

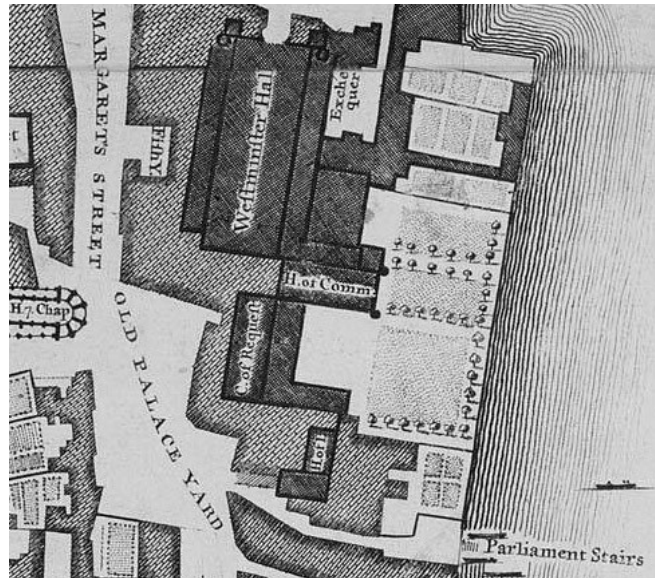
12.30pm 8 February 1750.



The head of the law courts was sitting in Westminster Hall in London. His name was Lord Hardwicke. He was a very important man and he was stern. Can you see his big judge's wig in the picture? He wears a black robe with gold decorations. How serious he looks! In Scotland there had been rebels who fought against the king. Lord Hardwicke was the judge who punished their leaders. Now the men of the Scottish mountains were not allowed to have any weapons. They were not allowed to wear

their tartan kilts. Tartan kilts were like a uniform that showed they did not like the king. It was Lord Hardwicke who said they could not wear them any more.

Westminster Hall was hundreds of years old. It was the most important place in the land. It had a wonderful strong roof. The roof was cleverly built. It did not need any pillars to hold it up. There were two big windows in the roof called lanterns. They let in the light. Can you find Westminster Hall on this old map? On the map you can see "H. of Comm." written. This stands for "House of Commons." It is where



Parliament used to meet. How small it is beside Westminster Hall! Everyone thought Westminster Hall was so strong it could never fall down.

That is what they thought. On that day in February they nearly changed their minds. Lord Hardwicke was listening to clever lawyers. It was quiet while the lawyers spoke. Everything was dignified and stern. Suddenly the whole huge building began to shake. It shook hard. It seemed as if it would fall down. Up jumped Lord Hardwicke from his great chair. The lawyers began to run to the doors. All these great men were very frightened.

In a grand house a mile away lived the king's son Frederick. Frederick was Prince of Wales. He expected to be king one day. His house was called Leicester House, It was full of servants in smart uniforms. Suddenly the grand house began to shake. "Help!" cried the servants, "Help! The house is sinking into the ground! Help! Help! It will fall down!"

Lord Hardwicke had a friend called the Duke of Newcastle. He lived in another grand house two miles away. It was a big house. It was a fashionable house. Everyone in London wished they had a house like Newcastle House. But New Castle House began to shake too. "Whatever is happening?" cried the Duke. He sent his servant to find out. He sent him to a neighbour's house. The neighbour was called Gowin Knight. He was a very clever scientist. He had been put in charge of the British Library. This is the most important library in the world. In those days it was a brand new library. Gown Knight was trying to find out what had happened. In his house the beds and furniture had been shaken about. In all the houses in London it was the same. Doors slammed on their own. Windows rattled. Clerks in offices were working. Suddenly their desks jumped. Pots and pans fell from shelves in kitchens. It was an earthquake!

That year there were more earthquakes in London. The next one was on 8<sup>th</sup> May. Some old houses fell down. Some chimneys fell down. Crockery fell from shelves and broke. People ran out of their houses. They were afraid the houses would fall down on top of them.

Then a foolish soldier said, "I know when there will be another earthquake. It will be very bad. Half the buildings in London will fall right down. It will be on 4<sup>th</sup> of April." He did not know this. It was not true. He was telling a lie. How wicked! But people believed him and were afraid.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April thousands of people ran away from their homes. They were afraid. They thought the soldier was telling the truth. They went into parks and open spaces instead of going home to bed. Many people went to church to pray. They only went because they were afraid of a lie! There is a big park in London called Hyde Park. At midnight everyone should have been in bed. Instead thousands of people were in Hyde Park. A great preacher called

George Whitefield lived in those days. He had a clear loud voice. When he preached outside thousands of people could hear him. God often used him to tell people about the love of the Lord Jesus. He went to Hyde Park. He preached to all the people. He did not tell them lies like the foolish soldier. He told them that Jesus died so that they could be forgiven. He told them that one day God will bring the whole world to an end. No one knows when that will happen. Whitefield told them that those who trust in Jesus will be safe on that day.