any information that would be valuable to me at this point. Please let me know of the possibilities of my entering in the fall term of 1951.

Thank you for your help. An immediate reply would be appreciated.

Tlc. MLKP-MBU: Box 116, folder 49.

Crozer Theological Seminary
Placement Committee:
Confidential Evaluation of
Martin Luther King, Jr., by George W. Davis

15 November 1950
Chester, Pa.

The Placement Committee, headed by Sankey L. Blanton, asked for Davis’s “estimate of [King’s] general and special abilities and character, together with any added remarks you deem helpful to the Placement Committee.”

1. Exceptional intellectual ability—discriminating mind.
2. Very personable.
4. A man of high character.
5. Should make an excellent minister or teacher. He has the mind for the latter.

AFmS. CRO-NRcr.

1. Morton Scott Enslin, Raymond J. Bean, and Charles E. Batten also prepared evaluations for the placement committee; see pp. 354, 392, and 406–407 in this volume, respectively.

“An Appraisal of the Great Awakening”

[17 November 1950]
[Chester, Pa.]

King wrote this essay for American Christianity (Colonial Period) taught by Raymond J. Bean at Crozer Theological Seminary. Bean lectured on the development of Christianity in the United States from the arrival of the Spanish...

1. Raymond Joseph Bean (1917–1982) received a B.A. from the University of New Hampshire in 1941, a B.D. from Andover-Newton Theological School in 1944, and a Th.D. from Boston in 1949. He replaced Reuben Elmore Ernest Harkness as Crozer’s professor of church history during King’s last year at the seminary. Bean remained at Crozer until 1959, when he became minister of the First Baptist Church in East Orange, New Jersey. In 1966, he became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Manchester, New Hampshire.
missionaries in the mid-sixteenth century through the origins of religious liberalism in the early nineteenth century. King was given three options for his term paper topic: the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in the colonies, the relationship between Baptists and the rise of democracy in America, and the Great Awakening in colonial America. His paper on the Great Awakening contains a detailed description of the lives of the ministers who led the movement and the various revivals that occurred between 1720 and 1775. King provides little analysis of either the social and political origins or the consequences of the Great Awakening and no discussion of its role in the development of African-American Christianity. He places great emphasis on the deep religious emotion involved in the revivals and the power of their evangelical preaching. Bean gave King an A for both the paper and the course.

The great spiritual revival of religion in the eighteenth century is usually termed the Great Awakening of 1740, because its chief intensity, in this country, culminated about that time. However it would be a mistake to confine this momentous movement to that year. It commenced more than a decade before that date and continued with power more than a decade after it. It would be well nigh impossible to set forth every single cause of this great religious revival, since social phenomena are usually tied up with a complexity of causes. But some of the causes are quite apparent. Probably the first factor that lead to colonial revivalism was the failure of organized religion to reach the masses. For years organized religion in the American colonies had been a matter of the few. During the early colonial period there were undoubtedly more unchurched people in America, in proportion to the population, than was to be found in any other country in Christendom.* Even in State Churches, as in New England and the Southern colonies, only a comparatively small proportion of the total population were members of the church. It was this situation which necessitated the development of new techniques to win people to the church, and this new method was revivalism. The Great Awakening was the first serious attempt to bring religion to the masses in the American Colonies.

The gradual decline of emotional fervor was also a factor which led to the Great Awakening. Religion had become unemotional, with a type of preaching un conducive to revivals and conversion. It was this situation which led to the necessity for the Half-Way Covenant.²

* See Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 5.

² Half-Way Covenant: adopted at the Synod of 1662 in Massachusetts, the covenant stated that children whose parents had been baptised into the Congregational church but not yet had
More and more individuals came to feel that there were certain “means” which might be used in putting the soul in a position to receive the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God. Reliance on these “means” rather than the miraculous power of God led to a cold and unemotional religion.*3 No wonder Jonathan Edwards came on the scene emphasizing justification by faith and the sovereignty of God. From the moment of his landing in America Theodore Frelinghuysen had noticed this lack of emotional fervor in religion, and he spent most of his time preaching against the formality and dead orthodoxy that had permeated the Dutch churches in America. Such was the general religious situation when the new and highly emotional reaction set in which we know as the Great Awakening.

A third factor which led to colonial revivalism was the awareness on the part of religious leaders of a breakdown in moral standards. During the latter years of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth century New England ministers on every hand were raising their voices against the immoral tendencies then existing. In 1688 William Stoughton stood before the Massachusetts legislature and said, “O what a sad metamorphosis hath of later years passed upon us in these churches and plantations! Alas! How is New England in danger to be buried in its own ruins.” Increase Mather observed ten years later that “clear, sound conversions are not frequent. Many of the rising generation are profane Drunkards, Swearers, Licentious and Scoffers at the power of Godliness.”

