biography—and again in his discussions of John Wesley, as seen at the end of this chapter—concerns Charles’ conversion. It is evident that Dallimore’s anti-charismatic viewpoint shaped aspects of his interpretation and of his source-selection.

#### Charles Wesley’s charismatic conversion

While the younger Wesley’s conversion is not as well-known as the elder’s Aldersgate experience, it is nonetheless important in the history of Methodism. Dallimore told the story in the same relative detail in the first volume of his Whitefield biography as in *A*

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<sup>843</sup> Frank Baker, “Review of Arnold A. Dallimore, *A Heart Set Free*,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 75.3 (July 1989), 521.

<sup>844</sup> Frederick Maser, “Charles Wesley and His Biographers,” *Methodist History* 29:1 (October 1990), 50.

<sup>845</sup> Maser, “Charles Wesley,” 50.

*Heart Set Free*, devoting roughly seven pages to it in the former and eight in the latter. Before delving into Dallimore's handling of the narrative, a couple of literary idiosyncrasies are worth observing. First, if the two versions of the conversion story are read side-by-side it is evident that their language is strikingly similar; in effect the Wesley biography is a reiteration of the same telling in the Whitefield—possibly self-plagiarization. Even some of the basic illustrations and analogies are the same. For instance, William Holland (d. 1761), who converted before Wesley, had a “triumphant testimony” after reading Luther on Galatians.<sup>846</sup> Second, Dallimore would at times summarize a quotation without telling the reader, making it appear as if his summary was the original. An example of this comes from the conversion narrative. When Charles was in the home of John Bray immediately before his conversion, he conversed with “a woman” (it is a “Mrs. Turner,” though readers are not told).<sup>847</sup> Wesley asked her if she had a perfect peace and whether she loved Christ above all. She replied, “I do!” When he asked if she was afraid to die, he quoted her as saying, “I would be willing to die this moment; for I know my sins are blotted out. . . . He has saved me by his death.” Though the basic meaning of the quote is essentially unchanged, the original response reads like this: “I am; and would be glad to die at this moment; for I know all my sins are blotted out; the hand-writing that was against me is taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross. He has saved me by his death.” The changes are very minor and were it not for Dallimore's propensity for changing quotes, it would be irrelevant. However, because this is a common practice, this provides one more example. It is hard, in this case, to determine a

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<sup>846</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:183; Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 60.

<sup>847</sup> This account is also found in John R. Tyson, *Assist Me To Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 46, that names Mrs. Turner.

reason why, theological or otherwise, he would make this change. It could be that, due to his lack of formal historical training, he was not aware how to properly cite from an original source.

A bigger example of neglecting a source appears to be more theologically motivated. In Wesley's account of his conversion he spoke about how, on Pentecost Sunday, he was ill (Tyson indicated that it was likely pneumonia that he suffered), and expectant to physically meet Christ and finally be converted. In a prayer he recounted a promise from Scripture that "I will send the Comforter unto you," a reference to Jesus' words to his disciples in John 14:16 that the Holy Spirit (Paraclete, Comforter) would come in his stead. This was a sensible text considering the date on the church calendar, but it also had significance for the event that was about to transpire. In his prayer he expressed his trust in God's promise, that God would "accomplish it in thy time and manner." After praying he fell asleep, only to be awakened by one whom he initially thought was a "Mrs. Musgrave," a woman who had been caring for him in his sickness. As she came into his room she declared, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all they infirmities." Wesley later recalled his wonderment at why "it would enter into her head to speak in that manner. The words struck me to the heart. I sighed and said to myself, 'O that Christ would but speak thus to me!'" Musgrave denied that the event happened. Wesley then felt "a strange palpitation of heart." He declared, "I said, yet feared to say, I believe! I believe!" Musgrave returned and said, "It was I, a weak, sinful creature [who] spoke: but the words were Christ's: he commanded me to say them, and so constrained me that I could not forbear." To be sure that it was as she said, Wesley called for Bray and asked "whether I believed. He

answered, I ought not doubt of it: it was Christ spoke to me.” Bray then read from Psalm 32, and Wesley expressed the feeling of “violent opposition” within himself, until the Spirit of God overcame and he was finally converted.<sup>848</sup>

In *A Heart Set Free* Dallimore detailed relatively little of the events of Whitsunday morning. All that he recorded was a quote from Wesley’s journal about his hopeful waking that Christ might be speaking downstairs, only to be disappointed that it was not the Saviour. Bray then read from Psalm 32, whereupon Charles “felt a violent opposition and reluctance to believe...yet the Spirit of God strove with my own evil spirit” until he was finally convinced. Later that night he wrote in his journal that he had found peace with God and that he now saw by faith. In all, the whole account took up one paragraph. In volume one of *George Whitefield* the same event was recorded taking up the same space, though some minor details are filled out, such as the person speaking downstairs when Charles first awoke was Bray’s sister. Other details were omitted, such as Bray’s reading of Psalm 32. Dallimore spoke only of the violent opposition that Charles felt before he was finally converted. In both accounts there is no mention of Mrs. Musgrave.<sup>849</sup> If Dallimore’s criticisms of Whitefield’s countenancing of “impressions” early in his ministry, and his severe criticism of Irving’s charismatic theology, are taken into consideration, there is strong reason to conclude that Dallimore excised Mrs. Musgrave from the story because it smacked too much of charismatic experience. Charles Wesley, and the friends who were with him, believed that it was Jesus Christ who spoke

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<sup>848</sup> This account can be found in Thomas Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M. A.: Comprising a Review of His Poetry; Sketches of the Rise and Progress of Methodism; with Notices of Contemporary Events and Characters* (London: John Mason, 1841), 132. I am indebted to Tyson, *Assist Me To Proclaim*, 47, for drawing this quote to my attention.

<sup>849</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:184.

through Mrs. Musgrave, thus fulfilling Wesley's long-held anticipation that the Saviour would meet him in person. As it turned out, Mrs. Musgrave was a suitable stand-in. Yet for Dallimore's readers, nothing of this event is known, and there is no indication that the Methodist would welcome such a mystical experience.

### Conversion hymn

In both accounts Dallimore spoke briefly to the debate over Charles Wesley's "conversion hymn." In *A Heart Set Free*, he recounted that two days after the conversion experience Charles began to write a hymn to commemorate the event. Dallimore suggested that "it may have been" the hymn that begins "Where shall my wondering soul begin?" Though it was a distinct possibility that he wrote this hymn then, Dallimore asserted that "it is more likely" that he wrote another hymn, one that emphasized the personal application of the gospel that he had read in Luther's commentary on Galatians. Upon reading Luther Charles was struck by the "for me" language and wrote, "I laboured, waited and prayed to feel 'who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*.'" With this emphasis, it was more likely that Wesley's conversion hymn was the one whose opening lines were, "And can it be that I should gain." Throughout this hymn Wesley used such "for me" language: "Died he for me, who cause his pain?/For me, who him to death pursued?" Or, "That thou, my God, should'st die for me?" The personal pronouns match Luther's and were a fitting "testimony to having received the experience of conversion."<sup>850</sup> Without the reference to Luther, Dallimore made the same point in

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<sup>850</sup> Cited in Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 62.

*George Whitefield* that “And can it be” was the more likely candidate for the conversion hymn, though he commented, “It matters little which was ‘the hymn’ of Charles’s conversion.”<sup>851</sup> In his biography of Wesley, Tyson indicated that the conversion hymn was “a matter of some debate.” Most scholars favoured “Where shall my wondering soul begin?” The first two stanzas, that speak of being “a brand pluck’d from eternal fire,” had direct application to the Wesleys, harkening back to one of the fires at their home in Epworth when they were children. John nearly died in one such fire in February 1709, and was later called “a brand plucked from the burning,” which is a reference to Zechariah 3:2. Likewise, there is a strong emphasis on believing in the hymn, reflecting his new found doctrine of justification by faith alone. Like Dallimore, Tyson indicated that the second hymn to contend for “conversion hymn” status was “And can it be?” though at the time it was titled “Free Grace.” Like Dallimore, Tyson pointed to the link with Luther’s use of personal pronouns that fit well with the general message of the hymn. Another potential contender was “Come, Divine, and peaceful Guest,” that carries with it Pentecost themes that again fit with the circumstances of Wesley’s conversion. Ultimately, Tyson did not weigh in on the matter.<sup>852</sup>

This discussion of the conversion hymn is one of the few studies of Charles’ hymnody, which, when compared to the work of Tyson, is a short-coming in Dallimore’s book as a whole. Though he dedicated a chapter to “Charles Wesley, the poet,” it only addressed the poetic nature of the Wesley family, the way that John edited the Methodist hymnals, and the sources that Charles may have used in his compositions, including the

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<sup>851</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:184-185.

<sup>852</sup> Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim*, 49-51.

Psalms, the “masters” like Haydn, and the Moravians. There is no examination of the literary, compositional, or poetic qualities of individual hymns. In Tyson, readers are treated not only to a very well-researched life of his subject, based on all of the latest research in Wesley and Methodist studies, but a work that is deeply engaged with Wesley’s hymns. One comes away from reading Tyson not only with a sense of Wesley the man, but also Wesley the poet. This is something lacking in Dallimore’s work, which is surprising as he wrote that Wesley inhabits “the first position among the writers of English religious verse.” This is a hagiographical statement made without substantiation and is incredible when one considers the masters of English religious poetry such as John Milton, John Donne, and George Herbert to name a few. If Wesley does occupy such a place, why is there no treatment of his hymnody?<sup>853</sup>

### **Susanna Wesley: Mother of Methodism**

Four years after the publication of his Charles Wesley biography Dallimore published another, this on the Wesleys’ mother simply titled, *Susanna Wesley*.<sup>854</sup> It has been well-documented by Methodist historians that Susanna had a profound influence on her children. It is typically argued that her strong personality and rational mind most shaped John, while Charles was more like her tempestuous and poetic husband Samuel Wesley (1662-1735). In spite of her influence, relatively few biographies of Susanna have been

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<sup>853</sup> This same point is made in John A. Vickers, “Review of Arnold A. Dallimore, *A Heart Set Free*,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 46.6 (October 1988), 191.

<sup>854</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, *Susanna Wesley: The Mother of John & Charles Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993). This study uses the edition published the following year by Baker Book House.

written.<sup>855</sup> Dallimore's biography is important for bringing her story to a twentieth-century audience. This does not mean, however, that nothing has been written of her; different portraits have been painted according to the proclivities of different historians. As Charles Wallace Jr., the editor of her *Works* asked:

Who is Susanna Wesley? In different communities of interpretation she has been a Methodist saint, an archetype of evangelical womanhood, and even (in a certain psychological reading) an overweening mother who prevented her son from experiencing any marital happiness. Most recently, however, as feminist approaches have claimed scholarly prerogatives in literary and historical, as well as religious, studies, her identity is ripe for reinterpretation.<sup>856</sup>

One of the best biographies of Susanna is by Rebecca Lamar Harmon, published in the late 1960s. Like Dallimore, she wrote it as a popular study; its prose reads like a novel, yet it is very well researched and is probably the most thorough popular introduction to Susanna's life and thought.<sup>857</sup>

#### Source material

In the preface to his biography Dallimore expressed that his aim was "to present a simple, readable account" of her life, which he succeeded in doing. Though he did not say why, he indicated that his audience was primarily women. He also wrote to set Susanna against her husband, Samuel Wesley, to demonstrate her patience in light of his irrational and

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<sup>855</sup> For a bibliographical survey of scholarship about Susanna Wesley up to 1969 see John Newton, "Susanna Wesley (1669-1742): A Bibliographical Survey," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 37.2 (June 1969): 37-40.

