

Wesley against Whitefield



“This letter, no doubt, will lose me many friends.”
(Whitefield)

Introduction: Galatians 2:11-14

We’ve seen two of three controversial subjects – having left off the historical review of Whitefield’s life with his great circuit of the young America. His stance on Christian unity brought him into disrepute with denominational bigots (especially in the Church of England); his opposition to unconverted ministers brought him into conflict with mere religionists in the Christian pulpits; now his opposition to the Arminianism taught by his friend, John Wesley, concludes this review.

The Background:

1. Wesley set over the three large works of Gloucester, Bristol, and London
2. What leads Wesley to this rift
 - a. His own disposition
 - b. His “success” in emotional upheaval
 - c. His views on casting lots and printing sermon: “Free Grace”

Wesley Takes Ownership of the Three Works

1. One of the lowest deeds of his life
2. Opposed by John Cennick
3. Whitefield arrives in England to a disaffected people – 45-46, vol. 2

Whitefield’s Lost Reply Found

1. How the division had been perceived
2. Whitefield’s point by point answer:
 - a. Means – needless or appointed
 - b. Motivation for holiness – destroyed or established
 - c. Comfort and assurance – undermined or set
 - d. Destiny sealed – for innocents or guilty
 - e. Revelation – unnecessary or necessary
 - f. No respecter of persons – inward or outward
 - g. God’s not willing any to perish – how so
 - h. Reprobation and election – dishonoring or honoring
3. Wesley’s Perfectionism considered

Concluding Matters:

1. Need for great care and wisdom in controversy
2. Beware the use of secondary manners of guidance before clear Scripture
3. Predestination to be treated with care
4. Men breaking with their own confessional standards dangerous
5. Importance of grace and generosity toward opponents