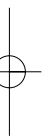


**Farewell  
Parochial  
Sermon at  
Stonehouse**

**George  
Whitefield**



# Farewell Parochial Sermon at Stonehouse

**A SERMON**  
preached at Stonehouse  
on Ascension Day, 10 May 1737

by

**GEORGE WHITEFIELD M.A.**

**Quinta Press**

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and is working on a complete printed edition.

# WHITEFIELD'S FAREWELL PAROCHIAL SERMON

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH

OF

STONEHOUSE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE,

ON ASCENSION DAY, 1737,

BY THE

REV. G. WHITEFIELD, B.A.

UPON HIS RELIQUISHING THE CURE OF THAT PARISH.

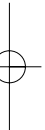
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1842

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## PREFACE

THE Sermon here placed in the hands of the public, was accidentally discovered last summer in the neighbourhood of Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, in the hand-writing of two gentlemen (brothers), who were intimately connected with that parish, and one of them resided there and was much esteemed by Mr Harris, the vicar, by whom, probably, the original manuscript was lent to the transcribers.

It is presumed that this Sermon will be highly interesting (independent of its own merits, which are very considerable,) as connected with ecclesiastical history; being a specimen of the manner in which G. Whitefield discoursed from the pulpit previously to his secession from the Established Church.

The Editor is greatly mistaken, if it does not appear, from a comparison of this Sermon with those afterwards published by this zealous preacher of God's word, that there is a peculiar blessing and unction from the Holy Spirit which accompanies zeal, when fostered beneath the hallowed wing and sober discipline of our truly Apostolical Church; which, on the

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other hand has a tendency to wildness and eccentricities, when separated from the wholesome influence of a system, in which the Apostle's rule is so faithfully observed, 'Let all things be done decently and in order'.

It is a matter of vital importance to consider and weigh the causes of the extensive influence of Methodism generally, but at the same time, of its inability to spread itself in any locality where the genuine spirit and principles of the Gospel have prevailed previously to its introduction.

I desire particularly to direct the attention of the public to the following circumstances, which I am confident will be found to be faithfully true.

I hesitate not to assert that there were no places throughout the Diocese of Gloucester, in which Methodism found fewer converts than in the contiguous parishes of Stonehouse and Eastington; and for this very

reason: the Diocese of Gloucester did not produce two more zealous, faithful, persevering pastors, than the Rev. Sampson Harris, Vicar of Stonehouse, and the Rev. W. Deighton, Rector of Eastington. These two eminent and devoted servants of God, walked in his house as friends. Their labours were, from frequent intercourse, of a harmonised character: they converted many souls to righteousness, and are now shining in the heavenly mansions, as the stars for ever and ever.

May their memory be revered, and their examples universally followed; and then, doubtless, the irregularities of Methodism will cease, schism will no longer prevail, we shall be all of one mind united in bonds of peace, and primitive decency and order will be restored to the Apostolic Church of God established in this kingdom.

September, 1842.



## A SERMON, &c.

ROMANS 8:30.

*'Those whom he justified, them he also glorified.'*

THIS being the day set apart by the Church for the solemn commemoration of our blessed Lord's ascension into heaven, and it being likewise one, if not the chiefest design of his ascending up thither, to go and prepare a place for us; and as our head and representative, thereby to take possession of that glory which he has purchased for, and will actually confer on all true believers—I hope it will no ways be thought improper or impertinent to the meditations this day's glorious festival ought to suggest, if from the words of the text—

I FIRST endeavour to prove that Christ has purchased for, and in due time will actually confer, on all true believers, eternal glory in the world to come.

SECONDLY, I shall endeavour to instance in some particulars, in which that glory and happiness will consist.

THIRDLY and lastly, I shall beg leave to conclude with an

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inference or two naturally arising from what shall have been delivered.

And FIRST, then, I am to endeavour to prove that Christ has purchased for, and actually will confer on all true believers, eternal glory and happiness in the world to come. Those whom he justified, them he also glorified, or will glorify; a common way of speaking in the Holy Scriptures, by putting the time past for the time to come, in order to show the certainty of it.

