

THE ERSKINES AND THE METHODISTS

ERASMUS MIDDLETON once said, apropos of Ralph Erskine and George Whitefield, 'The differences of good men are never to be mentioned but with sorrow'.¹ Strangely enough, however, historians have almost forgotten that the leaders of the Scots Secession Church and of the Methodist Movement were once caught up in a brief ecclesiastical courtship, which at first promised a lasting union. Over a century ago a little of the Erskines' side of the affair was presented by their biographer, Donald Fraser; George Whitefield's relations with the secession movement were outlined in the pages of Luke Tyerman. John Wesley's correspondence with Ralph Erskine, however, seems never to have seen the light of day since Erskine published it in 1743 in a pamphlet so rare that not even the British Museum has a copy. Yet from this work can be rescued three important and characteristic letters of the Methodist leader, together with new information on the relations between the would-be reformers of the established Churches both of England and of Scotland.

The story opens in 1739. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine had already formed an 'Associate Presbytery' as a purifying cell within the Presbyterian Church, established as the State religion by the tolerance and good sense of King William III. The Erskines, like many of their compatriots, believed that altogether too much power was now in the hands of the State, whose worldliness was too faithfully echoed by an unspiritual ecclesiastical hierarchy. In particular they urged that ministers of religion should be elected by the people, and inveighed against the system of patronage, which had been abolished in 1649, restored in 1660, abolished once more under William and Mary in 1690, but (unkindest cut of all!) once more restored in 1712, under Anne. 'From which time onwards', wrote John Dall, 'this ancient cause of strife assumes the position of chief disturber of the peace of the Church of Scotland.'²

In 1739, to all intents and purposes, the Associate Presbytery was a separate denomination, albeit small, ignoring all attempts to woo it back to the fold. Not until May 1740 did the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland formally depose the Erskines and their colleagues. The events of the preceding twelve months had given grounds for the Associate Presbytery to hope that before a state of open schism was declared they might join forces with their English brethren for a movement of Church reform on two fronts, a gust of revival breathing new life into the established Churches of England and Scotland alike. For another new movement, like theirs a movement of the people, and containing within it the seeds of secession, was stirring in the south. On 17th February 1739 George Whitefield preached in the open air to the forgotten colliers of

were not bound to follow Muhammad's opinion in secular as in religious matters (see *Muslim World*, xlv, 1954, 200).

⁴ In all languages except Arabic, where bilingualism still perpetuates the gulf between literature and life, the distinction between the literary and spoken language is being gradually bridged.

⁵ Starting from the realization that Islam seems at a halt and incapable of exerting contemporary influence, a Pakistani writer, Rafi ad-Din, says that some Muslims on this account consider that the present stagnation is because Islam is not practised, but he considers that this is not a cause but a symptom. The real cause is decline in belief (cf. J. W. Sweetman in *Muslim World*, xlvii, 1957, 230). Christians, faced by a similar dilemma, can meet here with the Muslim on mutual ground.

Kingswood, near Bristol. A few weeks later he persuaded John Wesley to adapt 'this strange way of preaching in the fields', though previously Wesley would 'have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church'.³

Even before this epochal event of 1st April, however, both John Wesley and George Whitefield had realized something of their spiritual kinship with the evangelists and Church reformers of Scotland. On the afternoon of 28th February Wesley's diary recorded that he 'read Erskine'—this at John Bray's in Little Britain, prior to a meeting of the leaders of the infant Methodist society in London, which was already witnessing strange and wonderful conversions. On 10th March Whitefield wrote to Ralph Erskine about 'the great outpouring of the Spirit in England and Wales', asking at the same time to hear more about the revival in Scotland. Erskine reacted very cautiously. He perused more carefully the references to Whitefield in the periodicals. He also enquired about him from friends in London.⁴ Eventually he replied, and Whitefield's *Journal* for 18th May recorded: 'Received an excellent letter from Mr Ralph Erskine, a field-preacher of the Scots Church, a noble soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ.'⁵ Whitefield's use of the term 'field-preacher' reveals the fact that he saw in Erskine a kindred spirit to Wesley and himself. Erskine apparently sent Whitefield some of the prolific and prolix literature of the Scots movement, and Whitefield 'was much pleased and edified in reading' the *Collection of Sermons on Several Subjects* published by the two Erskine brothers in 1738.⁶ So edified was he, indeed, that his whole outlook changed. It is surely no accident that the Calvinistic note began to appear in his thinking and preaching at exactly the same period as his literary contacts with the Erskines, and some time before his second visit to America had confirmed and crystallized his Calvinism, thus precipitating the breach with the Wesleys.⁷