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the conversional experience necessary to become full members—that is, “visible saints”—could be baptised by virtue of their parents’ “half-way” status. The covenant engendered great theological debate. While adoption of the covenant undermined the “purity” of the community of visible saints, it also increased the size of congregations. The covenant also allowed church fathers to continue to exert ecclesiastical control over the majority of the Puritan community.

3. William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), p. 65: “Thus there came to be more and more reliance upon the use of ‘means’ and less and less upon the miraculous power of God, which led to a cold and unemotional religion.”

4. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Scribner, 1942), pp. 272–273: “A third factor which helped set the stage for colonial revivalism was the growing awareness on the part of the religious leaders of the decline of religion throughout the colonies. The sermons of the New England ministers during the latter years of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth centuries are full of gloomy forebodings as to the future because of the low state of religion and public morals. ‘O what a sad metamorphosis hath of later years passed upon us in these churches and plantations! Alas! How is New England in danger to be buried in its own ruins,’ is the plaint of William Stoughton before the Massachusetts Legislature in 1668. Ten years later Increase

* Ibid, p. 65
A survey of the subjects of sermons preached at this period also reveals the low state of religious life at that time. In 1700 Samuel Willard preached on "The Perils of the Times Displayed." In 1711 Stephen Bingham preached from the theme, "The Unreasonableness and Danger of a People's Renouncing Their Subjection to God." In 1730 William Russell’s theme was, "The Decay of Love to God in Churches, Offensive and Dangerous." These and many other subjects could be cited as examples of the uniform denunciation on the part of ministers of the religious conditions of their times. The times were ripe for a new emphasis in religion.

The Revival in the Middle Colonies

Colonial Revivalism began in the Middle Colonies under the dynamic preaching of Theodore J. Frelinghuysen. He may properly be called the first outstanding revivalist. Frelinghuysen came to America in 1720 at the call of three congregations which had been formed among the Dutch settlers in central New Jersey. Religiously he found the people cold and unemotional with little desire beyond outward formalism. Being educated under pietistic influences, he naturally revolted against this prevalent trend. His first sermon was a call to an inner religion in contrast to conformity to outward religious duties. This passionate preaching soon brought a cleavage among Frelinghuysen’s parishioners. On the one hand there were the well-to-do whose only desire was to preserve the Dutch Church as a symbol of their Dutch nationality. On the other hand there were the poorer people and the younger generation who were quite in accord with the pietistic teachings of Frelinghuysen.

The conflict between these two parties became so

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5. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 273: "A random survey of the subjects of the election sermons preached at this period show that almost all are of a piece in this respect—they were uniformly denunciatory of the religious conditions of their times. In 1700 Samuel Willard preached on 'The Perils of the Times Displayed'; in 1711 Stephen Buckingham’s theme was 'The Unreasonableness and Danger of a People's Renouncing Their Subjection to God'; William Russell’s subject in 1730 was 'The Decay of Love to God in Churches, Offensive and Dangerous.'"

6. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 273: "Times were ripe for some new emphasis in religion as well as a new type of religious leadership to meet the peculiar situation which the American colonies represented."
intensified that there were even reverberations in Holland. The group opposing Frelinghuysen soon took their complaints to Domine Boel, one of the Dutch collegiate ministers of New York, who labeled Frelinghuysen a heretic. But this did not at all silence the young domine. He continued to preach and even publish sermons defending his views. Converts continued to stream in, and finally Frelinghuysen was able to reach many of his former opposers. The height of this revival came in 1726 when the ingathering of new converts was particularly large. Frelinghuysen eventually came to the point of gaining the support of the majority of Dutch ministers, although the division thus created in the Dutch Church was not healed until toward the end of the colonial period.

The Frelinghuysen revival among the Dutch in central New Jersey was highly significant in preparing the way for the next phase of the Middle Colony revival, that among the Scotch-Irish. The most influential figures in this phase of the revival were the graduates of William Tennent's "Log College" at Neshaminy in Pennsylvania.

The Tennent family consisted of the father, William, and four sons, Gilbert, John, William, and Charles, all five able ministers of the gospel. The senior Tennent, although a powerful preacher, received his chief fame as an educator of young men for the Presbyterian ministry. His school was established primarily for the education of his own sons, but later other young men were admitted. It was not long before this school was derisively called "Log College" by Tennent's opponents, and as such it has passed into history. The classical training obtained at this institution was by no means of light quality. This fact is validated by the scholarly attainments of many of these men; but the chief distinction of these men was their evangelical zeal. Gradually Log College graduates were spreading over central Jersey, and they were preaching a militant revivalism which was sweeping the whole region.7

Gilbert Tennent, who was educated for the ministry by his father, was destined to be the heart and

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7. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 276: "Gradually a group of Log College men came to be settled over churches in central New Jersey, and under their preaching developed a militant revivalism which swept the whole region."
center of the revival movement among the Presbyterians. He was the most distinguished member of the noted Tennent family, and by all standards of measurement an able preacher. When he was called to the Presbyterian church at New Brunswick Domine Frelinghuysen was at the height of his revival, and the Dutch minister gave him a hearty welcome and encouraged his members to do the same.