<sup>856</sup> Charles Wallace Jr., "Introduction," in Charles Wallace Jr., ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>857</sup> Rebecca Lamar Harmon, *Susanna: Mother of the Wesleys* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1968). Dallimore did not cite Harmon's work in his book or bibliography.

domineering manner. The preface provides an insight into Dallimore's source material. While he would have drawn heavily from the research he had already done so many years before on Whitefield, he also made use of Samuel's "Autobiography," that he obtained from the Bodleian Library at Oxford—Dallimore transcribed it from what he called "difficult" hand-writing. Dallimore claimed that Susanna left no diary, so he had to make use of her letters as well as those of her husband and their two famous sons. Dallimore spoke of the help he received from Frank Baker of Duke University and D. W. Riley of the John Rylands Library at Manchester University. When one consults his bibliography it is apparent that he was aware of a number of twentieth century secondary sources, yet relied primarily on nineteenth century material, such as that by Luke Tyerman, George J. Stevenson, and John Kirk.<sup>858</sup> As well, his research was not as thorough as it could have been, as Elizabeth Hart pointed out in her helpful review. For instance, Susanna did in fact leave a diary that was housed at the Wesley College archives in Bristol.<sup>859</sup> And though he rightly rooted Susanna's worldview in the Puritanism of her childhood, Dallimore did not quote from John A. Newton's seminal study, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism*, nor does it appear in his bibliography.<sup>860</sup> However, as Hart indicated, Dallimore did use some previously unused sources. For instance, he cited a letter pertaining to the "Amen" affair, when Samuel left home due to Susanna's refusal to say amen to his prayer for the king. This was correspondence between Susanna, Lady

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<sup>858</sup> Dallimore used Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1866); George J. Stevenson, *Memorials of the Wesley Family* (London: Partridge, 1876); John Kirk, *The Mother of the Wesleys* (London: Jarrold, 1868).

<sup>859</sup> Elizabeth Hart, "Review of Arnold A. Dallimore, *Susanna Wesley*," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 49.1 (February 1993), 24.

<sup>860</sup> John A. Newton, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1968).

Yarborough and Bishop Hicketts. Hart also commended Dallimore for his use of Samuel's "Autobiography."<sup>861</sup> Dallimore concluded the preface with a statement about his spiritual aspirations for the book, saying, as he did with his other biographies, "This book is sent forth with the desire that it may not only bring Susanna Wesley to the attention of many people, but that the story of her life may move many to copy her example of prayerfulness, patience and piety."<sup>862</sup>

In her review, Hart also pointed to a number of "errors of fact" that Dallimore committed. For example, he claimed that the place of Susanna's marriage was unknown, when it was actually at St. Marylebone Parish. Hart claimed it was on March 10, 1682/1683, though it was November 12, 1688 (Dallimore said it was November 11).<sup>863</sup> He also claimed that Susanna's father, Samuel Annesley (1620-1696), "had never known financial need."<sup>864</sup> Yet, due to the Great Ejection of 1662, he likely experienced considerable hardship, considering that he had nineteen children to provide for. Dallimore also assumed, without argument, that Susanna and her father suffered estrangement after she joined the Church of England—yet, as Hart explained, they maintained a good relationship through to the end of his life. This was seen especially in his bequeathment of his papers to her at his death. A number of minor errors are also found in the book, some of which should have been caught by its editors. Dallimore

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<sup>861</sup> Hart, "Review," 24.

<sup>862</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 8.

<sup>863</sup> Hart, "Review," 24; Dallimore, *Susanna*, 26. Cf. Charles Wallace Jr., ed. *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xii. There seems to be significant confusion surrounding the actual date of their marriage, as Samuel J. Rogal claimed it was in 1689. See Samuel J. Rogal, "Wesley, Susanna Annesley," in Charles Yrigoyen Jr. and Susan E. Warrick, eds., *Historical Dictionary of Methodism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 327.

<sup>864</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 35.

called South Ormsby, “South Thoresby,” though it was corrected on a subsequent page, and he inadvertently changed Frank Baker’s first name to Charles.<sup>865</sup> Hart also felt that some of Dallimore’s summaries were too quick, and that he got “somewhat carried away,” particularly as he related that “[m]uch of [Susanna’s] adult life was taken up with bearing children and watching them die.”<sup>866</sup> Hart nonetheless commended Dallimore “on his true devotion to his vision of Susanna which in itself reflects her sanctification in the best Victorian tradition—complete with lyrical comments on her physical beauty.”<sup>867</sup>

Dallimore wrote positively and sympathetically about Susanna. This is especially seen in the way he described her marriage to Samuel. Dallimore did not portray Susanna’s husband favourably. He was most critical in the chapter, “Forsaken by Her Husband,” where he detailed the famous incident where Samuel left due to Susanna’s refusal to say amen after his prayer for the king. Susanna did not believe that William of Orange was the rightful king of England, and thus could not support Samuel in his prayers for him. Dallimore firmly believed in the veracity of this incident, though he noted that a number of historians did not, including Tyerman. He believed Tyerman desired to maintain Samuel Wesley’s unblemished character. Yet, as he proved by quoting at length from the aforementioned letter by Susanna to Lady Yarborough, Samuel did indeed leave.<sup>868</sup> Dallimore also speculated as to Samuel’s motivations in this incident. When Samuel left the Wesleys had been married for twelve years; Dallimore

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<sup>865</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 37-38, 172.

<sup>866</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 37.

<sup>867</sup> Hart, “Review,” 24.

<sup>868</sup> The letters between Susanna Wesley, Lady Yarborough and George Hicke were found by Robert Walmsley and published in the *Manchester Guardian* on July 2 and 3, 1953. It was reprinted as Robert Walmsley, “John Wesley’s Parents’ Quarrel and Reconciliation,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 29.3 (September 1953): 50-57.

was incredulous that this would be the first time that Susanna's husband noticed her failure to say "amen." For Dallimore, Samuel had come to "such a plight," presumably because of his continual financial indebtedness, that he finally left her. He wanted to ingratiate himself with the king, and so this was a way to prove his loyalty. A fire in the Wesley home forced Samuel to return after five months. The result of this episode turned out to be quite negative for Samuel, as he never moved further up in the church hierarchy, and "Susanna's attitude towards him was never the same again" (though Hart noted that this was an unproven assumption on Dallimore's part).<sup>869</sup>

Another area where Dallimore challenged interpretations of Susanna Wesley concerned her conversion. Though not as famous a conversion narrative as that of either of her famous sons, the timing of Susanna's conversion has had some minor debate. Both John and Charles believed that Susanna was converted while communicating at the Eucharist while she lived at the Foundery near the end of her life. Though as a minister's wife she had lived her life fearing God, teaching her children the Christian faith, and demonstrating deep theological knowledge, they believed that she was basically unconverted. John Kirk argued that a perusal of the "records of Mrs. Wesley's spiritual life" will "dissipate the common notion" that she "did not experience the inward consolations of the Gospel until late in life." Kirk blamed this notion on a statement in John Wesley's journal from September 3, 1739, where he recorded his mother saying that she had not "scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now." For Kirk, Susanna had "long before laid the burden at the foot of the cross."<sup>870</sup> G. Elsie

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<sup>869</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 53-54.

<sup>870</sup> John Kirk, *The Mother of the Wesleys: A Biography* (London: Henry James Tresidder, 1864), 271.

Harrison, in her infamous biography *Son to Susanna*, decried John and Charles for thinking that their mother was converted after a “legal night of seventy years,” as Charles put it in a poem about his mother after her death. In a dryness that is characteristic of the whole book, Harrison said, “It is safe to say that Charles Wesley dare not have written that glib poem had his mother been alive.” It was with “superb arrogance” that he “made her mourn a legal night of seventy years in darkness before the light of his own particular brand of religion was vouchsafed to her.” Harrison said, “Not for Susanna was instant salvation, but rather a whole life of self-abnegation and crucifixion and a growing in grace.”<sup>871</sup> More recently Samuel J. Rogal called her late-in-life conversion experience, “more anecdotal than factual.”<sup>872</sup>

Does Dallimore’s interpretation of Susanna’s conversion correspond with her sons’, or with later (and at times acrimonious) biographers? In his discussion of her upbringing in a Puritan home, he asked, “Was Susanna converted while she was still a girl?” Though her sons later would say no, Dallimore noted that “several persons” (though he did not say who) have objected to their opinion about their mother. However, Dallimore said, an examination of her life showed “evidence of a confusion in her mind as to how one becomes a Christian.” On the one hand she frequently declared the need of faith and belief in the heart, but she at times also showed “a reliance on human works.”<sup>873</sup> As he discussed “Susanna’s Christian School,” he spoke of her pedagogical method with her children. Her overall purpose in education was the saving of her children’s souls. Yet, as

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<sup>871</sup> G. Elsie Harrison, *Son to Susanna: The Private Life of John Wesley* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1937), 197.

<sup>872</sup> Samuel J. Rogal, *Susanna Annesley Wesley (1669-1742): A Biography of Strength and Love (The Mother of John and Charles Wesley)* (Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 2001), 173.

<sup>873</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 15.

Dallimore observed, “she failed during these years to mention the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death and the receiving of its merits by faith.” She had not yet spoken of conversion or assurance of faith, but stressed the need to attend church and the Lord’s Supper. In a more detailed treatment near the end of the book, Dallimore reiterated her confusion, but did not conclude, like John and Charles, that her conversion experience happened at the Foundery Communion Table. Charles had written a letter to his mother to confirm her beliefs where he said that “she had previously been in a lost and hell-deserving condition.” Dallimore recounted her reply, where she said that she had been “enlightened” and a “partaker of the heavenly gift,” and had “been fully awakened.” Yet she also admitted that “I have not been faithful to the talents committed to my trust, and have lost my first love.” She spoke of times when she felt she had been “without hope” and had “forgotten God,” but then found “that he had not forgotten me.” Through it all she maintained her belief that “Christ died for me.”<sup>874</sup>

In his evaluation of this letter Dallimore asked whether she was stating that her Lord’s Supper conversion was not actually a conversion, because she “had already known Christ as her Saviour for many years?” Due to the confusion surrounding her conversion, Dallimore chose not to take a firm position, but concluded that there was no need to pinpoint the moment when she was saved. “Rather,” he said, “we may rejoice in the evidence that she had probably known the Lord for a long time and in the certainty of salvation to which she manifestly came as the result of this experience later in her life.”<sup>875</sup> In this, Dallimore demonstrated good historical judgment by not forming conclusions

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<sup>874</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 164.

<sup>875</sup> Dallimore, *Susanna*, 164.

based on one person's statement, nor did he feel that he had to tie up every loose end. There are times when historical evidence does not always give answers, and thus it must be left.