That doctrinal breach within Methodism was not yet, however. Meantime Whitefield must urge on John Wesley that he, too, should commence a correspondence with their fellow-evangelists in Scotland, about whom Wesley already knew sufficient to warm to the idea. Here again Ralph Erskine was very cautious, and it seemed that he might never act. On 23rd July, therefore, Whitefield sent his 'tenderest affections' to 'all the Associate Presbytery', and added a passage designed to break down any remaining hesitation: 'Mr Wesley has not yet received your letter. He will readily correspond with you. He fights the Lord's battles, as doth his brother, most courageously.'⁸

At length all Ralph Erskine's reticence was broken down. In a lengthy epistle dated 21st August 1739, he assured Whitefield that he was ready to 'cover with a mantle of love all the differences' arising from the limitations of the Methodists' Anglican background. He dared to suggest 'a happy union in the Lord' between the Associate Presbytery and the Methodists, and this (flinging discretion to the winds) 'not only in a private and personal, but even in a more public and general way'. Erskine drew out the parallels between the two movements, not only in the matter of evangelism, but of 'Scriptural Christianity' and of secession:

You likewise add that so long as the Articles of the Church of England are agreeable to Scripture, you resolve to preach them up. . . . This . . . is the case with us. We

preach up and defend, doctrinally and judicially, those Articles of the Church of Scotland, agreeable to the Scriptures, which the judicatories are letting go. Hence, I conclude, you are just of our mind, as to separation from an established Church. We never declared a secession from the Church of Scotland, but . . . only a secession from the judicatories, in their course of defection from the primitive and covenanted constitution, to which we stood bound by our ordination engagements.

Having reiterated his conviction that 'there is, perhaps, more in the womb of Providence relating to our several situations, and successes therein, than we are aware of', he concluded with salutations to 'the worthy Swards and Wesleys'.⁹ (William Seward's correspondence with Erskine had opened on 24th July, when he introduced himself as 'a weak fellow-labourer with dear Mr Whitefield'.¹⁰)

Actually, Whitefield had embarked for America a week before this letter was written. In the course of this same letter, however, Erskine had announced an arrangement that the Associate Presbytery's publications would be sent regularly to Whitefield, or in his absence 'to Mr Seward or Mr John Wesley'. It is possible that Wesley read the letter before it was forwarded to Whitefield, to be answered the following January. At any rate, three days later John Wesley despatched his first letter to Ralph Erskine, taking up where for the time being Whitefield had left off. It was a comparatively short letter, but its importance for Wesley was marked by the fact that in his diary that morning he inserted a special note—'writ to Erskine':

'Bristol, Aug. 24, 1739.

Reverend and dear Sir,

Many Souls hath our blessed Lord here turned from Darkness unto Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God; a great and effectual Door is indeed opened among us, and the many Adversaries cannot shut it: But what a little surprized us at first, was the outward Manner wherein *most* of these were affected, who are cut to the Heart by the Sword of the Spirit. Some of them drop down as dead, having no Strength nor Appearance of Life left in them. Some burst out into strong Cries and Tears, some exceedingly tremble and quake, from some great Drops of Sweat fall to the Ground, others struggle as in the Agonies of Death, so that four or five strong Men can hardly restrain a weak Woman or a Child from hurting themselves or others. Of these many are in that Hour filled with Peace and Joy, others continue Days or Weeks in Heaviness, so that sometimes their Bodies almost sink under the weight of the wounded Spirit.

I should be glad to know whether any outward Appearances like these have been among you, and how the Work of the Lord prospers in your Hands. It would be a Comfort to our little Flock, in whose Prayers, you and your Fellow-labourers are not forgotten. O may you see Satan as Lightning fall from Heaven! We have (forty or fifty of us) been this Day calling together upon our God, that he would please to hasten his Kingdom. I commend you and your dear Brother (both after the Flesh and after the Spirit) to his Protection, and am,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother, and servant in Christ,

John Wesley.¹¹

Wesley had avoided any reference to the danger of secession or separation implicit in every revival. The theme refused to be shelved, however. On Thursday, 13th September, he was made fully aware of how the situation in Scotland

might apply to himself and his brother. The conversation of a group of Methodists and others gathered at Islington House swayed ominously towards the subject of secession. A 'serious clergyman' wanted to know in what respects the Wesleys differed from the Church of England. Being told 'In none!' he pressed the matter farther, asking in what points they differed from the *clergy* of the Church of England. Wesley acknowledged that he did indeed differ from some of the clergy, namely those who 'dissent from the Church (though they own it not)'. Thus much is to be seen in his printed *Journal*. It is a very interesting echo of the position of the Erskines. In a much fuller private journal written for the benefit of his brother Charles, however, Wesley revealed that one of the group was 'a Scotch gentleman', who echoed the 'serious clergyman's' warning by furnishing 'a plain account of Mr Erskine and his associates'. This account was summarized, and the summary included Ebenezer Erskine's reply when summoned before the Moderator of the General Assembly: 'Moderator, both you and those that are with you have erred from the faith, and your practices are irregular too; and you have no discipline: therefore you are no Kirk. We are the Kirk, and we alone.' In spite of this uncompromising statement, the Associate Presbytery had escaped deposition (for the time being) by five votes. But the future was threatening. Wesley's presentation of their case to his brother Charles betrayed a sympathy which may or may not have reflected the viewpoint of the unnamed Scotch gentleman:

Having received help from God, they continue to this day; declaring to all that their congregation is the Kirk of Scotland; that they (the ministers, now ten in all) are the proper Presbytery, and there is no other; those commonly so called having made shipwreck both of the faith and discipline once delivered to the saints.¹²

How closely this narrative of the two Scots brothers echoed the urges and the half-submerged fears of the two English brothers!

A fortnight later came Ralph Erskine's reply to Wesley's letter, accompanied by some pamphlets. It was dated 'Dunfermline, Sept. 28, 1739'. Wesley considered it important enough to include in his printed *Journal*. While confessing that the preaching of the Associate Presbytery was not accompanied by such revival phenomena as Wesley had described—and hazarding a guess that these manifestations were attempts of Satan to frustrate the work—Erskine maintained that the crucial issue in each case was that people really were converted. In closing he asked to be kept in touch with Methodist events, and added a salutation which echoed and emphasized Wesley's own, even though he was eighteen years Wesley's senior:

Pray let me hear, at your leisure hours, more and more of what the Lord is doing among you.

I am, Reverend and very Dear Sir,
Your very affectionate brother and servant in Christ,
Ralph Erskine.¹³

Meantime, George Whitefield, both on the high seas and on American soil, was eagerly studying his Erskine. In November he wrote to Ralph Erskine:

My heart has been much warmed by reading some of your sermons, especially that preached before the Associate Presbytery. I long more and more to hear of the rise and progress of your proceedings, and how far you would willingly carry the reformation of the Church of Scotland.

He sought more guidance in his theological reading, hinting that already his Scots tutor had been largely instrumental in converting him to the Calvinist position:

I bless God, His Spirit has convinced me of our eternal election by the Father through the Son; of our free justification by faith in His blood; of our sanctification as the consequence of that; and of our final perseverance and glorification as the result of all.¹⁴

On 16th January 1740, replying to Erskine's delayed overtures of 21st August, Whitefield informed Erskine that he was now in complete doctrinal agreement with him: 'I assure you, dear sir, I am fully convinced of the doctrine of election, free justification, and final perseverance.' In spite of his frequent preaching in Presbyterian churches, however, Whitefield was unable to take the further step of agreeing that the presbyterian type of church government was essential to the true worship of God. Here he remained a true disciple of his former leader, John Wesley: 'Though I profess myself a minister of the Church of England, I am of a catholic spirit; and, if I see any man who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, I am not very solicitous to what outward communion he belongs.'¹⁵

John Wesley also (and presumably Charles) was studying his Erskine, both in the publications supplied in accordance with the promise to keep the Methodists in general *au fait* with Scots affairs, and also by means of at least one parcel of books sent to him personally.¹⁶ Intervals of leisure were few and brief in these crucial months, however, which included not only frequent travelling and pioneer preaching, but the formation of the Foundery Society in London. One cannot avoid suggesting that this important step in the gradual separation of Methodism from the Church of England was at least made simpler for Wesley by the fact that he had been convinced on at least one point by Erskine's writings—'that every Christian congregation has an indisputable right to choose its own Pastor'. This point, the chief bone of contention in the lengthy and acrimonious debate over patronage, was continually being emphasized by both the Erskines. Typical is Ebenezer Erskine's sermon, *The Stone rejected by the Builders, exalted as the Head-Stone of the Corner*. This had caused a sensation when it was first preached before the Synod of Perth and Stirling in 1732, and had continued to be one of the manifestoes of the Associate Presbytery. There is no doubt that a copy would be supplied to Wesley, and that his eye would seek out the 'quarrelled expressions' to which the reader was obligingly directed:

The Call of the Church lies in the free choice and election of the christian people. The promise of conduct and counsel in the choice of men that are to build the church is not made to patrons, heritors, or any other particular set of men, but to the church, the body of Christ, to whom apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given. As it is a natural privilege of every house or society of men to have the choice of their own servants or officers, so 'tis the privilege of the house of God in a particular manner.