The Scotch-Irish revival mounted high throughout the seventeen-thirties with new converts coming in on every hand. In 1738 the New Brunswick Presbytery was formed, made up of five evangelical ministers, three of whom were Log College men. The reason why these revivalists desired to be formed in a separate presbytery is not far to seek. It is to be noted that opposition to the revival began to manifest itself among the more conservative Presbyterian ministers who had received their training in Scottish universities. These men set out to block the progress of the revivalists by passing certain laws in the Synod requiring all candidates for ordination to present diplomas either from New England or European colleges. This law was obviously aimed at the revivalists, most of whom were Log College graduates. So it can now be seen that a separate presbytery was formed by the Log College men of their own kind. John Rowland, a recent Log College graduate, was immediately licensed by the New Brunswick Presbytery, a challenge aimed at the conservatives. Thus the Presbyterian ministers in New Jersey were soon divided into two parties, viz., “Old Side” and “New Side.”

Such was the general situation among the Presbyterians in the middle colonies when George White-

8. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 276: “Throughout the seventeen-thirties the Scotch-Irish revival mounted higher and higher, and new congregations were formed as converts increased and new communities were reached. In 1738 the New Brunswick Presbytery was erected, made up of five evangelical ministers, three of whom were Log College men. The principal reason why the revivalists desired to be formed into a separate presbytery was that they might license and ordain men of their own kind. Meanwhile opposition to the revival began to manifest itself among the older ministers who had received their training in the Scottish universities. These men now sought to control the situation by the enactment of laws in the Synod requiring all candidates for ordination to present diplomas either from New England or European colleges. This enactment was obviously aimed at the revivalists. But at the very time this was happening, John Rowland, a recent Log College graduate, was licensed by the New Brunswick Presbytery, a challenge aimed at the conservatives.”

339
field appeared on the American scene. Landing at Lewes, Delaware, in August 1739, Whitefield immediately began his first American evangelistic tour. One characteristic which he had on his arrival and which he retained throughout his life was a great catholic spirit. On his voyage to America he even lent his cabin to a Quaker preacher, who held meetings there. Also Whitefield was quite tolerant toward the Baptists, though he himself held the Episcopal theory of ordination and of the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Lord’s Supper. In England he freely collected money for the Lutherans of Georgia and enjoyed fellowship with the Moravians, though they were not in full accord with his Calvinism.

On one occasion, preaching from the balcony of the courthouse in Philadelphia, it is said that Whitefield cried out: "Father Abraham, whom have you in Heaven? Any Episcopalians? ‘No.’ Any Presbyterians? ‘No.’ ‘Have you any Independents or Seceders?’ ‘No.’ ‘Have you any Methodists? ‘No!’ ‘no!’ ‘Whom have you there?’ ‘We don’t know these names here. All who are here are Christians—believers in Christ—men who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.’ ‘Oh, is this the case? Then—God help us, God help us all, to forget party names, and to become Christians in deed, and in truth.’"

The preaching ability of this moving spirit of the Great Awakening cannot be exaggerated. His reputation in this area had been established even before his appearance on the American shores. One of the colonial newspapers tells of the great concourse of people that filled the church of St. Mary Magdalene, London, long before the time of service and of sev-

9. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 276: “Such was the situation in central New Jersey when George Whitefield appeared on the American religious scene.”
11. Charles Hartshorn Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1920), p. 45: “On his voyage to America in 1739 he even lent his cabin to a Quaker preacher, who held meetings there.”
12. Maxson, Great Awakening, p. 45: “... with Baptists, though he himself held the Episcopal theory of ordination and of the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Lord’s Supper. In England he had collected money for the Lutherans of Georgia and enjoyed fellowship with the Moravians, but his Calvinism was a barrier to the fullest intercourse with them.”
eral hundred persons in the street who in vain endeavored to force themselves into the church and past the constables stationed at the door to preserve the peace. Such was the mad desire to see and hear the eloquent youth who had volunteered to go to Georgia as a missionary. * In speaking of the powerful delivery of Whitefield Tracy says, "Probably, in simply delivery, no man since Demosthenes, has ever surpassed Whitefield as a public orator." †

Whitefield arrived in Pennsylvania in the winter months of 1739. This was his first visit to the Northern Colonies. Great multitudes flocked to hear him. No building being sufficiently large to accommodate the people, he frequently preached from the gallery of the court house on Market Street. It was said that "his voice was distinctly heard on the Jersey shore, and so distinct was his speech that every word was understood on board of a shallop at Market Street wharf, a distance of upwards of four hundred feet from the court house. All the intermediate space was crowded with his hearers." ‡ During his visit at Philadelphia he had intercourse with members of the Society of Friends, and was treated very kindly by many of them. He speaks of them as honest, open-hearted, and true. § The Presbyterian and Baptist ministers came to his lodgings to tell of their pleasure in hearing "Christ preached in the Church."