### Conclusion

While his biography of Susanna is basically reliable, there were difficulties with interpretation and historical fact. Dallimore presented Susanna as an example, presumably to the women he said that he was writing for, of a godly Christian woman. She was steadfast in her convictions, a dutiful wife and mother, and a faithful Christian. In a discussion about her at the death of her husband, Dallimore made a comment that seemed to have personal application in his own life. He spoke of Samuel being buried "very frugally, yet decently" in the churchyard in Epworth. "And so Susanna, his long-suffering wife, began her years of impoverished, but uncomplaining widowhood." As the biographical chapter of Dallimore showed, he had a long-held concern that after his own death May Dallimore would not be adequately provided for with his meager pension, which was why he wrote his "lesser biographies" like *Susanna Wesley*. The admiration that he had for Susanna makes one think that he saw those same qualities in his own wife.

### **John Wesley the bad**

In the second chapter we saw that Dallimore was strongly antagonistic toward John Wesley, so much so that his publisher, Banner of Truth, had to intervene and cajole him to set Wesley in a better light. Dallimore long expressed a desire to write a biography of

him in order to set the record straight about the Methodist's theology and true character. So it is curious that he would write about Charles and Susanna and not John. In light of this happenstance of history, Dallimore's published views of Wesley need to be explored. Though he did not write a biography, Wesley appears enough in Dallimore's writings on the eighteenth century that some perspective on his views can be ascertained. Was this perspective fair to Wesley? Or were Dallimore's concerns shaped by his particular faith commitments?

Early in the first volume of his biography of Whitefield, Dallimore registered a critical view of Wesley that expanded intermittently throughout, and then grew in more detail in volume two. At the beginning of his chapter on the conversion of the Wesleys Dallimore recorded a quote by the Methodist historian J. Ernest Rattenbury (1870-1963) who, incidentally, gave a helpful direction against hagiography. Dallimore, however, used the quote to demonstrate the need for readers to understand Wesley's faults. Rattenbury wrote, "It is of real importance not to undervalue the human side of great saints. The value of a Francis and a Wesley is not exhausted by their heavenly citizenship... Wesley undoubtedly suffered from this semi-idolatry. The spirit which apotheosizes a man destroys the *man*, and it is just the man, of like passions with ourselves, as he struggled and conquered, lived and served, who is really a heritage and inspiration."<sup>876</sup> Dallimore's use of this quote set the tone for the rest of his treatment of Wesley in his Whitefield as well as his Wesley biographies. His critical view of John is a part of his larger apologetic for Whitefield. For every character flaw expressed by

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<sup>876</sup> J. Ernest Rattenbury, *Wesley's Legacy to the World: Six Studies in the Permanent Values of the Evangelical Revival* (London: Epworth Press, 1928), 18, 21; cited in Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1: 178. Emphasis Rattenbury's.

Wesley, Whitefield turned out to be the opposite. The interesting exception to this rule is the issue of slavery, where the tables are reversed. Dallimore rightly criticized Whitefield for his willingness to use the institution, though Wesley's strong repudiations were not praised.<sup>877</sup>

This section explores three ways that Dallimore interpreted the life of John Wesley. First, Dallimore's understanding of Wesley's conversion is set against the backdrop of broader Methodist scholarship on this subject. Though ambiguous about when it happened, Dallimore did not believe that it was Aldersgate. His position was part of his larger polemic against Wesley as the founder of Methodism. Second, following on the theme of the first part, this section looks at Dallimore's treatment of whether Wesley or Whitefield should be constituted Methodism's founder. He argued that Whitefield had already achieved his fame as a preacher before the Wesleys were even known, and thus he should be thought of as the founder. Third, Dallimore's problems with aspects of Wesley's theology are examined, particularly the problem of perfection. Though Dallimore's statements about Christian perfection are relatively short, it would appear that he did not have a deep enough understanding to offer a satisfactory account of its teaching.

### Conversion, Methodism, and theology

#### **Conversion: Genuine or not?**

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<sup>877</sup> For Wesley on slavery see Warren Thomas Smith, *John Wesley and Slavery* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986).

One topic that has generated significant debate in Wesley studies is the question of when John Wesley underwent an evangelical conversion.<sup>878</sup> Dallimore engaged in a debate with Graham Harrison over the nature of Whitefield's conversion, and likewise, his view of Wesley's conversion merits study. Of the many famous elements of Wesley's life, his Aldersgate conversion, where he spoke of his heart as being "strangely warmed," is one of the best-known and has joined the ranks of famous conversion narratives alongside Augustine's in a garden in Milan, and Martin Luther's after a lightning storm. As Albert C. Outler put it, "In Methodist tradition, it stands as the equivalent of Paul's experience on the Damascus road."<sup>879</sup> It has become standard for popular versions of Wesley's life to take at face value what he wrote in his journal on May 24, 1738:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, 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.<sup>880</sup>

Frederick Maser's taxonomy of views pertaining to Aldersgate is five-fold, though there is seeming overlap between some of them. The first covers those who accept Wesley's telling as a genuine conversion experience. The second is the converse, with

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<sup>878</sup> For the history of interpretation on Wesley's conversion see Randy L. Maddox, "Aldersgate: A Tradition History," in Randy L. Maddox, ed., *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books an Imprint of Abindon Press, 1990), 133-146; Kenneth J. Collins, "Twentieth-Century Interpretations of John Wesley's Aldersgate Experience: Coherence or Confusion?" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 24 (1989): 18-31.

<sup>879</sup> Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 51. Outler also likened it to Augustine's conversion. See also D. Bruce Hindmarsh, "'My Chains Fell Off, My Heart Was Free': Early Methodist Conversion Narrative in England," *Church History* 68.4 (December 1999), 911-912 for similar sentiments.

<sup>880</sup> W. Reginald Ward and Richard R. Heitzenrater, eds., *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 18: Journals and Diaries I* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 249-250.

those who reject it for various reasons. However, many in this group do recognize that Aldersgate was an important event in Wesley's life. The third sees signs of genuine Christian faith in his earlier spirituality and so Aldersgate was not necessary as a conversion. The fourth emphasized the gradual development of Wesley's spirituality and Aldersgate is one step in the process. Finally the fifth group argued that Wesley had many conversions and Aldersgate was but one.<sup>881</sup>

Kenneth J. Collins traced the history of twentieth-century interpretations of Aldersgate as a genuine conversion experience from the 1909 work of Nehemiah Curnock (1840-1916), who argued that though Wesley had an experience of sorts at his ordination in 1725, he still held to works-righteousness that was not addressed until May 24, 1738, when he learned "the meaning of saving faith."<sup>882</sup> Collins included others such as Rattenbury, who was willing to admit that Wesley may have experienced a kind of "Catholic" conversion at the age of twenty-two, but it was not until Aldersgate that he had an "evangelical" conversion.<sup>883</sup> An example of a recent writer who had a similar argument to Rattenbury is Daniel L. Burnett in his 2006 book *In the Shadow of Aldersgate*. Burnett recognized the ambiguity surrounding the traditional Wesley conversion narrative, and so was not blind to the interpretational issues involved. Nonetheless he concluded that Aldersgate was a "transformation from works-oriented religion to grace-oriented faith," and was in fact "a true conversion to biblical

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<sup>881</sup> Frederick E. Maser, "Second Thoughts on John Wesley," *Drew Gateway* 49.2 (Winter 1978): 35-36. Cf. Maddox, "Aldersgate," 133-134. The problem of determining when Wesley was converted is also seen in the debate over when it should be celebrated.

<sup>882</sup> Nehemiah Curnock, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), 1:12; cited in Collins, "Twentieth Century Interpretations," 19.

<sup>883</sup> J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Conversion of the Wesleys* (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), 42.

Christianity.”<sup>884</sup> Burnett highlighted the “radical nature of [Wesley’s] transformation” wherein Wesley himself regularly referred to his newfound freedom from sin. Burnett quoted a letter that John wrote on October 30, 1738, to his older brother Samuel Wesley (ca. 1690-1739) where he described that a Christian was one “who so believes in Christ, as that sin hath no more dominion over him.” Linking this to his conversion he said, “I was not a Christian till May the 24<sup>th</sup> last past.”<sup>885</sup> Therefore Burnett argued that the experience was an “Evangelical Conversion,” or a “new birth.” Before Aldersgate, Wesley was converted in the “Catholic” sense of having turned from the world to God. After Aldersgate he was converted in the “Protestant” sense of actually experiencing saving faith.<sup>886</sup>

Many Wesley scholars, both from previous generations and more recently, have challenged the notion that Wesley was converted at this time. Richard B. Heitzenrater demonstrated that there were a number of early biographers who did not believe that Wesley was converted at Aldersgate, including John Whitehead (ca. 1740-1804), who preached Wesley’s funeral sermon, and downplayed Aldersgate. Thomas Coke (1747-1814) and the London Anglican Elhanan Winchester “omit any reference at all.”<sup>887</sup> It is important to note that even Wesley qualified his earlier testimony of conversion, specifically as he looked back on his spiritual state before 1738. In 1774 and 1775 he placed footnotes in his *Journal* tempering the radical conversion language. He also never

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<sup>884</sup> Daniel L. Burnett, *In the Shadow of Aldersgate: An Introduction to the Heritage and Faith of the Wesleyan Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2006), 36.

<sup>885</sup> John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley: Tracts and Letter on Various Subjects* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1827), 10: 461.

<sup>886</sup> Burnett, *Shadow of Aldersgate*, 37.

<sup>887</sup> Richard B. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 347.

mentioned Aldersgate in subsequent writings.<sup>888</sup> All of this makes a clear reading of Wesley's conversion account ambiguous, or, in the words of Outler, the account is "something of an anomaly."<sup>889</sup> He argued that one potential reason why Wesley tempered his language describing Aldersgate was due to the influence of the Moravians at this time. Wesley would not have wanted to give them as much credit after his schism with them.

How then did Dallimore interpret Aldersgate? The chapter on the Wesleys' conversions in volume one of *George Whitefield* gives the lengthiest treatment of the issue. In it Dallimore initially adopted a seemingly traditional version of Aldersgate as a genuine conversion narrative. Charles had been converted on May 21, 1738, Pentecost Sunday, but it was three more days before John would be. After being given a copy of the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans, which Dallimore claimed was a gift from William Holland, Wesley found his heart strangely warmed and he was converted. After their conversions both Wesleys looked forward to a changed life, as they had learned to expect from their Moravian teachers. Charles found this change, relatively speaking, but John did not. It is at this point that Dallimore began to break with the traditional interpretation. Though John found himself a "new man," the inward change he looked for came slowly.<sup>890</sup> At this point in his discussion, Dallimore referred to the different scholarly interpretations of Wesley's conversion, citing the work of R. A. Knox

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<sup>888</sup> Outler, *John Wesley*, 51.

<sup>889</sup> Maddox, "Aldersgate," 134; Outler, *John Wesley*, 51.