Observe farther, that it is said, those whom he justified, them he also glorified. And it is evident from innumerable passages of holy writ, that

God justifies none but those whom he first sanctifies, or maketh holy. So that no one unsanctified person, viz. no one that willingly continues in any one known sin, or that does not do his utmost to fit himself for heaven, has any share in that glory which awaits the manifestation only of the true sons of God. This caution, then, being premised, I come now more immediately to prove that Christ has purchased for, and will actually confer on all sincere believers, eternal glory and happiness in the world to come.

(1.) And this will appear, FIRST, from the end and design of Christ's coming into the world, which was to make up those breaches which were made by us, and regain for us those privileges which we lost in Adam. And what were those? Why, pardon, God's Holy Spirit, and eternal life. For thus runs the covenant—"The day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die", (*i.e.* thou and all mankind in thee) shall be subject to spiritual, temporal, and eternal death. On the contrary, if thou continue in thy obedience, and not eat the forbidden fruit, none of these evils shall come upon thee, but thou shalt have a full possession of my Holy Spirit, and never

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see death. It is true, indeed, we find no such promise given to Adam in express words, but, however, it is impliedly made to him. For when God says, the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (that is three kinds of death), therein is implied that so long as he did not eat the forbidden fruit, he should surely live. And accordingly, God gave Adam the tree of life as a sacrament (as the sacrament of the Lord's supper is to Christians), to assure him, that if he kept his part of the covenant, God would certainly perform his. Now, Adam, we know, did not continue in his obedience, and consequently became liable to (and we in him, for he acted as our representative) these three curses, and forfeited the happiness and immortality which was promised only upon condition of an unsinning obedience. It was the design, therefore, of the eternal Son of God, in coming down from heaven (for ever adored be his unmerited love and goodness) to make up these breaches, and regain for us that immortality which we lost in Adam. Accordingly, he shed his precious blood to wash away the guilt of our sins, and by his death purchased for us the gift of God's Holy Spirit to purify and change our natures. And now, unless he procure for us likewise eternal happiness, the two fore-mentioned benefits will be but in vain, nor would our benefit be so extensive as our disease. And then, how would the Scripture be fulfilled,

which tells us, that as in Adam, all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive? For it is plain our bodies are still dead; *i.e.* subject to mortality, because of our first sin. (God has not taken that part of the curse away, though he has drawn the sting out of it, which is as well.) And since we are all here mortal, and Christ came to make us immortal, glorious, and happy, as Adam was, it follows that this immortality—this glory—this happiness is reserved for its in a future state.

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(2.) But this will appear still plainer in the SECOND place, if we consider the manner of Christ's dealings with his true followers here on earth, both as to his providence and grace. Whoever looks round the world, cannot but observe that many are the troubles of the righteous. They who profess to be in reality—are not only almost, but altogether Christians—generally are encompassed with manifold afflictions, temptations, reproaches, and distresses for Christ's sake. And though the people of God may be more free from trouble in one age of the church than another, yet we shall always find that because they are not of the world, therefore the world, *i.e.* wicked and unrighteous men, will hate them, and they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must in some degree or other suffer persecution.

And now, since these things be so, it plainly follows that they must be glorified hereafter. For it is beyond all contradiction that such persons, howsoever despised and scoffed at, are the excellent ones of the earth. They are those with whom the Son of God delights to dwell. They tread in his paths and follow his steps, and cannot but be highly endeared to him. And as it is not to be imagined that he who came down from heaven, to shed his precious blood for them, can delight thus willingly to afflict his own dear children, we must infer that the only reason why he thus suffers them to be in heaviness for a season, and permits men to ride over their heads, is, because he intends to bring them forth into a wealthy place, even to the habitation of that eternal glory which he has reserved for all his faithful ones that follow his steps.

