One of the ways in which the strength of the Wesley brothers' partnership proved of fundamental importance to the future of Methodism was in the controversies that plagued the Evangelical Revival virtually from its beginnings. The Wesley brothers engaged in conflict with other evangelical groups as well as the parent Church of England and it was in this struggle that Wesleyan Methodist identity was forged. The brothers' combined strength of character and combative nature proved decisive in elevating the Wesleyan movement to the forefront of the Evangelical Revival.

Engagements and Marriages
Gareth Lloyd

The marriage of Charles Wesley to Sarah Gwynne in April 1749 represented a watershed in the groom's life and ministry. Charles's itinerant preaching was reduced until it ceased altogether in 1756 and this aggravated other tensions that were starting to appear in relations between the Wesley brothers. John and Charles seem to have viewed each other's marital intentions as a threat and this climaxed in Charles's deliberate destruction of his brother's engagement to Grace Murray in October 1749. A decisive personal break between the brothers was only
narrowly avoided, but their old closeness was severely undermined and this alienation started to impact on the Methodist movement.

The Moravian Church in England, 1728–1760
Colin Podmore

The effects of the great Evangelical Revival in eighteenth-century England were felt throughout the world, not least in America. It has long been accepted that the Revival owed much of its initial impetus to the Moravian Church, but previous accounts of the Moravians' role have been inadequate and overly dependent on Wesleyan sources. This book uses original material from German as well as British archives to dispel common misunderstandings about the Moravians, and to reveal that their influence was much greater than has previously been acknowledged. It discusses what motivated people to join the Church, analyses the Moravians' changing relationships with John Wesley and George Whitefield, and shows how Anglican bishops responded to the Moravians' successive ecumenical strategies. Its analysis of the successful campaign to secure state recognition (granted in 1749) sheds light on the inner workings of the Hanoverian parliament. In conclusion, the book explores how acclaim quickly turned to ridicule in a crisis of unpopularity that was to affect the Moravian Church for a generation.

Edwards and Revival
Harry S. Stout

This chapter explores the cultural and intellectual context for Edwards’s revival sermons preached during the “Great Awakening” of the early 1740s, concentrating on the theme of redemption with a special focus on its implications for revival preaching. The centerpiece of this preaching, indeed the apotheosis, is “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” which the chapter explores theologically and rhetorically. The chapter also discusses the rhetorical significance of Edwards’s brief, handwritten, notes, which compelled a more extemporaneous delivery. Finally, it looks
at the clerical opposition of “Old Lights” to Edwards and Revival as the context for Edwards’s theological treatises.

“Shall the Hellish Doctrine Stand?”
Peter J. Thuesen

in Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine
Published in print: 2009 Published Online: September 2009
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the emergence of Arminianism and other challenges to absolute predestination in 18th-century America. Much of the early opposition to the old Puritan synthesis came from Anglican missionaries bent on bringing their wayward brethren back into England’s established church. Colonial figures such as Samuel Johnson of Connecticut derided Calvinist predestination as antithetical to biblical truth. Many Anglicans were motivated by high-church sacramentalism, and this outlook influenced the young John Wesley, the Methodist founder and the most famous Arminian in American history. Wesley came to blows with more Calvinistic revivalists such as George Whitefield over predestination, and the resulting rift persists in evangelicalism to this day. Because the 18th century was also the age of Enlightenment, it bequeathed to American culture an enduring strain of rationalism regarding predestination and the associated doctrines of hell and providence. The chapter shows how these emergent doubts altered popular thinking about divine sovereignty.

The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion
Alan Harding

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: April 2004
Item type: book

The Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion has been one of the neglected strands in the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival. This is surprising, since the Connexion was one of the most significant of the non-Wesleyan groups within the Revival. Its importance lay less in its ministry to the upper classes, than as a grass-roots religious movement. It had its own training college (one of the first such institutions in England specifically directed to the development of ministerial skills) and formed a network of chapels across the country. Like Wesley, Lady Huntingdon started her religious life as a member of the Church of England, and
clergymen played an important part in her Connexion throughout her life. But events led the Connexion to secede from the Established Church and to establish its own ordination and articles of religion. Through its preachers, congregations, and example, the Connexion made a significant contribution to the revival of Dissent in England in the late eighteenth century. This book examines in detail how the Connexion worked: who its preachers were, where their hearers came from, how chapels came to be built, and who provided the money. It examines the relations between the Connexion and other religious groupings: with the Church of England, with Dissent, with other Calvinist evangelicals, and with the Wesleyans. It shows a popular religious movement in operation, and thereby provides an important insight into English religious life at the time.

**Christian Republicanism**

Mark A. Noll

in *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*

Published in print: 2002 Published Online: November 2003


By the early 1800s, the language of republicanism was ubiquitous throughout American Christianity. Prior to 1740 or so, however, traditional Christians mostly opposed republicanism. Revivalists like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards often interjected the language of liberty into their sermons, but they used this rhetoric for mostly spiritual purposes. War with France during the 1750s and the series of disputes with Britain during the 1760s that led to war, however, accelerated the integration of republican political philosophy and Christian thought. At the same time, Americans embraced the concept of “virtue,” an amorphous term that took on a variety of sometimes conflicted meanings, as their way of maintaining a healthy society protected from “slavery” and “tyranny.”