<sup>890</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:191.

primarily, but also R. Denny Urlin, J. H. Overton, Arnold Lunn, and Maximin Piette.<sup>891</sup>

According to Dallimore, those who have assumed Wesley's conversion at Aldersgate were misleading and have "falsely aggrandized him." Instead, Dallimore argued, Wesley was not lifted out of doubt that night, but was "left struggling with his uncertainty for months." Due to such struggles, "certain writers have been unable to consider that event his conversion at all."<sup>892</sup>

For Dallimore, a proper understanding of Wesley's post-Aldersgate condition was important for his study of Whitefield for two reasons. First, those who argue that Methodism was founded at Wesley's Aldersgate conversion have neglected the role that Whitefield had already played. This was a key motivation to Dallimore's revision of Aldersgate. Second, the events of this period drastically effected Wesley's subsequent theology, and later caused him to separate from Whitefield. According to Dallimore, Wesley's desire leading up to Aldersgate had been more about finding a commoditized "faith" than it was seeking after Christ and genuine conversion. Dallimore quoted Wesley, before Aldersgate, as saying, "But I still fixed not this faith on its right object: I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ." Though the Wesleys record in their journals that they were "seeking Christ," they were actually "seeking *faith* more than they were *Christ*. Faith had become the *desideratum* in their thinking, insomuch that

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<sup>891</sup> R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950); R. Denny Urlin, *The Churchman's Life of Wesley* (London: SPCK, 1880); J. H. Overton, *John Wesley* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1891); Arnold Lunn, *John Wesley* (New York: The Dial Press, 1929); Maximin Piette, *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1937).

<sup>892</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:192.

they began to look upon it as an entity in itself.”<sup>893</sup> They wanted to know how much of a measure of faith was necessary for salvation. This did not change after Whitsunday or Aldersgate for either brother. Dallimore observed of Charles that, rather than focusing on Christ, “more often it was faith itself that he emphasized.”<sup>894</sup> After Aldersgate, the subjective element of faith could similarly be found and cast John on a further path of subjectivism. He regularly looked inward to himself, and expressed doubt about his own state. Dallimore quoted a letter written eight months after Aldersgate where he said, “My friends affirm that I am mad because I said I was not a Christian a year ago. I affirm I am not a Christian now.”<sup>895</sup> Wesley was not, as some had supposed, converted in his Oxford days, as he “knew nothing of those truths that are essential to regeneration.” At Aldersgate, he finally saw the worthlessness of works-righteousness and saw his need of Christ, but the noticeable change in his life came later.<sup>896</sup> Dallimore did not indicate when this happened; presumably it was during Wesley’s time spent at Herrnhut immediately after Aldersgate. Earlier Dallimore spoke of the trip to Herrnhut as having certain lasting effects on Wesley, namely his combining of “Scripture and experience” in the formulation of his doctrine, his increased introspection, and his belief that the Moravians had something that he did not—a “Christian experience.”<sup>897</sup> This experience, Dallimore claimed, was not provided by Aldersgate. When Wesley returned to London he “had become something of a Moravian himself.” But even Herrnhut was not the ultimate cure-

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<sup>893</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:181. Emphasis his. He made this same point in his biography of Charles, where he said that this “concept was to colour their theology and ministries for much of the rest of their lives.” See Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 59.

<sup>894</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:187.

<sup>895</sup> John Wesley, *Journal*, 125; cited in Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:196.

<sup>896</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:196.

<sup>897</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:194.

all, as Wesley continued to look inward and continued to doubt. From this point on in the biography, Dallimore did not return to the problem of Wesley's conversion, and in his other biographies only mentions it in shorter, summary form. Dallimore's interpretation reflects the ambiguity that Outler noted above about Aldersgate in general. Ultimately readers are not given any further insight into when Dallimore thought Wesley was genuinely converted. At the very least, Dallimore fits into the taxonomy offered by Maser at the beginning of this section, finding himself best placed in the fourth position as one who saw Aldersgate as an important step in Wesley's conversion process. The overriding concern for Dallimore is less about Wesley, and more about Whitefield's role as the founder of Methodism. For him, Aldersgate is irrelevant to the whole discussion. Dallimore said that the "claims that [Wesley] was suddenly transformed and that 'the movement had its starting-point in that room' are but part of a thesis which almost completely overlooks the great ministry that Whitefield had already exercised—a thesis which makes it appear that there was no revival activity until Wesley's conversion, and that the trumpet voice that awakened England was his."<sup>898</sup>

### **John Wesley and the founding of Methodism**

In his broad interpretation of Methodism, Dallimore was concerned to defend the character of George Whitefield against John Wesley. Whitefield was the kind and balanced evangelist who humbly put the Wesleys before him—or, as Dallimore quoted Isaac Taylor, he was "the love-fraught, self-denying and gentle-natured Whitefield"—

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<sup>898</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:192-193.

whereas John was proud and arrogant, always seeking to undermine Whitefield.<sup>899</sup> When Wesley desired “great success” early in his itinerant ministry, “Whitefield assured him, ‘Indeed, I wish you all the success you could desire,’ and said, ‘May you increase, though I decrease’ and ‘Though you come after me, may you be preferred before me.’”<sup>900</sup> He willfully gave up the title of founder: “Throughout his lifetime and for several years after his death he was known as ‘the leader and founder of Methodism.’ Yet, as we have seen, he willingly relinquished his position as the head of the Calvinistic branch of the movement and served thereafter as ‘simply the servant of all.’”<sup>901</sup> Whitefield is forgotten because his humility actually worked. Thus certain myths about the respective roles of Whitefield and the Wesleys in Methodist memory have been propagated.

One of the most egregious myths that Dallimore sought to dispel was the notion that Wesley was the founder of Methodism, a view that has had a long history. Luke Tyerman, biographer of both Whitefield and Wesley, subtitled his biography of the latter, the “founder of the Methodists.”<sup>902</sup> In the 1891 *Methodist Review* an editorial comment by James W. Mendenhall argued that, “Without controversy, Mr. Wesley was *de facto* the originator of Methodism.... To dispute this fact is to dispute history.”<sup>903</sup> This view has

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<sup>899</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, “A Bicentennial Remembrance of George Whitefield,” *Methodist Review* (January 1971), 20.

<sup>900</sup> Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 94.

<sup>901</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield: Anointed Servant*, 200.

<sup>902</sup> Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.: Founder of the Methodists*, 3 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871).

<sup>903</sup> [James W. Mendenhall,] “Was John Wesley the Founder of American Methodism?” *The Methodist Review* 73 (July 1891), 618. Remarkably, Mendenhall wrote of Whitefield: “Methodism, *in embryo*, had a representative on this continent in Mr. Whitefield, who, nearly thirty years before Barbara Heck, astonished the people in the great cities from Savannah to Boston with his marvellous eloquence and his wonderful revival power over the multitudes. He visited this country several times, at first as genuine a Methodist as Mr. Wesley himself, but later surrendered to the Calvinistic influence. Justice requires not merely an acknowledgment of his earnest labors, but that for a time at least they were Methodistic in

been maintained by more recent scholarship as well. An entry on John Wesley in the *Historical Dictionary of Methodism* indicated that he was “the founder of the Methodist movement within the Church of England.”<sup>904</sup> A large part of Dallimore’s Whitefield apologetic was to set the record straight on who founded the movement.

A clear statement of his defence of Whitefield was articulated in a *Methodist History* essay commemorating the Grand Itinerant’s bicentennial. Dallimore spoke of the “common concept” that Methodism was “very largely associated with John Wesley,” and that he was the “preeminent figure in that work.” The term “the founder of Methodism” was often applied to him, and the revival for which he laboured referred to as “the Wesleyan Revival.” For Dallimore, such a perspective first of all neglected other important figures who helped found and shape Methodism such as Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, John Cennick, Howell Harris, and Daniel Rowland. If Charles Wesley is rightly the “poet of Methodism,” should John not be the “founder”? For Dallimore, the answer was a resounding no. For that title, historians should look to the one most overlooked: George Whitefield.

Dallimore lamented that Whitefield was generally thought of as a man of “extraordinary eloquence” but also “superficial” and “quite secondary” to Wesley.<sup>905</sup> This was “an incomplete and misleading view.” It must be remembered that the revival was an international movement that affected much of the English-speaking world, and when

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character, and might, under proper co-operation of Mr. Wesley, have resulted in the establishment of Methodism on our shores. Incompetent as an organizer, and failing to conserve the results of his prodigious services, it is but just to recognize Whitefield as a pioneer in the religious history of America.” Mendenhall, “Was John Wesley,” 619.

<sup>904</sup> “Wesley, John,” in Charles Yrigoyen Sr. and Susan E. Varrick, eds., *Historical Dictionary of Methodism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 320.

<sup>905</sup> Dallimore, “Bicentennial Remembrance,” 16.

compared with its worldwide leaders, Whitefield was the “supreme figure.”<sup>906</sup> For instance, Harris’s labours were largely in South Wales, Edwards was relegated to New England, and Wesley was “virtually limited” to England. Aside from Wesley’s early trip to Georgia, he only ventured out of England to Ireland, a country he visited regularly. Thus, Dallimore said, “Whitefield alone carried the message, not only throughout England and much of Wales, but repeatedly to Scotland and also to Gibraltar, Bermuda, and Holland. Twice he conducted preaching missions in Ireland and seven times he visited America and over and over again preached the Gospel to vast multitudes from Maine in the north to Georgia in the south.”<sup>907</sup> Historians need to recognize the place that Harris, Edwards, and Wesley occupied, but when viewing the Methodist movement as a whole, Whitefield is to take the preeminent place.

To further support this claim, Dallimore pointed to Whitefield’s “trumpet voice” that first awakened England from its sinful slumbers. In 1737, England suddenly became aware that “a prophet of God had arisen in their midst.” At twenty-two years of age the recently ordained youth was preaching every day of the week and three or more times on Sundays. Wherever he went large crowds attended. All of this was months before Wesley’s Aldersgate experience and he and Charles were as yet unknown to the public.<sup>908</sup> For Dallimore, Methodism began in 1739 when Whitefield began open-air preaching to crowds in their thousands. As he “performed this work” hundreds became “attached to him and to his cause, insomuch that they constituted a great body of permanent followers,

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<sup>906</sup> Dallimore, “Bicentennial Remembrance,” 17.

<sup>907</sup> Dallimore, “Bicentennial Remembrance,” 17.

<sup>908</sup> Dallimore, “Bicentennial Remembrance,” 17-18. Note, this is the second use of “trumpet voice.” See above.

and to them the public gave the name ‘Methodists.’”<sup>909</sup> It was Whitefield who “thrust John Wesley” into the open air in Bristol and later Charles in London. Both Wesleys preached to smaller congregations and “were but secondary figures in the movement.” Dallimore argued that throughout Whitefield’s life he was known as “Methodism’s founder and chief leader.” Scores of statements to this effect can be found in the literature of the times and could be quoted to support Dallimore’s argument. As A. Skevington Wood (1917-1993) said, “A scrutiny of the contemporary records will reveal that in the eighteenth century itself the name of Whitefield figures most prominently of all...it is unquestionable that in the popular view Whitefield was regarded as the primate of the new movement and even as the founder of Methodism.”<sup>910</sup> In the first volume of his Whitefield biography Dallimore expanded on the series of Whitefield’s contemporaries who called him the founder of Methodism including Matthew Tindal (1657-1733), periodicals like the *St. James Evening Post* and the *Gentleman’s Magazine* that in 1748 wrongly reported on the death of Whitefield, “the founder of the Methodists.” A number of his critics also referred to him in this way.<sup>911</sup>

Dallimore questioned whether Methodism was founded by the Wesleys while they were students at Oxford. Was Charles Wesley, who first founded the Holy Club, a group that was regularly called “Methodist,” the movement’s rightful founder? Or maybe it was John, who quickly took leadership of the club while Whitefield was a young student? According to Dallimore, there was no direct link between the Holy Club and Methodism.