But farther, as it appears, that verily there is an eternal glory laid up for the righteous in a future state, on account of Christ's dealing with his servants in respect to his providence; so it is still more evident from the dispensations of

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his grace. Now that there are many happy souls (though, alas! too, too few in comparison of those of a contrary stamp) that have not only heard,

but experimentally perceived, that there is a Holy Ghost; that have escaped the pollutions which are in the world, through lust, and received the first fruits of the Spirit in its sanctifying gifts and graces; whose hopes are full of immortality, and who long to be dissolved and to be with Christ: I say that there be some such persons (O happy they!), cannot be doubted. And as we dare not suspect on the one hand of these earnest groanings and desires to be clothed with their houses which are from heaven, are merely the effect of a crazy head or enthusiastic brain, because many of them are persons of great parts as well as piety, both which have a direct tendency to preserve them from error; and as, on the other hand, we cannot think it consistent with the love of the holy Jesus to raise these earnest desires in the hearts of his true followers merely to deceive and disappoint them—we must conclude that these graces, these groanings, these desires, are only the foretastes of, and longings for a happiness to come; and that they who thus hunger and thirst after Christ here, shall be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory hereafter.

I might now proceed to prove this point still further by the occasion of this day's solemnity, viz. the Ascension of our blessed Lord, who, as I observed before, entered as our forerunner, and who cannot, in a proper sense, be said to be glorified till his members and followers are glorified with him. I might also prove it by many positive texts of Scripture, which speak of an eternal and exceeding weight of glory and an eternal inheritance, with many other such precious promises, which God the righteous judge will make good to, and confer on all that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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But as time will not permit a farther enlargement on this head, and as what hath been already urged is in some measure, I hope, sufficient, I choose now to pass on to the SECOND thing proposed, viz. to instance, in some particulars, wherein this glory will chiefly consist; but, alas! who am I that I should presume to undertake so great a task! Had I indeed been with Saint Paul, wrapt up into the third heavens, or with Isaiah when he saw Christ's glory and spake of him—had I ascended with Moses on the top of Mount Pisgah and taken a view of the promised land, our spiritual Canaan—I might, perhaps, have given some faint description of the happiness of the Saints in the world to come; though even then we must have confessed that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that are there prepared for those that sincerely love God'. But as none of

these things have befallen me, how can my unhallowed lips attempt to speak of these invisible things of God? However, since it has pleased the Almighty to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel, though the happiness of heaven is shadowed forth therein by such things as we account most valuable on earth, such as—sceptres, a kingdom, an eternal and exceeding weight of glory—yet we may probably conclude that the blessedness of the righteous will chiefly consist in these four things, viz. (1.) *In the glorification of our bodies*, (2.) *The communion of Saints*, (3.) *A converse with angels*, and (4.) *The vision of God*.

(1.) And FIRST, the happiness of the righteous will undoubtedly partly consist in the glorification of their bodies. This is plain, from many passages of Scripture where we are told that the bodies of good men will be sown *i.e.* die natural, but will be raised spiritual bodies. They will be sown in dishonour, but raised in glory. And though we cannot describe particularly that glory our bodies are to be clothed

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with, yet we are assured it will be most exceeding great, even resembling the glory of the holy and exalted Jesus himself; for the Apostle expressly tells us that they are to be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. And what kind of glory it is we may form some faint idea of, from the account given us of our blessed Lord's transfiguration upon the mount, when it is said, 'his raiment became white and glittering, and his face brighter than the sun'. O Death! then where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?

(2.) A SECOND particular which will contribute to the happiness of the righteous, will be the communion of Saints. This, all-pious souls know by experience, is part of their happiness here, and certainly will be no small part of it hereafter. Accordingly, the apostle informs us that all true Christians are come to the spirits of just men made perfect. And Oh! what heart can conceive, what tongue express the joy and ardour, the love and affection with which each of the breasts of the children of God will glow when they arrive safe, and meet, and salute altogether in their heavenly Father's house! For if the company of good Christians is so pleasing here on earth, which can only be carried on by a few in one city, town, or country, and which is frequently and unavoidably interrupted by lawful business necessary journeys, or other employments in the world, I say, if this be so sweet and delightful, which is so short, so transient, so imperfect—O, how ravishing, how transporting must it be when all these interruptions and imperfections will be removed, and all

danger of parting taken away, and they will have nothing to do through a long eternity, but live and love, to love and live for ever.

