

Far more than Whitefield did Lady Huntingdon possess this qualification, and had she been a man the history and present status of Calvinistic Methodism might have been very different. She was deeply convinced of the necessity of a college for the training of ministers for the numerous chapels which, through her zeal and liberality, had sprung up in many parts of the country. She broached her scheme to John Wesley and others, and received their hearty approval. A romantic and dilapidated old castle at Trevecca, in Wales, was accordingly purchased and fitted up as a place of residence and instruction for candidates for the ministry. This enterprise exhausted her means, but she was assisted by contributions from titled and wealthy ladies who sympathized with her project. The saintly and accomplished Fletcher became its first president, and the learned Wesleyan commentator, Joseph Benson, its headmaster. The first student was a poor collier, who subsequently became an able and useful vicar in the Established Church. The ancient cloisters were soon thronged with earnest students. No conditions of admission were imposed, other than those of conversion to God and a purpose to enter the Christian ministry, either in the Established Church or in any Dissenting body. In this truly catholic institution the students received lodging, maintenance, instruction, and an annual suit of clothes, at the expense of the Countess.

The first anniversary of the college was celebrated as a religious festival of holy rejoicing. For nearly a week previously, the scattered evangelists of the "Connexion" continued to arrive in the courtyard of the picturesque old castle. Very different was the scene from those of tilt and tourney with which it had resounded in the days of knightly chivalry. Hymns and prayers and sermons, in English and Welsh, echoed beneath the ancient arches. On the great day of the feast, Wesley and Fletcher, Shirley and Howell Harris, Arminian and Calvinist, English and Welsh, preached and prayed, and administered the sacrament and celebrated the "love-feast," together, all differences being forgotten in their common brotherhood in Christ. The ministers all dined together with Lady Huntingdon, while great baskets of bread and meat were distributed to the multitude in