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<sup>909</sup> Dallimore, “Bicentennial Remembrance,” 18.

<sup>910</sup> A. Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze: Spiritual Renewal and Advance in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Paternoster Press, 1960), 79. Cited in Dallimore, “Bicentennial Remembrance,” 18.

<sup>911</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:382.

Holy Club Methodism “reached but a handful of students and knew no assurance of salvation, and it had died away with the departure of the Wesleys in 1735.” Whitefield’s “was a Methodism of joy and assurance, and this was the Methodism that was to become permanent.”<sup>912</sup> In the biography Dallimore also pointed out that in the early years the Wesleys seldom referred to themselves as Methodists, preferring “our company” when speaking of the Holy Club. It was not until 1744 that Wesley started to regularly use “Methodist” instead of “United Society.”<sup>913</sup> Whitefield, conversely, regularly spoke of the “Methodists,” in his journals.<sup>914</sup> Dallimore also linked Whitefield more broadly not only to Methodism, but to the beginnings of the revival. He gave two reasons why Whitefield was the progenitor of both. First, as he had indicated earlier, the revival began (“humanly speaking”) under his preaching while the Wesleys were in Georgia and were yet unknown. Second, all of the “enterprises” by which the revival grew were started by Whitefield. Under this second head Dallimore gave five examples: the open-air campaigns began with Whitefield; he was the first to aggressively evangelize wherever he had the opportunity; he was the first to form the various Methodist societies and link them into an organization; he was the first to hold a Methodist conference and produce a weekly periodical; and, finally, his congregations were consistently the largest. Thus, “Throughout his life he was known as its leading figure and as ‘The Founder of Methodism.’”<sup>915</sup> Wesley was “something of a lieutenant to Whitefield.”<sup>916</sup>

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<sup>912</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield: Anointed Servant*, 29.

<sup>913</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:158.

<sup>914</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:382.

<sup>915</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:531.

<sup>916</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:20.

Others picked up on Dallimore's perspective. Kenneth E. Lawson, writing in the evangelical *Reformation & Revival* journal, argued along the same lines as Dallimore, often quoting him.<sup>917</sup> Lawson argued that Wesley was dependent on Whitefield for five reasons. First, due to its membership's failure to understand the "new birth," the Holy Club was not a Methodist society and should not be viewed as part of Methodism's founding—it was a precursor. The first evangelical societies were founded in 1737—and possibly even 1735—by Whitefield, who preached the new birth. Whichever date is chosen, the founding of evangelical societies was separate from the as-yet converted Wesleys who were in Georgia.<sup>918</sup> Second, Whitefield was the first to practice open-air preaching. He learned it from Howell Harris who had been field-preaching for some time. On February 17, 1739, Whitefield preached out of doors for the first time. Wesley did not witness open-air preaching until April when he saw Whitefield do it in Bristol. It was not until June 14, 1739, that Wesley himself first preached outside of a Church.<sup>919</sup> Third, Whitefield's contemporaries called him "the founder of Methodism." One example of many, and quoting from Dallimore, was a letter from the Countess of Hertford to the Countess of Pomfret that said, "I do not know whether you have heard of our new sect who call themselves Methodists. There is one Whitefield at the head of them—a young man under five and twenty."<sup>920</sup> Fourth, while the modern organizational system of Methodism owes its origin to Wesley, in the early years it was Whitefield who was the

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<sup>917</sup> Kenneth E. Lawson, "Who Founded Methodism? Wesley's Dependence upon Whitefield in the Eighteenth-Century English Revival," *Reformation & Revival* 4.3 (Summer 1995): 39-57.

<sup>918</sup> Lawson, "Who Founded Methodism," 42.

<sup>919</sup> Lawson, "Who Founded Methodism," 43-44.

<sup>920</sup> [A. C. H. Seymour,] *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* (London: William Edward Painter, 1841), 1:197; cited in Lawson, "Who Founded Methodism," 46. Lawson quoted from Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:381.

planner and organizer, and many of the ideas that are attributed to Wesley came from Whitefield.<sup>921</sup> For instance, the first Methodist conference was held on January 5, 1739, and it is recorded in Whitefield's journal that he was the host. John Wesley's first conference was not until 1744. Fifth, Lawson pointed out that the growth of Methodism through the spread of revival across the United Kingdom and the colonies was a result of Whitefield's preaching. He first visited Scotland in 1741, but Wesley did not go there until 1751, ten years later. Lawson argued that Wesley was "virtually unknown in the Colonies."<sup>922</sup> Due to these five arguments, Lawson concurred with Dallimore that the Wesleys were dependent on Whitefield and he should be credited as the founder of the Methodists.

Other modern studies on Methodism's founding, however, have not looked to Whitefield, but to another source. Frederick Dreyer, a Canadian historian who taught at the University of Western Ontario, did a detailed study of the "genesis of Methodism" and credited the Moravians as having the largest emphasis on the movement through John Wesley.<sup>923</sup> He said, "Methodism as a finished and developed system owes little to its background in England. Deriving from German Pietism, it originated in Saxony and came to England by way of Georgia."<sup>924</sup> By this he meant through John Wesley's contacts with the Moravians on his first trip to Georgia. It was through this relationship, as it was located in the Fetter Lane Society in London, that Methodism first spread. Wesley used all of the organizational principles that he learned from the Moravians and applied them

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<sup>921</sup> Lawson, "Who Founded Methodism," 48.

<sup>922</sup> Lawson, "Who Founded Methodism," 53.

<sup>923</sup> Frederick Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism* (Cranbury, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1999).

<sup>924</sup> Dreyer, *Genesis of Methodism*, 110.

to Methodism. Even his spirituality, rooted as it was in the empiricism of the Enlightenment, was shared with Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Later he said, “In [Methodism’s] pedigree it owes nothing to High Anglican tradition; it’s ecclesiastical antecedents lie in Lutheran Pietism.”<sup>925</sup> Remarkably, George Whitefield was hardly mentioned in the work, and when he was, it was only tangentially. For instance, Dreyer said, “George Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon, William Grimshaw, and John Fletcher can be fairly counted as important figures in the history of either movement.”<sup>926</sup> Or, he spoke of Whitefield needing Wesley’s help in setting up a society using the “Moravian pattern.”<sup>927</sup> While Dreyer shed important light on the Moravian influence on Methodism, he did so to the neglect of other factors, most notably Whitefield. When one considers that they were in the same southwestern Ontario orbit, it is curious that Dreyer did not interact with Dallimore’s arguments about Whitefield as founder, though he did footnote Dallimore at a few points. Henry D. Rack, in his definitive treatment of Wesley’s life, has argued that Wesley must be viewed in light of his co-religionists in the movement such as Whitefield and Harris, and that ultimately it cannot be said that Wesley alone was the founder of Methodism.

### **The problem of perfection**

A final area of interpretation where Dallimore’s theological bias is evident is his portrayal of the Wesleyan view of Christian perfection, or what is sometimes called

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<sup>925</sup> Dreyer, *Genesis of Methodism*, 113.

<sup>926</sup> Dreyer, *Genesis of Methodism*, 55.

<sup>927</sup> Dreyer, *Genesis of Methodism*, 72.

“entire sanctification.” As a Calvinist who was sympathetic to Whitefield, Dallimore saw John Wesley’s doctrine of perfection as the most troubling aspect of his theology. In this light, the question must be asked: did Dallimore fully understand and rightly engage with the Wesleys on this subject? Roger J. Green, in a review of *A Heart Set Free*, argued that Dallimore misunderstood perfectionism. Though the book “is a good biography, clearly written, and generally reliable,” it suffered a number of drawbacks.<sup>928</sup> A minor shortcoming that Green noted was Dallimore’s propensity to preach throughout the work. He cited Dallimore’s views on the doctrine of revelation, and his taste in worship music as examples. Green said that the “greatest weakness” of the book is that “Dallimore is simply incorrect in his analysis of this doctrine [of perfection]. He fails to appreciate the historical context which helped shape the doctrine, as well as the influence of the Pietists and others upon the Wesleys.” Green claimed that “it is simply not true that with the teaching of the doctrine of Christian perfection the Wesleys ‘began to assert another teaching in which they differed from virtually all other Christians of that time.’”<sup>929</sup> Dallimore put the doctrine in a political and self-serving light, according to Green, making it seem like it had been devised merely for “base and practical reasons,” that led to division. Dallimore failed to view the doctrine within the biblical and theological framework that the Wesleys had placed it in, including an understanding of sin and grace.<sup>930</sup>

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<sup>928</sup> Roger J. Green, “Review of Arnold A. Dallimore, *A Heart Set Free*,” *Fides et Historia* 23.1 (Winter-Spring 1991), 121.

<sup>929</sup> Green, “Review,” 121, citing Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 98.

<sup>930</sup> Green, “Review,” 122.

This section, then, evaluates whether Green was right in his assessment of Dallimore's treatment of Christian perfection. It goes beyond Green's criticism and looks not just at *A Heart Set Free* but also the biographies of Whitefield where the issue is addressed in more detail. This section examines whether Dallimore gave an historical treatment of the doctrine, both as it may have developed in church history and among the Wesleys' contemporaries. It then asks whether Dallimore gave an appropriate theological and biblical critique of perfectionism and if that critique satisfies.

The Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, though articulated in a distinct way, did not just appear for the first time in the eighteenth century. Rather, it can be found in various iterations in church history. A helpful early twentieth-century source on the history and theology of Christian perfection outlining these historical elements is R. Newton Flew's 1934 work, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology*.<sup>931</sup> Flew was master of Wesley College, Cambridge, and an expert on the hymnody and poetry of Charles Wesley.<sup>932</sup> In his book Flew gave an historical treatment of perfection as an ideal for the Christian life from the teachings of the New Testament (with chapters on Jesus, Paul, Hebrews, and Johannine theology), through the early church up to Augustine. Unfortunately, the Middle Ages, an era that was rife with the mystical spirituality suited to this ideal, gets shorter shrift, though there is a chapter on Thomas Aquinas. After the Reformation, Flew focused on the more immediate context of Wesley's theology, namely Quietism, Pietism, Quakerism, and William Law. After a chapter on Methodism, two

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<sup>931</sup> R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology: An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934). This thesis cites R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology: An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present Life* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005).

<sup>932</sup> Cf. R. Newton Flew, *The Hymns of Charles Wesley: A Study of their Structure* (London: Epworth, 1953).

others dealt with Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889). What Flew's work demonstrated was that the theology of Christian perfection was not new to the Wesleys, but in various forms had a strong historical precedent. He argued that "the sectarian reactions of Quakerism, Pietism, and Methodism were, in spite of all appearances, symptoms of a return to the larger and more truly Catholic view."<sup>933</sup> Two examples from figures that have shaped Western Christian thought are his treatments of Augustine and Aquinas. In Augustine the ideal can be found in the *summum bonum* of the *visio Dei*—the Beatific Vision. After noting the degrees of perfection in his thought, Flew quoted Thomas as saying, "The third perfection refers to the removal of obstacles to the movement of love towards God... Such perfection may be had in this life."<sup>934</sup> This is not to say that Wesleyan perfectionism can be found in the centuries previous to the eighteenth, but that Wesley's ideas were not entirely original to him and that he had been influenced by aspects of the Great Tradition. The purpose of noting Flew's work is to observe that, though it had been published in the early twentieth century, it nowhere appears in *A Heart Set Free* or the biography of Whitefield. It would have made for a helpful source in tracing the history of the Wesleys' thought, and would have altered Dallimore's view that Wesley had developed a novel doctrine.<sup>935</sup>

How did Dallimore explain the Wesleys' view of Christian perfection? Dallimore's lengthiest treatment of the subject can be found in volume one of *George Whitefield*. In it

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<sup>933</sup> Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, xiv.

