

family. In her early youth she was married to Theophilus Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon. Lady Elizabeth and Lady Margaret Hastings, her sisters-in-law, had become interested in the Oxford Methodists. Through their influence, and through severe personal and family affliction, the Countess was led to a religious life and to a strong sympathy with the methods and principles of the evangelists, especially of Whitefield.

Her husband sent for Bishop Benson to restore her to a "saner mind," but the learned prelate failed in the attempt. Although she moved in the most aristocratic circles, the Countess was not ashamed of the lonely and despised Methodists through whom she had received such spiritual benefit. She invited John Wesley to her residence at Downington Park, where he preached to fashionable congregations the same uncompromising Gospel that he declared at Gwenap Pit or Moorfields Common. With a wise provision of one of the greatest evangelistic agencies of the age, she specially encouraged the employment of a lay ministry, against the strong ecclesiastical prejudices of the Wesleys.

When the separation took place between Whitefield and the Wesleys on the ground of the Calvinistic controversy, she sought to win the beatitude of the peacemaker by mediating between them. She succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation, which was confirmed by exchange of pulpits and of kindly offices. The friendship thus happily cemented continued unbroken through their lives, their only rivalry being one of hallowed zeal in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Lady Huntingdon still considered the moral unity of Methodism unbroken, and when Wesley's first Conference was held in London, in 1744, the entire body were entertained at her elegant mansion at Chelsea. She used her social influence in high places with such effect on behalf of brave John Nelson, who had been impressed into the army and suffered bonds and imprisonment for conscience' sake, that he was rescued from his persecutors and set free to range the kingdom, proclaiming everywhere the great salvation.

In 1748 Lady Huntingdon became a widow. Henceforth her life was devoted to labours of pious zeal in the promotion of Christ's kingdom. Whitefield became one of her permanent