The most cherished intercourse that young Whitefield had on his visit to Philadelphia was that with the old gray-headed William Tennent, of Neshaming. Whitefield says in his journal that Tennent was a great friend of the Erskines, and just as they were hated by the judicatories of the Church of Scotland, and as his Methodist associates were despised by their brethren of the Church of England, so too were Tennent and his sons treated by the majority of the synod. But just as surely as Elijah overcame the prophets of Baal, so would the few evangelicals overcome their opposers, thought Whitefield. || The aged founder of the Log College had made the journey of twenty miles from Neshaming to hear this great spiritual leader, and the

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* See Maxon, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, p. 42.
‡ Quoted from F. G. Beardsley, A History of American Revivals, p. 96.
§ Whitefield, Journal, No. 5, p. 47.
|| Ibid, p. 31.

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14. Maxson, Great Awakening, pp. 41–42: "The Virginia Gazette tells of the great concourse of people that filled the church of St. Mary Magdalene, London, long before the time of service, and of several hundred persons in the street who in vain endeavored to force themselves into the church and past the constables stationed at the door to preserve the peace. Such was the mad desire to see and hear the eloquent youth who had volunteered to go to Georgia as a missionary."
result was an alliance between Whitefield and the New Brunswick Presbyterians.

After nine days at Philadelphia, Whitefield journeyed toward New York, preaching at Burlington, and at New Brunswick, the home of Gilbert Tennent. In New York Whitefield preached in the Presbyterian church, as well as in the fields where great throngs assembled. While in New York Whitefield had the opportunity of listening to a sermon preached by Gilbert Tennent in the Presbyterian church. Whitefield left convinced that he had never before heard such a searching discourse.* So deeply was he moved by the truth presented by his new friend that his own method of preaching was sensibly changed by his intercourse with the Tennents.

Journeying back to Philadelphia Whitefield accepted the previously given invitation of Jonathan Dickinson, Presbyterian pastor at Elizabethtown. In his sermon Whitefield preached against both ministers and people who contented themselves with a bare, speculative knowledge of the doctrines of grace, “never experiencing the power of them in their hearts.”†

Coming again to New Brunswick the evangelist met several of the leaders of the evangelical movement in the Middle colonies. Among them was Domine Frelighuysen, whom Whitefield called, the “beginner of the great work in these parts.”‡ Another was John Cross, Presbyterian pastor of Basking Ridge. Still another was James Campbell, of Newtown, Pennsylvania. These men were greatly moved by the evangelical zeal of Whitefield.

Finally Whitefield reached Philadelphia after triumphs in three provinces. The enthusiasm of the people mounted higher and higher. It is estimated that his farewell congregation at Philadelphia numbered ten thousand.§ "After five stirring days he left Philadelphia, accompanied by one hundred and fifty horsemen, stopping and preaching at various points until he reached White Clay Creek, the home of Charles Tennent.”‖

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‡ Ibid., p. 41.
§ Maxon, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, p. 52.
‖ Ibid., p. 52.

15. Maxson, Great Awakening, p. 52: “After these triumphs in three provinces Whitefield returned to Philadelphia. The enthusiasm of the people mounted higher and higher. It was estimated that his congregation at Germantown numbered five thousand people, and that his farewell sermon at Philadelphia had ten thousand hearers.”
The year 1740 marks the high tide of the revival in the middle colonies. It was in this year that Gilbert Tennent preached his famous sermon on “Danger of an Unconverted Ministry.” It was a terrible arraignment of men who enter the ministry as a trade, with no dynamic religious experience. Unconverted themselves, they were unconcerned, though many years passed without a conversion in their congregations.* Whitefield's preaching had touched all classes of people, including the deistic Franklin who became a life long admirer of the evangelist. The revival became exceedingly popular with the common people. But from the beginning the revival had aroused criticism, and unfortunately the revivalists were partly responsible for it because of their tendency to be censorious of those who did not agree with them.

Opposition to the revival among the Presbyterians came to a head at the meeting of the synod in 1740, when the evangelicals were excluded from membership in the synod by the conservatives. The evangelicals attempted to undo the action taken in 1741, but when this failed they formed, in 1745, the New York Synod at Elizabethtown, New Jersey. From this year until 1758 the Presbyterians in the colonies were divided into two distinct bodies. The evangelical or New Side party grew with rapid proportions, while the conservative or Old Side party made very little progress. At the time of the separation the Old Side numbered twenty-five ministers, while the New Side numbered twenty-two. In 1758 when the schism was healed the Old Side had decreased to but twenty-two, while the New Side had grown by leaps and bounds numbering seventy-two.† "These years of separation mark the unmistakable triumph of the revival party within the Presbyterian Church."‡

The great revival in the middle colonies was quite influential in the rise of many educational institutions. Many graduates of William Tennent's Log College went out and established log colleges, or private schools, modeled after that of their Alma Mater. One such school founded on the model of the Log College was that established by Samuel Blair at Fogg's Manor.