<sup>934</sup> Flew, *Idea of Perfection*, 236. For a discussion of Aquinas and Christian perfection see Edgardo A. Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas & Christian Perfection: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009).

<sup>935</sup> Another that would have been readily available and just as helpful is W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (Nashville, NT: Abingdon Press, 1943).

he explained that, though Wesley entertained the idea of perfection as a student at Oxford, it was after the “semi-failure” of Aldersgate that he decided he needed a further work of grace. He had heard testimony of sinlessness among the Moravians and so “began to conceive of an attainable perfection.”<sup>936</sup> At this point Dallimore made it seem as though the Moravians were the primary influences on the origin of perfectionism, which was not the case. Though the Wesleys’ view was not identical to his, William Law’s *A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection* was a major influence, especially during their time at Oxford. Tyson also pointed to the role that Scougal’s *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* played a part in their journey to perfectionism. Though it was not a work on the subject per se, “Scougal anticipated some of the central themes of the Wesleyan understanding of sanctification or Christian perfection.”<sup>937</sup> Beyond these two early sources, the Wesleys believed that their view was to be found in Scripture. They looked to texts like Matthew 5:48 that spoke of the need for perfection, Hebrews 13:20-21 where Christians are told that God will make them perfect, and 1 John 4:18 and the perfect love that casts out fear.

Dallimore did not give a detailed summary and evaluation of Wesleyan perfection, contenting himself to explain it in four ways. First, perfection was not merely a high state of Christian development; it was “something more.” Dallimore left it at that, presumably because the other three points explained what that “something more” was. Second, the person perfected had their sin nature “eradicated” and their soul “entirely sanctified.” This was a state superior to “relative holiness” but due to Wesley’s use of words like

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<sup>936</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:316.

<sup>937</sup> Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim*, 231.

“all,” “whole,” and “entire,” the Wesleyan view was essentially “absolute holiness.”

Third, Wesley did not clearly define his terms and thus added to the confusion over what his views actually were. As an example, Dallimore highlighted the problem of the term “sin,” which Wesley vaguely defined. Dallimore provided a quote from *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* that differentiated sin from transgression; the latter was not, for Wesley, technically considered sin.<sup>938</sup> Fourth, Wesley failed to maintain a distinction between “entire sanctification,” which Dallimore saw as particular to Wesley, and “Christian maturity,” that was a belief common to all Christians. Dallimore argued that this distinction was the essence of Wesley’s teaching, though at times Wesley contradicted himself. For instance, he seemed to indicate that perfection was merely the destruction of the old nature, whereas at other times it was nothing other than loving God with the whole heart. Wesley “propounded a doctrine and propagated it with zeal,” wrote Dallimore, “yet he left its essential points bewilderingly vague and undefined.”<sup>939</sup> The result of the perfection teaching was dissension in the Methodist movement, and a sharp differentiation from the theology of Whitefield and the Moravians. Even Charles, though he initially sided with his brother, would “weaken” his view later in his life.<sup>940</sup> Dallimore argued that a part of the impetus behind Wesley’s theology was the desire to forge his own brand of Methodism, separate from Whitefield. He said, “Wesley was thus bringing into being the distinctive doctrines that he needed if he was to function as a leader in his

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<sup>938</sup> Dallimore quoted from John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth, n.d.), 15-16.

<sup>939</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:318.

<sup>940</sup> Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 98-99. In his very brief summary of perfection in his Charles Wesley biography, Dallimore again relied heavily on the language from the opening of the second volume of *George Whitefield*, even using some of the same wording. Compare with Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2:32.

own right, and it is impossible to conceive of a teaching more suited to his purpose than that of his *Christian Perfection*.<sup>941</sup> Dallimore's concerns mirrored those expressed by Whitefield. Near the end of the first volume of his Whitefield biography Dallimore reproduced a letter from the Grand Itinerant to Wesley wherein perfection was discussed. Whitefield indicated that personally he was not "free from indwelling sin," and that he was sorry to hear that Wesley owned that "*sinless perfection* in this life attainable." Whitefield noted the irony that Wesley would "cry up" perfection, yet "cry down" final perseverance—the latter a hallmark of Calvinistic doctrine.<sup>942</sup> In the second volume Dallimore noted that in his refutations of perfectionism, Whitefield would speak of the imperfections noticeable in those who professed to be without them.<sup>943</sup> For Whitefield, the claim to entire sanctification was unscriptural.

In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* Wesley spoke of the various works that early influenced his thinking. In 1725 he read Jeremy Taylor's (*bap.* 1613-1667) *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying* that made him instantly resolve to dedicate his life to God. Four years later he read Thomas à Kempis' (*ca.* 1380-1471) *Christian Pattern* (also called *The Imitation of Christ*), that spoke to him of the importance of the religion of the heart. Not long after he read William Law's *Christian Perfection* that convinced him of the impossibility of being a "half Christian."<sup>944</sup> Also around 1729 he

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<sup>941</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:319. Emphasis his.

<sup>942</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:573.

<sup>943</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1:52.

<sup>944</sup> John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1827), 5-6. Cf. Jeremy Taylor, *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying* (London: J. Walthoe, 1739); Thomas à Kempis, *The Christian Pattern, or the Imitation of Jesus Christ* (London, UK/Germantown, PA: Christophor Sowr, 1749); William Law, *A Practical Treatise Upon Christian Perfection* (London: William and John Innys, 1726).

studied the bible on these matters and saw in a “clearer and clearer light” the need to have a mind that was in Christ and of walking as Christ walked. In 1733 he began to apply these things he had been learning in preaching. This he continued to do after Aldersgate, particularly in 1739 when he preached on it in the late summer and fall. In the winter of 1742 he preached from a series of texts dealing with cleansing from sin, namely 1 John 1:7, 2:12, Ephesians 4:23, Hebrews 4:9 and 10:19. In one sermon he spoke of love being the full sum of perfection, glory and happiness. He also wrote about the doctrine, notably in a tract entitled *The Character of a Methodist*, where again he spoke of the need for love that cleanses from sin. Near the end of *A Plain Account* Wesley defined perfection as meaning “the pure love of God and man; the loving of God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions.”<sup>945</sup> Wesley commented that this doctrine of perfection is what he maintained from the beginning, and continued until the time of writing.<sup>946</sup>

Wesley taught that perfection was not perfection in knowledge, nor freedom from ignorance or mistake. Perfection was not infallibility; it did not prevent sins of omission, where the person perfected ceased sinning in unintended ways. Nor was the perfected person free from infirmities. A person who is perfect is “freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.” Wesley saw entire sanctification from the position of the end of salvation—it was the highest kind of perfection in the present life. Perfection was not a static experience and though it could happen in an instant, he also believed that there was a

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<sup>945</sup> Wesley, “Plain Account,” 29.

<sup>946</sup> Mark K. Olson argued that Wesley’s views developed over time, dividing his thought into five periods: early (1725-1738), Aldersgate (1738), middle period 1 (1738-1755), middle period 2 (1756-1767), and late (1768-1791). Olson argued that the later Wesley saw perfection as a kind of second blessing. See Mark K. Olson, ed., *The John Wesley Reader on Christian Perfection* (Fenwick, MI: Truth in Heart, 2008).

process that led to it. Though his *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* is the key source to turn to for his views, Wesley spoke of it as well in sermons and letters. For instance, in *The Principles of a Methodist* he spoke of the one justified as having “power over all the stirrings and motions of sin, but not a total freedom from them.”<sup>947</sup> However, when that person is fully sanctified attaining to the “last and highest state of perfection in this life,” he or she is given a new heart and the “struggle between the old and new man is over.”<sup>948</sup>

With this brief summary in mind, the best way to understand Wesley’s view of perfection is to see it ultimately as love for God. W. Stanley Johnson argued that Jesus’ command to love God with all of the heart in Matthew 22:37-40 is a crucial text to understand Wesley. When asked to supply a definition of Christian perfection, Wesley said that it was “The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and all the thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love.”<sup>949</sup> Love burns away sin. Once sin is gone, all that is left is love for God. It is not the intention of this survey of Wesleyan perfection to speak of its merits or demerits, but to look at whether Dallimore gave it a fair analysis. In his review of *A Heart Set Free*, Green rightly criticized Dallimore for not supplying a proper context to Wesley’s doctrine of perfection. There is no sense in Dallimore’s work that Wesley was building on the broader Christian tradition beginning with the New

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<sup>947</sup> John Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist,” in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1827), 8:185. Curiously, Joseph Yoo, quoting from this same source, has Wesley say the exact opposite. See Joseph Chang Hyung Yoo, “A Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification for the Korean Context,” (PhD dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2007), 180.

<sup>948</sup> Wesley, “Principles,” 186.

<sup>949</sup> W. Stanley Johnson, “Christian Perfection as Love for God,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (March 1983), 51.

Testament. Nor did he recognize the way that Wesley came to the doctrine, brushing aside any notion that he really believed it while a student at Oxford. For Dallimore, perfection was more closely linked to the failure of Aldersgate. Because of this failure, Wesley needed another experience. Dallimore did not properly evaluate the role love to God played in Wesleyan perfection, which is key to any right understanding of the doctrine. While there is an element of vagueness in Wesley's teaching, a large part of that can be accounted for by the gradual development in the doctrine. It was something he had to work out over time, thus the exploratory element made certain conclusions tentative. It also developed in the midst of controversy, with Whitefield and the Calvinistic Methodists on the one hand, and the Moravians on the other. These matters need to be considered when trying to understand Wesley's teaching on sanctification. Thus, instead of seeing in his writings a certain vagueness, as Dallimore did, more historical nuance is needed.

What was a potential motivator to Dallimore's negative interpretation? First, the main contention that Dallimore had, as did Whitefield, was that perfectionism was unbiblical. Though that may be true, it is more of a working assumption in Dallimore's treatments of the subject, rather than a demonstrated argument. It would have helped his case if he had provided biblical and theological responses to it. Of course, as a work of history, that may not always be necessary, but as his biographies were written to teach his audience, it would have been appropriate to provide better argumentation. Second, a large part of Dallimore's criticisms were driven by his anti-charismatic views. As with his concerns over Whitefield's "impressions" in his early ministry, and Edward Irving's overall charismatic emphases, Dallimore critiqued John Wesley for allowing the

“extraordinary accompaniments of his ministry,” beginning in Bristol and lasting throughout his career. During services, people would fall into “convulsion-like experiences.”<sup>950</sup> Wesley believed that the charismatic phenomena were proof that God was with him. Under his ministry people began to experience “convulsion-like attacks” that caused them to writhe on the ground. There were reports that four strong men could not hold one down. Charles spoke of these as “the fits” and Whitefield expressed disfavour.<sup>951</sup> These experiences were part and parcel of the experience of perfection. As Amy Caswell Bratton described in her recent book, the narrative of perfection began with the discovery of personal sin, continued with growth in grace, followed often by a charismatic experience, ending in a transformed life.<sup>952</sup> Often when Wesley witnessed a charismatic experience he concluded that the person had been entirely sanctified. So, not only was perfection unbiblical in and of itself, but it was also connected to another practice that Dallimore also saw as troublesome.