(3.) An intimate correspondence and *converse with the holy angels* will undoubtedly be another branch of the happiness of the glorified saints in the world to come. It is true, indeed,

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good men are certainly in this life often conversant with these blessed spirits, who are continually either ascending or descending the heavenly ladder to minister unto us, as that infinitely wise and good Being at the top of it shall direct. But as they are pure and perfect spirits, and we are covered with a veil of flesh and blood, it will be impossible for us, whilst on earth, to enjoy their blessed company as we would. But when once this veil is taken off by death, and our souls new born into the world of spirits, how infinitely shall we rejoice to hear them relate how many dangers we have been delivered from by their administration—how many seasonable comforts we have received from their hands under God—how watchfully they stood to embrace our souls at the hour of death, and wafted them safe, with winged speed, through the dismal regions of the powers of darkness to the happy mansions of eternal bliss! Add to this the delightful accounts they must needs give us of God's universal and particular providence through all the different ages of the world—how, by him, kings have reigned and princes have decreed justice—and how a sparrow has not fallen to the ground without his knowledge, and according to the eternal purpose of his will; but what will most employ their tongues, will be the glorious account of our redemption by Jesus Christ. We find how wonderfully delighted they were at our blessed Saviour's birth, when they sang glory be to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men; as likewise, how joyfully they directed the poor shepherds where they might find the infant King, a God incarnate, lying in a manger. And if they took so much pleasure in relating the glad tidings of a Saviour's being born into the world, and the shepherds (as undoubtedly they were) so delighted in having the company of the heavenly host, chanting forth their Hallelujahs—O how willingly, may we suppose, the same heavenly spirits will relate all the particular

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circumstances of the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, to the glorified saints hereafter, and they in their turns be so transported with the pleasing narration, that they will burn with love like theirs, till

at length, unable to contain any longer, they will break out into the same heavenly anthem, and join with them day and night in that glorious doxology and song of praise—'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! worthy art thou, O Lamb that wast slain, to receive all honour, and power, and riches, and glory.'

But what will complete and crown our happiness, and which is the FOURTH and last thing I shall instance wherein the happiness of the blessed will consist, is, the vision of God. This undoubtedly, will be a great, if not the greatest, part of our enjoyment in heaven. 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' says Christ, 'for they shall see God.' And again says the apostle, 'Beloved! it does not yet appear what we shall be, but this we know, that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!' Observe—*we shall see him as he is!* This implies the most intimate knowledge and intuition of the divine attributes and perfections that glorified saints can possibly be capable of. Should I pretend to describe it, I should but diminish the greatness of that happiness the vision of God will afford by the meanness of the description. For, could I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and had all the knowledge a finite creature can possibly attain unto, alas! it would all be infinitely too little to give you any proper idea of that glory—that joy—that unspeakable comfort which the sight of the most high God will communicate to, and fill the souls of, the saints in a future state. If the shining of the sun in the natural world so gladdens our hearts, and makes us think it a pleasant thing to behold the light—O how must the refreshing beams which will be eternally issuing and streaming forth from Almighty God, who is the source and

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fountain of all light, and who is brighter than ten thousand suns, gladden, transport, and comfort the spirits of just men made perfect in a future state. O, it will be so great, that no heart can conceive, no tongue express, the ten thousandth part of it.

And now we are upon the mount, it is good, methinks, for us to be here; but it is time for me, as was proposed in the THIRD and last place, to draw an inference or two from what has been delivered.

And FIRST then, if Christ has purchased for, and will actually confer on all true believers eternal glory, then, it appears that man is no loser by the fall. For, since instead of an earthly paradise, which was the best which Adam could enjoy in a state of innocency, he has purchased for us an eternal inheritance among all them that are sanctified, instead of

murmuring at God's imputing Adam's sin to us, how can we avoid crying out with the Psalmist, 'Lord! what is man that thou art so mindful of him! or the son of man, that thou so visitest him!' Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, and when he had by sin sunk himself beneath the beasts that perish, thou not only sentest thy dear Son Jesus Christ to die for his sins, but intendest, in the world to come, to crown him with eternal glory and honour.