* Gilbert Tennent, The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry.
† Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 143.
‡ Ibid., p. 143.

16. Sweet, Story of Religion, p. 143: “In 1758 at the time of the reunion the Old Side had decreased and numbered but twenty-two, while the New Side had grown by leaps and bounds and numbered seventy-two.”
in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Another such school was that established at Nottingham, Pennsylvania, by Samuel Finley. Of greater importance than both of these was the establishment by the New York Synod of the College of New Jersey. This college was established in 1746 with Jonathan Dickinson as its first president. As the years passed by this institution became stronger and stronger. As Sweet succinctly states, "The College of New Jersey, as Princeton was called in its early years, admirably served the purpose of its founding and poured a stream of zealous young men into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church."*

The founding of the University of Pennsylvania came indirectly out of the Great Awakening. When Whitefield first came to Philadelphia he was permitted to preach in the Established Church of the city, but on his later visits this was denied him, and it became necessary for him to preach on the courthouse steps. Finally Whitefield's friends conceived the idea of erecting a building to accommodate the great crowds who wished to hear him.† Benjamin Franklin, a great admirer of Whitefield, describes the erection of the building thus: "Sufficient sums were soon received to procure the ground and erect the building, which was a hundred feet long, and seventy broad. Both house and ground were vested in trustees," of whom Franklin was one, "expressly for the use of any preacher of any religious persuasion, who might desire to say something to the people of Philadelphia."† It was here that Whitefield preached when he visited the city, and it was here that the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, of which Gilbert Tennent was pastor, worshiped for nine years. In 1753, largely through the efforts of Franklin, the building was chartered as the "College Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia," which finally (1791) became the University of Pennsylvania.‡

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† Ibid., p. 146.
‡ Ibid., p. 146.

17. Sweet, *Story of Religion*, p. 145: "The founding of the University of Pennsylvania came indirectly out of the Great Awakening. . . . At first [Whitefield] was permitted to preach in the Established Church in that city, but on his later visits this was denied him, and it became necessary for him to preach in the fields or from the courthouse steps. Finally Whitefield's Philadelphia friends conceived the idea of erecting a building to accommodate the great crowds who wished to hear him."

18. Sweet, *Story of Religion*, p. 146: "In 1751, largely through the efforts of Franklin, the building was used for an academy, and two years later it was chartered as the 'College, Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia,' which finally (1791) grew into the University of Pennsylvania."
in one of the quadrangles of that great university a life-size statue of George Whitefield.

The Great Awakening In New England

At the center of the Great New England Awakening stands Jonathan Edwards, the minister of the church at Northampton. Edwards was called to the church at Northampton as a young man, fresh from graduate study and a tutorship at Yale, there he became the colleague and ultimately the successor of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. Northampton was a prosperous, intelligent and growing community of some two hundred families. The church was famed in New England for its long history of spiritual vigor. The church and the community at this time, however, was going through a state of religious and spiritual decline. Because of this it became Edward’s purpose to foster a warmer and deeper piety, and to redeem the community from its moral laxity. With a tremendous earnestness combined with “an almost oriental fertility of imagination, and intellectual acumen,” Edwards set out to do this job, and at the end of the winter of 1734–1735 “there was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world.”* Beginning with a single young woman prominent among the “social company keepers” of the town, it overspread the community, until, when springtime came, this little village of two hundred families sheltered “three hundred souls savingly brought home to Christ.”† From Northampton this movement spread like wild fire in all directions, to South Hadley, Suffield, Sunderland, Deerfield, Hatfield, West Springfield, Long-meadow, Enfield, Springfield and Hadley.§

From the beginning Edwards preached sermons on justification by faith, the justice of God in the damnation of sinners, and the excellency of Christ. In these sermons the doctrine of the sovereignty of God was strongly emphasized. Through Adam’s fall man had lost the divine image and was therefore unable to make any move toward God; only God could make the move. Man has the rational power to turn to God, but he lacks the moral power. God is under no obligation to save anyone. However special grace is communicated to such as he has chosen to salvation; all others are left to die in their sins. Satisfaction must be

† Op.-cit.; {Ibid.,} pp. 18, 28.
‡ Edwards, “Thoughts on Revivals,” p. 148.
made for the sins of those who are foreordained to salvation. Such satisfaction was made in the vicarious sacrifice on the cross by Jesus Christ. Such in brief were the elements of Edward's theology. The influence of such doctrines upon the minds of those who had contented themselves with a barren morality can better be imagined than described.