### Conclusion

With the exception of his Edward Irving biography, Dallimore’s other lesser biographies all tell a basic life story of their respective subjects in an engaging way that are generally faithful to historical facts. Yet in each biography, as with his larger one on Whitefield, there is a discernable interpretive bias that regularly manifests itself, namely Dallimore’s assumptions about the problems of the charismatic movement. Whenever an interpretive

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<sup>950</sup> Dallimore, *Heart Set Free*, 94.

<sup>951</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield: Anointed Servant*, 62.

<sup>952</sup> Amy Caswell Bratton, *Witness of Perfect Love: Narrative of Christian Perfection in Early Methodism*, Tyndale Studies in Wesleyan Theology and History 4 (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2014).

difficulty appears, and Dallimore takes an unconventional view, the reason for his historiographical decision seems to be motivated by his anti-charismaticism, even more so than Calvinism. This is evident in his treatment of Charles Wesley's conversion, where the experience involving Mrs. Musgrave was expunged, and in his dealing with the doctrine of Christian perfection. Another place where bias shaped Dallimore's reading is his defence of Whitefield. Because he saw Whitefield as the true founder of Methodism—and Dallimore's arguments are compelling—it was convenient for him to recast John Wesley's Aldersgate experience because it served the purpose of further undermining arguments that Wesley was the founder of Methodism. Not all found Dallimore compelling, however. John C. Bowmer, in a review of the second Whitefield volume, said that Dallimore glorified Whitefield "at the expense of John Wesley." Dallimore left "no doubt that the real founder of Methodism was Whitefield, not Wesley; that the crucial point in Wesley's life was not the Aldersgate experience but his excursion into open-air preaching, into which he was led by Whitefield." Bowmer argued that overall Dallimore failed because he did not write impartially about the "relative roles of Whitefield and Wesley in the Evangelical Revival," and this he did because he was not impartial at all. Dallimore, "leaves us with the clear impression that the villain of the piece is John Wesley."<sup>953</sup> Though Dallimore was not unique amongst Wesleyan interpreters, he did not appear to offer a conclusive answer as to when Wesley underwent an evangelical conversion. It was sufficient enough to tear down the arguments for Aldersgate so that Whitefield could retain his rightful place as the father of Methodism. All of this contributes to a further understanding of how objectivity can be skewed,

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<sup>953</sup> John C. Bowmer, "Review of Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Volume 2*," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 43.2 (September 1981), 34.

presuppositions can shape interpretations and source-selection, and how the past can be manipulated to serve a particular agenda—in this case a theological one.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

### **Using Dallimore's usable past**

Critical reflection on the need for objectivity in history is not a recent phenomenon. Writing at the end of the nineteenth-century historian Charles Francis Adams Jr. (1835-1915), reflected on how patriotism had negatively affected the writing of colonial American history: "For in the study of history there should be but one law for all. Patriotism, piety and filial duty have nothing to do with it;—they are, indeed, mere snares and sources of delusion. The rules and canons of criticism applied in one case and to one character, must be sternly and scrupulously applied in all other similar cases and to all other characters; and, while surrounding circumstances should, and, indeed, must be taken into careful consideration, no matter who is concerned. Patriotism in the study of history is but another name for provincialism. To see history truly and correctly, it must be viewed as a whole."<sup>954</sup> As this study has demonstrated, religious concerns can be just as influential in colouring the writing of history as political ones.

The aim of this dissertation has focused on the historiography of Arnold Dallimore. The question asked concerns the ways that Reformed evangelical faith shaped his understanding of the past. This study has therefore considered Dallimore as an historian. The results have yielded a number of important conclusions about the nature of Christian historiography in general and Dallimore in particular both in his role as a pastor and as an historian who stands in the Reformed, evangelical, and Baptist traditions.

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<sup>954</sup> Charles Francis Adams, *Massachusetts: Its Historians and Its History, An Object Lesson* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1893), 12.

The importance of this work is threefold. First, as demonstrated by the *status quaestionis*, Dallimore occupies an important place in the debate over Christian history. Writing from the supernaturalist end of the historiographical spectrum, Dallimore's work finds a home among the popular biographers who have published with Reformed and evangelical publishing houses like the Banner of Truth Trust. At the same time, his major biography of Whitefield occupies an important place alongside biographies written by professional historians and published by academic presses. Second, though it is thanks to Dallimore that there was renewed interest in George Whitefield, until now very little has been known about Whitefield's biographer. This study has shown how Dallimore's life circumstances intersected with his writing of history. He had a particular sense of vocation both as a minister and as a biographer, and he demonstrated admirable perseverance through suffering to fulfill that sense of call. Third, Dallimore had very strong theological convictions and those emerged in his writings, most clearly in his work on Edward Irving, but even in his biography of Whitefield and the other lesser biographies. One of his strongest theological agendas was his anti-charismatic evangelicalism. What has become apparent in this study is that though Dallimore, as a providential historian, was keen to detect the mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit in history, at the same time he was averse to reading the Spirit too much into history. Thus the "impressions" in Whitefield's early career, the willingness of John Wesley to sanction charismatic displays, and Irving's role as "forerunner of the charismatic movement," are all anathema to Dallimore. It is interesting to find that Dallimore was representative of many providential historians who did not want to judge the Spirit's work too closely. By exploring how Dallimore's theological agenda clouded his historical judgment, historians

can better reflect on their own ideological biases—whether theological, denominational, or otherwise—as they strive towards greater objectivity. In this case, one’s agenda should never drive them to excise passages out of direct quotations, or rewrite them in order to preserve a particular reading. Fourth, although Dallimore was not trained as an historian, he put forth a body of work that stood up to scrutiny, by and large, from the academic guild, namely his major study of Whitefield. Thus he can properly be understood as an historian. This concluding chapter, summarizing what has been argued in the whole of this dissertation, analyses this last point by exploring Dallimore’s role as an historian and drawing together the strengths and weaknesses of his corpus. It looks in detail at the nature of the discipline of history and shows why Dallimore can rightly be called an historian. And it lists the areas where his ideological agendas were most apparent and how that shaped his writing.

### **Dallimore and the discipline of history**

The subtitle of this thesis calls Arnold Dallimore a pastor-historian; in its two-fold sense this nomenclature describes his vocation as it played across the span of his life. Dallimore ministered in the rural community of Cottam, Ontario, and retired at the height of his ministry. He was also respected for his biography of Whitefield that had met a level of popular and scholarly success. This second aspect of Dallimore’s vocation forces us to question whether he was an historian, properly speaking. It might be tempting for some to answer this negatively. His education at Toronto Baptist Seminary prepared him for a life of ministry in the church, not an academic in a research university. Dallimore admitted that his church history professor in seminary, W. W. Fliescher, was not equipped to give

him the necessary tools to write history, so he learned the craft by himself. As a result of his efforts he published an important biography on eighteenth-century evangelicalism. How is his historical legacy to be understood?

To help understand the nature of Dallimore as historian, James Banner's recent book *Being a Historian* gives relevant categories to help answer the question. In it he asked and answered the question, What is an historian? Banner's answer can be readily applied to Dallimore.<sup>955</sup> Banner's work helps to see that Dallimore, though not a professional historian, was an historian nonetheless. Banner provocatively opened his book saying, "History is a single discipline practiced in many professions...[h]istorians share the same discipline but not the same profession."<sup>956</sup> This suggests that one might be an historian who curates a museum, or produces documentaries, or, in Dallimore's case, serves primarily as a religious leader.<sup>957</sup> It is not the occupation that determines the discipline of history. The rest of Banner's book is spent delineating a distinction between the "profession" and the "discipline" of history. In the first instance, a professional historian is one who is educated to write history, works for an institution dedicated to the task of publicizing history (a research university or government agency, for instance), publishes with academic presses, and is a member of an historical fraternity. "A profession is an occupation for which roughly uniform education in a body of knowledge

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<sup>955</sup> James M. Banner, Jr., *Being a Historian: An Introduction to the Professional World of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>956</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 1.

<sup>957</sup> The glaring omission of Banner's book is his failure to address religious history, whether that done by professional historians like David Bebbington, George Marsden, or Mark Noll, or those "creative amateurs" like Dallimore who write from within and for a particular religious tradition. The collection of essays in John Fea, Jay Green and Eric Miller, eds., *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian's Vocation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010) is a fine example of the role that religion plays in the history profession.

and protocols of practice...is necessary.”<sup>958</sup> Dallimore was not, in this sense, a professional historian; his main occupation was pastoral ministry. Of course, his seminary education taught him how to properly interpret ancient texts, how to think abstractly, how to apply the past to the present, and how to communicate effectively, which are all relevant to doing history. But the principal tools of his trade were pastoral.

However, Banner also argued that history is a discipline, which he defined as “a domain of knowledge, a capacious province of inquiry...with generally agreed-on, if not firm or impermeable, boundaries.” He wrote, “One joins a discipline but, unlike a profession, does not have to be admitted to it, and in this sense a historian is a historian by command of historical knowledge, not by skill in any particular activity.”<sup>959</sup>

Therefore, “Historians are defined as historians not by the kind or location of their work or by the audiences they address but rather by holding themselves out as people who seek to know what happened in the past and why it did so and then to present that knowledge to others in the formats—whether articles, books, films, radio transmissions, Web sites, or museum exhibits—of their choice.”<sup>960</sup> In this disciplinary sense, Dallimore was clearly an historian. As this thesis has shown, he not only had historical interests, but worked diligently to research, interpret, and publish works of history that have, by and large, been well-received by the popular and scholarly public. While his *oeuvre* has certain aspects that does not withstand scrutiny—most importantly, one thinks of the criticisms we have offered of his Irving biography—Dallimore’s basic historical project is sound, and in many ways he made original contributions to the study of early British and American

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<sup>958</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 4.

<sup>959</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 3.

<sup>960</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 3-4.

evangelicalism. In the words of Banner, Dallimore is “entitled to bear the title of historian.”<sup>961</sup>

It might be appropriate to categorize Dallimore as an “amateur historian,” if by this one follows Banner’s meaning: “Many amateur historians were amateurs only by virtue of their lack of graduate training, not in their historical knowledge or organizational skills.”<sup>962</sup> In D. A. Carson’s words, Dallimore’s only “terminal degree” was the bachelor of theology, his two doctorates were honorary.<sup>963</sup> But his historical knowledge, especially demonstrated in the Whitefield volumes, was near-exhaustive and well-organized.