**The Early Methodist Journalists: George Whitefield and John Wesley**

D. Bruce Hindmarsh

in *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England*

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: April 2005

The wide range of autobiographical records of the early Methodist leaders, published and unpublished, constitutes one of the most significant literary traces of the Evangelical Revival. In the course of these personal writings, which were typically set down for purposes other than confessional autobiography, the familiar Puritan–Pietist genre of conversion narrative resurfaced. The most influential figures in the 1730s and 1740s were arguably George Whitefield and John Wesley, but here we encounter the enormous importance of the journal form in the early years of the revival. The conversion narratives of Whitefield and Wesley did not appear in print as stand-alone spiritual autobiographies, but rather as set pieces (such as Wesley’s record of his Aldersgate experience) within the serial publication of their journals. These journals were enormously important for directing the course of the revival and stirring up similar experiences on the part of others.

Inventing George Whitefield
Jessica M. Parr

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
Publisher: University Press of Mississippi
DOI: 10.14325/mississippi/9781628461985.001.0001

In 1770, English missionary George Whitefield died in Newburyport, Massachusetts. His death marked the start of a complex legacy that in many ways rendered Whitefield more powerful and influential in the afterlife than during his considerable career. Whitefield was a religious icon shaped in the complexities of revivalism, the contest over religious toleration, and the conflicting role of Christianity for enslaved people. Pro-slavery Christians saw Christianity as a form of social control for slaves. Evangelical Christianity’s emphasis on “freedom in the eyes of God” also suggested a path to political freedom. The book’s analysis of Whitefield’s fluctuating views on slavery is among the book’s central contributions, as a topic that has not been addressed since the early 1970s, and then only briefly.

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon: Early Life and the Start of the Connexion
Alan Harding

in The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion: A Sect in Action in Eighteenth-Century England

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: April 2004
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/0198263694.003.0003
The future Countess of Huntingdon was born into an aristocratic Leicestershire family in 1707; her marriage to the Earl of Huntingdon in 1728 was a love match that produced seven children. She underwent an evangelical conversion in 1739, and thereafter came into contact with the Moravian Brethren, and leaders of the Revival including the Wesleys and George Whitefield. Gradually she assumed a position of influence within the Revival, as well as using her position to further evangelical religion within fashionable society. Her husband’s death in 1746 left her the care of a young family, but also enabled her to extend her religious activity, for example, by promoting harmony within the Revival in the face of internal divisions, and expanding her links with Anglican Evangelicals. From the early 1760s she began to open her own chapels and to build up a band of clerical helpers to serve at them.

Origins of an Icon

Jessica M. Parr

in Inventing George Whitefield: Race, Revivalism, and the Making of a Religious Icon

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Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses George Whitefield’s early life, his education at Pembroke College, Oxford, and his initial involvement with Charles and John Wesley. It describes Whitefield’s early antagonisms with the hierarchy of the Church of England as an important milestone in his transition to iconic status. He is also situated in the greater debate about religious toleration in an expanding, religiously pluralistic Protestant British Atlantic Empire.

Inventing George Whitefield

Jessica M. Parr

in Inventing George Whitefield: Race, Revivalism, and the Making of a Religious Icon

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
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Item type: chapter
Whitefield began his missionary career believing that he was a reformer in conversation with the Church of England about religious toleration. By the time Whitefield died in September 1770, he was for most unrecognizable as an Anglican minister. The itinerant and expansive nature of his career meant that he left no permanent ties to any locality or denomination. This made him a powerful religious icon that could be “claimed” by a number of causes.

The Moravians' Relations with the Methodists

Colin Podmore

in The Moravian Church in England, 1728-1760

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Item type: chapter

On September 24, 1740, the Elders' Conference at the Moravian headquarters in Marienborn sent August Gottlieb Spangenberg to England, and in December the Moravian General Synod made plans for several colleagues to accompany him. The Moravian Church would now be directly, fully, and permanently involved in English religious life, and by the mid-1740s it would represent a third force, after Whitefield's Association and the Wesleyan Methodists, within the English Evangelical Revival movement. In just two years, John Wesley had moved from being inspired by the Moravians to separation from their English followers, but it was with them, and not yet definitively with the Moravians, that Wesley broke when he withdrew from the Fetter Lane Society. George Whitefield had formally acknowledged the authority of the Moravian-inspired Fetter Lane Society over the Revival in 1739, but having in practice remained independent, he had yet to work out his relationship with the Moravians.