Edwards' method of arousing the sinner was quite different from that of most revivalists. He was never an extemporaneous preacher. He always took his entire manuscript into the pulpit, and his eye never seemed to rest upon his audience, but flashed continually from his manuscript to the opposite wall. However with these strange personal characteristics there was an extraordinary power of fascination in him. In speaking of the amazing power of Edwards Davenport says, "By dint of prodigious intellectual strength, by the wonderfully vivid imaging forth of premises which seem absurd to us but were as fundamental to his auditors as their own being, by the masterly marshalling of terrible argument, he wrought out an appeal to the fears of his hearers which stirred them to the very depths of their souls. They wept, they turned pale, they cried aloud. Some fainted, some fell into convulsions, some suffered thereafter from impaired health and some lost their reason."*

Chapell has this to say of Edwards' sermons: "Under the spell of those powerful sermons time and place were all swallowed up in the terrible realities of the eternal world. Once when he preached on the judgment some of his auditors really expected to see the Lord coming in the clouds as soon as the sermon closed. And when he preached at Enfield his famous sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," from the graphic text, "Their feet shall slide in due time," such was the influence upon the congregation, which had assembled in a careless mood, that some of them actually caught hold of the benches to save themselves from slipping into hell."† It was this powerful preaching which was responsible for more than three hundred professed conversions in the first year of the revival in Northampton. About May 1735 the excitement began to die down, probably because the "physical power to endure excitement was exhausted." But in 1740 the revival reappeared, not only in the Northampton vicinity, but in almost every church throughout New England.

Whitefield arrived on the shores of New England in this heated year, 1740. He was accepted with a deal

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* Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, p. 108.
† Chapell, The Great Awakening, p. 56.
of enthusiasm. Newport and Boston gave him an immense hearing. The students at Harvard heard him gladly "and under the spell of his matchless oratory men wept, women fainted and hundreds professed conversion." Leaving Boston in October, Whitefield journeyed toward Northampton, and there he met Jonathon Edwards. Edwards was delighted to have him visit Northampton, and himself sat in his own pulpit weeping like a child, as that matchless preacher swayed with his burning pathos the numerous auditors.

Gilbert Tennent also came up from New Jersey and preached with great emotional fervor throughout southern Massachusetts and Connecticut. Later came James Davenport of Long Island, who "more than any other man... embodied in himself and promoted in others, all the unsafe extravagances into which the revival was running," and who declared "that most of the ministers of the town of Boston and of the country are unconverted, and are leading their people blindfold to hell."20

The New England revival ended with great success in numerical terms. During the years from 1740 to 1742 there were between 25,000 to 50,000 out of a total population of 300,000 added to the church.† Testimonies of moral changes were heard throughout the colonies and there is no doubt but that the whole moral and religious life of New England was raised to a higher plane.21

† Ibid, p. 133.

The Revival In
The Southern Colonies

In the south the revival did not commence until 1743, and in Virginia the work was carried on prin-

19. Sweet, Story of Religion, p. 132: "Everywhere he was received with enthusiasm. Newport and Boston gave him an immense hearing. The students at Harvard heard him and under the spell of his matchless oratory men wept, women fainted and hundreds professed conversion."

20. Sweet, Story of Religion, p. 133: "Such a minister was James Davenport of Long Island, who 'more than any other man... embodied in himself and promoted in others, all the unsafe extravagances into which the revival was running,' and who declared 'that most of the ministers of the town of Boston and of the country are unconverted, and are leading their people blindfold to hell' (ellipses in original).

21. Sweet, Story of Religion, p. 133: "During the years from 1740 to 1742 there was a wonderful ingathering of members into the New England churches. Out of a population of 300,000, from 25,000 to 50,000 were added. ... Similar testimonies of moral changes in other communities are numerous and there is no doubt but that the whole moral and religious life of New England was raised to a higher plane."
cipally by laymen in the face of more or less opposition from the Established Church. Here and there throughout the province were to be found men and women hungering for the bread of life, who had become dissatisfied with the abuses of the church.

At Hanover there were a group of such who had been moved greatly by the preaching of Whitefield at Williamsburg in 1740. During the year 1743, Mr. Samuel Morris, one of their number came into possession of a small volume of Whitefield's sermons and a few of Luther's books. Morris invited his neighbors to his home and read them in their hearing. Week after week they met together in one another's houses where these books were read. Finally, the group grew so large that no ordinary house could accommodate them, and special houses were built, the first such building being called Morris's Reading House.* Thus the revival was propagated with spiritual quickening throughout the region. At length there were visits made by Rev. William Robinson, a graduate of the "Log College," who devoted his labors to the neglected districts among the new settlements of Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. Under his ministrations many were converted and the revival was given a fresh impetus.