In Geoffrey Nutall’s review of *George Whitefield*, noted in chapter three, Dallimore was recognized as someone who wrote history that “ye may believe.” He had a particular goal in mind when penning his biographies, to convince the reader that his subject was worth emulating (Whitefield, Spurgeon) or served as a warning against perceived ills (Irving, John Wesley). Banner called this “History with a philosophical, teleological, inspirational, and admonitory bent.”<sup>964</sup> The latter two categories, in relation to what constitutes a “usable past,” apply to Dallimore’s work. While there has been much debate over the last hundred years of historiography on the question as to whether history should be considered an objective science, recent scholars have been emphasizing the need for history that is relevant to current living—we saw this in the brief discussion of “usable past” in this study’s introduction. William Katerberg, in an essay on the historian’s

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<sup>961</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 4.

<sup>962</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 17.

<sup>963</sup> D. A. Carson, “The Scholar as Pastor: Lessons from the Church and the Academy” in Owen Strachan and David Mathis, eds., *The Pastor as Scholar & the Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry: John Piper & D. A. Carson* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 73.

<sup>964</sup> Banner, *Being a Historian*, 10.

vocation, argued “that historians have approached their dilemmas of identity from the wrong standpoint. The central issues [in historiography] are not epistemological but vocational.”<sup>965</sup> Instead of writing history for its “own sake,” Katerberg believed that “historians should redefine their vocation in terms of history being useful for life.” Put bluntly, “The defining goal of history should be the service of life.”<sup>966</sup> While objectivity should not be sacrificed for the sake of making a person or event usable—which at times happened with Dallimore—it is justifiable to write history for contemporary applicable purposes.

Robert Tracy McKenzie said, “[P]art of the calling of the Christian historian is to be an historian *for* Christians, not only to have a voice in the academy but also to speak in, to, and on behalf of the church.”<sup>967</sup> While this is addressed to Christian historians labouring academically, Dallimore’s historical contribution fulfilled this role. He wrote “that ye may believe” to encourage the church and to give her members a sense of identity and purpose, though at times he misread the line between objectivity and neutrality. As Carl Trueman reminded, “objectivity is not neutrality.” Historians cannot shake their personal biases when they interpret history, but this does not mean that objectivity is an impossible standard to reach. The historian can put forth research that is testable by “public criteria” that Trueman said is “[a]t the heart of the historian’s task;”

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<sup>965</sup> William Katerberg, “The ‘Objectivity Question’ and the Historian’s Vocation,” in John Fea, Jay Green and Eric Miller, eds., *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian’s Vocation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 101.

<sup>966</sup> Katerberg, “Objectivity Question,” 102.

<sup>967</sup> Robert Tracy McKenzie, “Don’t Forget the Church: Reflections on the Forgotten Dimension of Our Dual Calling,” in John Fea, Jay Green and Eric Miller, eds., *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian’s Vocation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 281.

they are to publish work that is verifiable and accountable.<sup>968</sup> This Dallimore did, and where he slipped into a greater degree of subjective interpretation reviewers—like Graham Harrison on Whitefield’s conversion—were sure to criticize. But in all of this, and in consideration of his intended audience, his work was appropriately biased towards encouraging churchmen in their own respective callings, whatever they may be.

As an historian, Dallimore demonstrated the importance of church history for the life of the church. Sadly, the church reflects its twenty-first century culture by shunning the past; in this regard, Dallimore’s own church, that was relatively unsupportive of his continued Whitefield project, is an example.<sup>969</sup> Yet Dallimore is proof that much can be used from the past in service of the church. As a pastor-historian he embodied the reasons why Christians should study and use its past.

Dallimore’s quest for a usable past was in large part pursued because he believed that history is telic and infused with meaning. Humans are engrossed in the passage of time as it progresses along a linear trajectory, thus we cannot escape its force. It is impossible to be unaffected by historical processes and to fail to reflect on them is detrimental to self-understanding. This is vital for the church as a community to understand, because biblical history moves from creation to recreation. This forms the basis for a Christian philosophy of history. According to Christian presuppositions, God is active in time, providentially guiding it and at times intervening in it—most

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<sup>968</sup> Trueman, *Histories and Fallacies*, 28. Cf. James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to the Research, Reference Works, and Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 48-52.

<sup>969</sup> For the church in an anti-historical age see, Carl R. Trueman, “Reckoning with the Past in an Anti-Historical Age,” in *The Wages of Spin: Critical Writings on Historical & Contemporary Evangelicalism* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2007), 15-38.

importantly in the incarnation—making Christianity, necessarily, a historical religion. This was Dallimore’s fundamental presupposition for doing history.

Dallimore’s quest for a usable past, though at times over-used, was motivated by a sincere desire to see the evangelicalism grow in its self-understanding for the purpose of strengthening the faith of its adherents. As we saw in the introduction, George Santayana’s oft-quoted observation that “those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it” has become cliché, but as is often the case with a cliché it is also true.<sup>970</sup> Historical knowledge brings with it the means to learn from mistakes. By studying the history of dogma, Christians can learn to avoid teachings that do not pertain to their own faith community. In this sense, Dallimore’s treatment of Irving, however misguided, serves as an example of using the past to guard against perceived error. On the other hand, positive examples are also a means of avoiding error. By observing the wisdom of faithful Christians of the past, a precedent is set for maintaining fidelity to faith commitments today. Dallimore’s two shining examples of such wise and faithful Christians are Whitefield and Spurgeon whom he set forth as models to be imitated. He would agree with the words of the eighteenth-century Baptist theologian Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) who, in a discussion amongst his colleagues about rekindling the church’s religious fervour, pointed to the past as a means of encouragement for the future. In a circular letter written in 1785 Fuller said, “Let us recollect the best periods of the Christian church, and compare them with the present.” To observe the zeal of the primitive Christians who “loved not their lives unto death” will “surely make us loathe

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<sup>970</sup> George Santayana, *The Works of George Santayana: The Life of Reason: Introduction and Reason in Common Sense*, eds., Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011), VII.I: 172.

ourselves for our detestable lukewarmness!” Fuller pointed to the Reformers’ accomplishments in light of great opposition and the Dissenters’ sacrifice for the sake of the church.<sup>971</sup> Such acts of remembrance were to highlight the coldness in the hearts of Fuller’s contemporaries and the warmth of earlier Christians to relight a flame: “O let us remember whence we are fallen, and repent!”<sup>972</sup> Fuller’s encouragement well-captures Dallimore’s purpose for writing history.

This fits with the example laid out in Hebrews 11, the “hall of fame of faith.” Here the author points to a list of characters from “church history”—namely the Hebrew bible—by whom Christians can be encouraged towards faith and obedience. Positive examples like Enoch and Noah are included alongside some more unsavory ones like Samson. Essentially, Christians are called to remember the past to press on for the future. All that has been said of Dallimore’s writing of history finds its ultimate fulfillment in his desire to praise his God. Dallimore, writing a “providentialist” or “supernaturalist” history, believed that he saw clearly the hand of God behind the events that he wrote about. For him, God brought about revival, God preserved the church from error, and for that he deserves to be worshiped as the God of history. Dallimore stands in a line of Christians who sought to know God in history. Michael Haykin quoted the Puritan Richard Baxter (1615-1691) thusly, “The writing of Church-history is the duty of all ages, because God’s works are to be known, as well as His Word... He that proveth

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<sup>971</sup> Andrew Fuller, “Causes of Declension in Religion, and Means of Revival,” in Andrew Gunton Fuller, ed., *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 3:323.

<sup>972</sup> Fuller, “Causes of Declension,” 323.

not...what God hath been doing in the world...doth want much to the completing of his knowledge.”<sup>973</sup>

## Conclusion

While writing this dissertation, I have become acutely aware of the truthfulness of what Thomas Carlyle called “Montesquieu’s Aphorism.” The great *philosophe* is supposed to have said, “Happy the People whose Annals are blank in History-Books!”<sup>974</sup> To be written about is not always pleasant, and some things are better left unsaid. But to truly appreciate a figure from the past—even the immediate past—the historian must be willing to cast a critical eye, no matter how favorably disposed he or she is towards their subject. To honour the legacy of Arnold Dallimore it is appropriate to see him as he really was. He persevered through his struggles as he clung to his sense of call. To value him as an historian, his scholarly abilities must be put in their proper place. He wrote what many believe to be one of the most important evangelical biographies of the twentieth century, and his work as an untrained historian is impressive. Yet not all of his books were to the same standard, for evident reasons supplied by his own life struggles. To see this helps us understand not only the books and their subjects, but also the man who wrote them and the pressures that made him write as he did. It helps us appreciate a

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<sup>973</sup> Richard Baxter, “The Life of Faith” in William Orme, ed., *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter in Twenty-three Volumes* (London: James Duncan, 1830), 12:364, quoted in Michael A. G. Haykin, “‘The Clean Sea Breeze of the Centuries’: A Plea for Reading Church History,” *The Gospel Witness* 83.9 (February 2005), 7-8.

<sup>974</sup> Henry Duff Traill, ed., *The Works of Thomas Carlyle: History of Friedrich II of Prussia, Called Frederick the Great V* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16:196.

man who loved his dual calling as pastor-historian, and used it for the benefit not only of the church at large, but the immediately pressing issues facing his family.

The history of Calvinistic renewal has had ebbs and flows in its five hundred year history. The recent surge of interest in the doctrines of grace has brought with it a corresponding interest in church history. As long as Reformed theology and its history are read in the church, the name of George Whitefield will stand as an example of evangelistically rooted Calvinism, and the name of Arnold Dallimore will remain as a pastor-historian, who carried out an ordinary ministry, and did an extraordinary thing: he gave to the church an enduring sense of identity and purpose that will hopefully continue until the end of history.

## APPENDIX

In November 1937, while ministering in Westport, Ontario, Arnold Dallimore drafted the following poem, “A Preacher’s Sunday Night.” In it, Dallimore expressed his own mental state after a long day ministering that he believed was not particular to himself but the common experience of ministers in general.

### **A Preacher’s Sunday Night**

I’m tired and I’m worn at the close of the day,  
The close of the day, oh my Lord;  
I’ve done but my best in my own wretched way,  
To set forth thy life-giving word.

I’ve tried hard to tell of thy great love to men;  
To warn of the wages of sin;  
And souls that are lost on the broad way of wrong,  
I’ve sought to the narrow to win.

Together we read from the Scripture, oh Lord,  
Together we sang hymns of praise;  
To many this day ‘twas a time of delight,  
To some, the beginning of days.

Alas! Though I’m burdened and weary to-night,  
And comfort my heart as I may,  
In knowing the task that was mine in these hours,  
I seem but a failure to-day.

How feebly I uttered the great truth of God!  
How weakly I told of His love;  
How coldly I warned of the folly of sin,  
Or pointed to mansions above!

Alas! Oh my Saviour, some sinner again,  
May ne'er hear the Gospel's glad sound;  
Oh let such a one, in the day of thy wrath,  
In the safety of Jesus be found.

And others, still loving the pathways of sin,  
Thy Spirit a deaf ear have turned;  
Yet had I but spoken with fervour and love,  
They might not His pleadings have spurned.

I bring thee my Master, the day that is gone,  
With all of its failure and loss;  
Although I have tried hard to serve Thee to-day,  
Its end seemeth little but dross.

Oh Master! kind Master! look down from above,  
On him who would serve thee, look down;  
And show him Thy face, as it scans o'er his day,--  
Thy face with a smile, not a frown.

Grant him sweet rest to his body and mind,  
And grant when he preaches again,  
With fervour and unction, conviction and love,  
He'll tell of the Saviour of men.

Westport, Nov./37.

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