But, SECONDLY if there is an eternal glory laid up for God's children in the world to come, this is a very good reason why they should cheerfully and contentedly undergo the troubles they must meet with in their journey thither; knowing that these light afflictions of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them, and that these light misfortunes which are but for a moment, shall work out for them a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

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But, THIRDLY, if there is an everlasting glory and happiness laid up for the righteous in a future state, and that is to consist partly in the glorification of our bodies, then this is a very good reason why we should all study by an abstemious use of (and sometimes, if health will permit, by a total abstinence from) God's good creatures, to keep our bodies in soberness, temperance, and chastity. For unless our bodies are pure and holy, the blessed Spirit of God will never choose them for his habitation to reside in. And we may assure ourselves, unless the Spirit which raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in us here, neither will our mortal bodies be quickened by the same spirit to reign with Jesus hereafter.

FOURTHLY and lastly, if we are to be glorified hereafter, and that glory is to consist, not only in the spiritualising of our bodies, but in *communion with Saints, a converse with Angels*, and more particularly in the *vision of God*; then this is a very strong argument why we should all labour by frequent acts of self-denial and mortification, to prepare and qualify our souls for such a delightful, such a blissful entertainment. For as I have often told you, and now tell you again weeping, unless we are changed in our natures, unless our corruptions are mortified and our souls renewed by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost, we never can be made meet to partake of this inheritance with the saints in light. It is therefore very observable that the Apostle Saint Paul, after he had been acquainting the Colossians that when Christ, who was their life, should appear, they also should appear with him in glory, immediately adds, as a natural inference drawn from the doctrine, 'Mortify, therefore, your members,



which are upon the earth.' And Saint John tells us, that he that hath this hope (*i.e.* whosoever hath a well-grounded hope of seeing God with comfort, purifies himself even as he is pure); *i.e.* labours day by day, by struggling

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with his corruptions, and a constant use of all the means of grace, to get such habits of purity and holiness as may render him like and conformable to the God he hopes to behold. For without this purity no man living can see the Lord. Let me, therefore, to sum up what has been said, in a word or two of exhortation, beseech you in the name, and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, rose again for our justification, and as on this day ascended up on high to lead captivity captive, and as our fore-runner, is gone to prepare a place in his heavenly-Father's kingdom for us, let me exhort you, if there be any consolation in Christ—if there be any fellowship of the Spirit—if there be any desire that we should all appear to the mutual comfort and satisfaction of each other at the judgment seat of Christ, that you would seriously lay to heart what has been delivered; and since there is an eternal glory laid up for you, let not any worldly pleasure—let not any worldly profit divert you from the constant and eager pursuit after, and preparation for it. And, indeed, I cannot choose but be more than ordinarily pressing upon you at this season, because, in all probability, henceforth, ye all, to whom I am now preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Therefore, brethren, take heed unto yourselves, and remember the words which have been spoken unto you, knowing that you are to give an account thereof at the terrible day of judgment. As for my own conduct, though sadly blameable in many respects, yet you yourselves know, ever since the first day I came amongst you, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, and how, to the best of my knowledge, I have kept back nothing that was profitable to have shown, and taught you, not only publicly, but from house to house, witnessing both to young and old, high and low, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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And now, behold, I go, I trust, under the direction of the Spirit of God, from you, and know not what shall befall me, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every place, that troubles, labours, and afflictions abide me; but none of these things, I hope, by the assistance of divine

grace, will any way move me, neither do I desire to count my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. May he, who as on this day ascended into heaven, in order to send down the Holy Ghost on all his followers, send also his blessed Comforter among you to comfort your hearts and enlighten your understanding, to know, and incline your wills to put in practice whatsoever directions have or shall be given to you by your worthy pastor, who will now return among you, and the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; so that we may all, though separate for a season, appear to the natural comfort and satisfaction of each other at the dreadful tribunal of Jesus Christ, and have an abundant entrance administered to us into the glory which has been the subject of the present discourse; and as we believed that God's only Son Jesus Christ ascended into the heavens, so we shall in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him, after this painful life is ended, continually dwell through the same Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one eternal God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, and glory, power, and praise, by angels and men, from this time forth for evermore. Amen.

[This Sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr Whitefield, Thursday being Ascension Day, at Stonehouse, his Farewell Sermon, May 10th, 1737,

Transcribed by R. and B. C.]

G. Daniell, Printer, Uppingham.