This in brief is the rise of Presbyterianism in Virginia. From time to time brief visits were made to this region by other outstanding ministers, among whom were Revs. Gilbert Tennent, Samuel Finley, William Tennent, Samuel Blair, and finally the noted evangelist George Whitefield.† These men were highly accepted and their coming was followed by many converts. But persecutions and seasons awaited them. They were brought into conflict with civil authority and harassed in many ways. In the face of all this embarrassment, the feeble companies of believers grew and churches multiplied, until at length Samuel Davies came to them to minister permanently. Within a short time, through his influence, the churches grew by leaps and bounds. The people were very happy to see Mr. Davies come to their colony, and with tones of joy they exclaimed: "How joyfully were we surprised before the next Sabbath, when we unexpectedly heard that Mr. Davis was come to preach so long among us; and especially, that he had qualified himself according to law, and obtained the licensure of four meetinghouses among us, which had never been done before! Thus, when our hopes were expiring, and our liberties more precarious than ever, we

were suddenly advanced to a more secure situation. Man's extremity is the Lord's opportunity. For this seasonable instance of this interposition of divine providence, we desire to offer our grateful praises; and we importune the friends of Zion generously to concur in the delightful employ."*

Such was the rise of Presbyterianism in Virginia. Notwithstanding many troubles from the partisans of the Church of England, who had the government of the colony in their hands, Presbyterianism continued to gain strength, and the work went forward with uninterrupted success until the commencement of the Revolutionary struggle.

Just five years previous to Samuel Davies' departure from Virginia two separate Baptist preachers, Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, had come down from Connecticut with their families and had settled in Berkeley county (in what is now West Virginia). Both had been converted by Whitefield's preaching and they brought with them the spiritual fervor of the master revivalist. Both had been congregationalists, but soon became convinced of the validity of the Baptist view. Although neither of these revivalist had had a formal education, they were men of great natural ability and good common sense. There were already several congregations of Regular Baptists in Virginia, but they were by no means sympathetic with the revivalistic tendencies of Stearns and Marshall. However the coming of these two separate Baptists into the Southern Colonies marks the beginning of a new phase in the development of the Great Awakening.22

Sandy Creek became the living center of the Separate Baptist as Hanover had become the center of Presbyterianism in the Southern Colonies. From a church of sixteen members formed by Stearns and Marshall families at Sandy Creek, the congregation

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22. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp. 301–302: “Just five years previous to Samuel Davies’ departure from Virginia two separate Baptist preachers from Connecticut, Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, settled with their families on Opequon Creek in Berkeley county, in what is now West Virginia. Both had been converted under Whitefield's preaching and they brought with them the fervor and spirit of that master revivalist. Both originally had been Congregationalists, but having become convinced of the futility of infant baptism they withdrew and joined the Baptists. Neither had had the advantage of a formal education, but they were men of superior natural ability and sound judgment. There were already several congregations of Regular Baptists in Virginia, but Stearns and Marshall soon found that they were out of sympathy with their revivalistic preaching. . . . The coming of these representatives of the revivalistic Baptists into the Southern Colonies marks the beginning of a new phase in the development of the Great Awakening.”
17 Nov 1950

grew within a relative short time to more than six hundred.*23 One of the things that made the Separate Baptist so popular with the masses was their novel type of preaching, appealing primarily to the emotions. The Presbyterians with their educated ministry had failed to reach the great mass of people, but the Separate Baptist with their uneducated and unsalaried ministry were well suited to the needs of the lower social and economic classes. Extreme emotional revivalism has always been more successful among people of little education than among people of higher educational attainments. The presence of even a few people of high educational attainments will tend to restrain emotionalism to a great degree.24 This is why Presbyterians were always less overtly emotional than Baptists.†25

From the beginning the revivalistic Baptists were a despised people. “The strange mannerisms of their preachers, their odd whoops and whinning tones together with their emotional extravagances aroused disgust and contempt.”‡ One man is reported to have said that, “he had rather go to hell than be obliged to hear a Baptist in order to go to heaven.” But all of this did not stop the growth of the Baptist. After 1770 the growth of Separate Baptist was astounding. In 1771 at the first Baptist Association in Virginia there were fourteen churches and 1335 members. Two years later the number of churches had increased and the total membership had increased to more than four thousand.§

Another phase of southern revivalism was the Methodist phase. This phase gained impetue mainly through Devereux Jarratt and lay preachers sent to America by Wesley. Because of Jarratt’s cooperation

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23. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 303: “As Hanover county was the center of an expanding Presbyterianism in the Southern Colonies, so Sandy Creek became the living center of the Separate Baptists. From a church of sixteen members formed by the Stearns and Marshall families at Sandy Creek, the congregation grew within a relatively short time to more than six hundred.”

24. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 302: “The Presbyterians with their educated ministry and elaborate creedal demands had failed to reach the great mass of the plain people. The Separate Baptists, however, with their uneducated and unsalaried ministry, their novel type of preaching, appealing primarily to the emotions, were well suited to the needs and mental capacities of the lower social and economic classes. Extreme emotional revivalism always has succeeded best among people of little education. But the presence of even a few people of higher educational attainments will tend to restrain the emotionalism of a large concourse of the less educated.”

25. Sweet cited the source of this argument to “F. M. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, A Study in Mental and Social Evolution, New York: 1905, Chapter I.”

* Sweet, Religion In Colonial America, p. 303.

† This is the thesis of F. M. Davenport. See his, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, Chapter I

‡ Sweet, Religion In Colonial America, p. 304.