The Short Life of Free Georgia

Noeleen McIlvenna

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
Item type: book

This book tells the foundation story of Georgia, chartered in 1732 to be a charity colony for poor white Europeans. Southern history is most often viewed through the lens of race. But the philanthropist Trustees banned slavery for the first twenty years of settlement, so the political perspective of the poor settlers reflected the rigid hierarchy of social class as English people of the time understood it. The worthy poor were
supposed to know their place and be grateful for the opportunity to work hard and fight for Britain, but they had ideas of their own. And, unfortunately for those who planned to occupy the role of the colonial Georgia gentry, such as the expansionist-minded South Carolina planters and some immigrants with planter aspirations, church services on Savannah Sundays were led in turn by two of the most dangerous men in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic Empire, John Wesley and George Whitefield. These pastors told their congregations that everyone was equal in the eyes of God. But in an unanticipated twist, poor whites' resistance to exploitation combined with the War of Jenkins’ Ear to help pave the way for slavery.

The Prospective Pastor
Jonathan Yeager

in Enlightened Evangelicalism: The Life and Thought of John Erskine
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: May 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199772551.003.0002

This chapter provides an account of Erskine's education and explanation for his desire to become a minister in the Church of Scotland. His father and grandfather studied law, the former serving as Edinburgh University's professor of municipal law. It seemed all but certain that Erskine would follow his father's footsteps and study law before going on to become a barrister. But after witnessing the dramatic revivals that took place in Cambuslang and Kilsyth in 1742, Erskine determined to change his course of study and enroll at the divinity hall with the intent of entering the ministry. He became convinced that the role of a minister would be more fulfilling for him than the vocation of a lawyer.

Jonathan Edwards and the First Great Awakening
Gary Scott Smith

in Heaven in the American Imagination
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: September 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199738953.003.0003

Widely considered America's greatest theologian, Jonathan Edwards, more than any other American, asserted that love dominated and defined heaven—the love among the three members of the Trinity, the love between God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
and individual saints, and the saints' love of one another. His portrait of heaven, like those of George Whitefield and other leaders of the First Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s, focused on the saints' praise of God, intimate relationship with Christ, growth (especially in knowledge), and social harmony. Edwards also emphasized heavenly rewards and argued that to avoid the suffering of hell and enjoy the glories of heaven, people must be born again. As Calvinists, First Great Awakening revivalists believed that God predestined people to salvation, but they also exhorted people to pursue holiness.

Presbyterian Heritage
Paul C. Gutjahr

in Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: May 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199740420.003.0002
Item type: chapter

Chapter Two explores the Presbyterian heritage of the Hodges. The Hodges were linked to George Whitefield’s American revival activity, as well as in the forming of Philadelphia’s Second Presbyterian Church. Benjamin Franklin was even impressed by Whitefield’s oratorical ability. The Hodges were New Side in their Presbyterian affiliations and helped bring Gilbert Tennent to Philadelphia to be their Church’s pastor.

Writing History
Paul C. Gutjahr

in Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy
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Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199740420.003.0030
Item type: chapter

Chapter thirty addresses Hodge in his role as his denomination’s historian. In 1839, he decides to write a definitive history of American Presbyterianism. He completes two volumes, which show that he largely uses history to explain the present. He makes many connections between the New Side colonial Presbyterians and the New School Presbyterians of his own day. Archibald Alexander disagreed with his treatment of the Old Side, saying he was too rough on its activities and its ultimate benefits to American Christianity. Hodge refused to bring his history up to the present day, saying that would be better left for someone else.
This book argues that the high-ranking gentlemen who figure so prominently in most accounts of New York City's evolution from 1664, when the English captured the small Dutch outpost of New Amsterdam, to the eve of American independence in 1776 were far from invincible and that the degree of cultural power they held has been exaggerated. The urban elite experienced challenges to its cultural authority at different times, from different groups, and in a variety of settings. The book illuminates the conflicts that pitted the privileged few against the socially anonymous many who mobilized their modest resources to creatively resist domination. Critics of orthodox religious practice took to heart the message of spiritual rebirth brought to New York City by the famed evangelist George Whitefield and were empowered to make independent religious choices. Wives deserted husbands and took charge of their own futures. Indentured servants complained or simply ran away. Enslaved women and men carved out spaces where they could control their own lives and salvage their dignity. Impoverished individuals, including prostitutes, chose not to bow to the dictates of the elite, even though it meant being cut off from the sources of charity. Among those who confronted the elite were descendants of the early Dutch settlers; by clinging to their native language and traditional faith they preserved a crucial sense of autonomy.

Darkness Falls on the Land of Light
Douglas L. Winiarski

This sweeping history of popular religion in eighteenth-century New England examines the experiences of ordinary men and women living through extraordinary times. Drawing on an unprecedented quantity of letters, diaries, and testimonies, Douglas Winiarski recovers the pervasive and vigorous lay piety of the early eighteenth century. George Whitefield’s preaching tour of 1740 called into question the fundamental assumptions of this thriving religious culture. Incited by Whitefield and fascinated by miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit—visions, bodily fits, and sudden conversions—countless New Englanders broke ranks with family,
neighbors, and ministers who dismissed their religious experiences as delusional enthusiasm. The new converts of the so-called Great Awakening, the progenitors of today’s evangelical movement, bitterly assaulted the Congregational establishment. Conflict transformed inclusive parishes into exclusive networks of combative spiritual seekers. Then as now, evangelicalism emboldened ordinary people to question traditional authorities. Their challenge shattered whole communities.