§ Ibid, p. 304.
with the Methodist lay preachers Methodism grew more rapidly in Virginia than anywhere else in America. In 1775 Jarratt accompanied Thomas Rankin, Wesley's assistant in America, on a preaching tour of the southern colonies and into North Carolina. They preached to great crowds of people under trees and in "preaching houses. So great was the demand for preaching that Rankin speaks of preaching almost to the point of exhaustion. Jesse Lee, who was an eye witness to many of the revival scenes states: "In almost every assembly might be seen signal instances of divine power; more especially in the meetings of the classes . . . Many who had long neglected the means of grace now flocked to hear . . . This outpouring of the spirit extended itself more or less, through most of the circuits, which takes in a circumference of between four and five hundred miles."*

The results of the revival are reflected in the statistics of the Virginia and North Carolina circuits. In 1774 there were only two circuits in the region, with a combined membership of 291; in 1776 the number of circuits had increased tremendously, with one circuit alone reporting 1,611 members. The following year there were six circuits with a combined membership of 4,379. In this same year the number of Methodists throughout all America was 6,968, which meant that two-thirds of all the Methodists in the colonies were found in Devereux Jarratt's parish.†

Such was the rise of Methodism in Virginia.

The Results of
The Great Awakening

Having given a brief outlining of the facts of the Great Awakening it now remains for me to sum up the results of this great movement. The chief value of a revival of religion is seen in its permanent results, that which lives on long after the first excitement has passed away. Bearing this in mind, let us see what were the results of the Great Awakening.

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* Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodists, pp. 55, 56.


26. Sweet, Story of Religion, p. 154: "The results of the revival are reflected in the statistics of the Virginia and North Carolina circuits. In 1774 there were but two circuits in the region, with a combined membership of 291; the following year there were 3 circuits with a membership of 935; in 1776 the number of circuits had increased, the Brunswick circuit alone reporting 1,611 members. The following year there were 6 circuits with a combined membership of 4,379. In this year the number of Methodists in America totaled 6,968, which meant two-thirds of all the Methodists in the colonies were found in the vicinity of Devereux Jarratt's parish, a fact which would seem to indicate that this region was the cradle of American Methodism."
First it must be admitted that Church membership was greatly increased with the coming of the Great Awakening. Moreover, the practical influence of Christianity upon colonial society was greatly strengthened. To give an exact figure of the number of individuals converted during the revival would be quite impossible. However various estimates have been made. Careful historians have estimated that from 25,000 to 50,000 were added to the churches of New England in consequence of the Awakening.*

Now the population of the New England colonies in 1750 was 340,000. Assuming the smaller number of additions, which is a conservative estimate, to be correct, more than seven per cent of the entire population of these colonies would have been gathered into the churches as a direct result of the revival. A national awakening of similar power at the present time would result in the ingathering of more than nine million souls.

The increase in the Presbyterian and Baptist churches was proportionately larger. From 1740 to 1760 the number of Presbyterian ministers in American Colonies had increased from 45 to over 100. During this same period the Baptist churches in New England alone increased from 21 to 79.† These and many other figures could be cited to show the numerical results of the Great Awakening. This movement, like a tidal wave swept over the colonies, and gathered multitudes into the church of God.

A second result of the Great Awakening was a Quickening along Missionary and Educational Lines. At this time there came a great concern for Indians and Negroes and underprivileged people in general. Out of this movement was forged the framework of the first anti-slavery impulse in America.‡

The Great Awakening was conducted chiefly by men of education, "and it has left its decided record and invaluable monuments in the way of institutions of learning and religious literature." We have shown above how the College of New Jersey and the Theological Seminary at Princeton grew out of Tennent's Log College at Neshaming. Harvard and Yale received a great impulse from the revival, though they at first set themselves against it. Dartmouth College, in New Hampshire, was a direct outgrowth of the Great Awakening. Brown University, at Providence, the parent of Baptist colleges, was founded during the Great Awakening. Rev. Chapell was quite right when he stated, "many of the colleges and seminaries

* Tracy, op. cit., p. 388
† Beardsley, op. cit., p. 64.
‡ Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 517.
of the present day largely owe their existence, or their influence as healthful fountains of truth, directly to the Great Awakening."

A third Result of the Great Awakening was its influence upon Religious and Political Liberty. In New England, excepting the colony of Rhode Island, Congregationalism was established by law. In New York, Virginia and the South, Episcopalianism was the established religion. With the coming of the Awakening and the expansion of newer denominations the way was paved for the tolerance of conflicting opinions and a broader conception of liberty of conscience.

Only indirectly did the Great Awakening affect the political liberties of the colonies. But this indirect influence cannot be overlooked. As Dr. Beardsley has laconically stated: "The religious convictions of the American people, which so largely were called into being through the revival, served as a balance to the political revolution which resulted in independence and prevented it from being hurled into the vortex of anarchy and ruin, in which the French Revolution was swallowed up."†

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† Beardsley, op. cit., p. 69.