[Christ's] authority was invaded by the act restoring patronages, whereby power is given to a malignant lord or laird to present a man, to take the charge of precious souls, who has perhaps no more concern about their salvation than the great *Turk*.¹⁷

The Foundery Society, the 'Mother Society' of Methodism, undoubtedly did consist of those who had deliberately chosen John Wesley as their spiritual leader. We must not overlook one important fact, however. Wesley made it quite clear that in the building which belonged to him personally his was the supreme authority, not the people's. If they did not agree with his methods, they were free to leave in peace, but not to appoint another leader for that Society in his place.¹⁸

It was not until 26th June 1740, just before Wesley's final break with the Fetter Lane Society,¹⁹ that he completed his study of Erskine's parcel of books, and thus felt able to reply:

London, June 26, 1740.

Dear Sir,

I delayed answering your welcome Letter, till I could have Time to read over and consider the Tracts you was so kind as to send me.

Of one Point which I knew not before, it has pleased God to convince me by them, viz. that every Christian Congregation has an indisputable Right to choose its own Pastor.

If it be not yet given us to agree as to some other Points relating to Discipline, yet it is a great Blessing that we can love one another, and bear with one another, till it seems good to our Lord (whichsoever of us is now mistaken) to reveal even this unto us.

I greatly rejoice in the Simplicity and Plainness of Speech wherewith you testify to the Truth, and against those who either are utter Strangers thereto, or hold it in Unrighteousness.

What I apprehend us to be now called to in England is,

1st. To declare the fundamental Truths of the Gospel, which have been for many Years either forgotten among us, or denied, despised, and blasphemed: this we generally do plainly and simply, without enumerating the Objections; indeed most times without taking any direct Notice that any thing hath ever been objected against them. But on some Occasions it has been further required of us.

2dly, To stop the Mouths of Gainsayers, and even publickly to testify, that the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the People love to have it so.

3dly, We are called to knit together in one, and to build up in our most holy Faith, as many as are given us of those who either love or seek the Lord Jesus in Sincerity.

I believe the Time will come when we shall be called to describe more particularly the many Antichrists which are in the World, and more explicitly (*sic*) to declare the publick and general corruptions which overspread our Church and Nation: But perhaps our wise Lord will not suffer this to be, till there is a greater Number of those gathered, who would joyfully take the spoiling of their Goods, knowing they have a better and an enduring Substance, and who would not count their Lives dear unto them, so they might finish their Course with Joy.

We shall at all Times rejoice to hear how the Cause of our common Lord prospers in your Hand, and desire a constant Place in your Prayers, that God would lead us in all things. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your ever affectionate Brother and Servant,

John Wesley.²⁰

To Ralph Erskine this sounded very promising. It looked as if there might indeed be an English counterpart of the Scottish Reformation. He was quite sure of Whitefield. And now it seemed that Wesley also was accepting the true faith as the Erskines proclaimed it. Perhaps eventually both Whitefield and Wesley would also embrace the true Christian church discipline, as embodied in the Associate Presbytery. He could not quite banish a lurking doubt, however, from his belated reply to Wesley's letter. First he put the credit side:

Dunfermline, January 31, 1741.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I was glad to find the Lord was pleased to enlighten you in that Point, relating to the indisputable Right that every Christian Congregation hath to choose its own Pastor. The Modesty, Judgment and Caution with which you write concerning other Points relating to Discipline, wherein it is not yet given us to agree, appears with a very beautiful and promising Aspect unto me. It is no doubt a great Blessing that we can love and bear with one another, till it please our Lord to reveal even this unto us.

Then came the doubt. A Dunfermline woman visiting her husband in London had brought back a report that Wesley 'seem'd to allow all promiscuously to come to the Lord's Table'. His teaching on sin was also suspect, for he apparently maintained that believers sinned, not because of 'the Remains of corrupt Nature that may be in the Regenerate, but merely from Outward Temptations'.²¹

Wesley did not answer this letter. Controversy much nearer home was engaging all the attention he could spare for such matters. In a letter from America George Whitefield, now thoroughly converted to the Erskines' Calvinism, had chided Wesley (albeit in kindly terms) for preaching and writing against predestination. Extracts from this letter had been surreptitiously printed and distributed in the very Foundery itself. On 1st February 1741, Wesley was constrained publicly to tear the printed letter in pieces, as did the other members of his congregation. A month later the Methodist Society at Kingswood was split over the same issue. Marginal negotiations must obviously give way before these internal disruptions.

Whitefield, on his way back from America in the *Minerva*, gathered that there was already a serious dissension within the Methodist camp, and wrote the more enthusiastically to the Erskines, expressing the pious hope that he might soon find an additional sphere of evangelistic activity in Scotland.²² Dissension rapidly issued in division. Less than a month after landing at Falmouth, George Whitefield was building a 'Tabernacle' for himself and his followers in London. Briefly, almost bitterly, he wrote to Erskine:

London, April 2, 1741.

Reverend and very dear Brother,

God is sifting his Church here. The Mr Wesleys scarce preach one Principle agreeable to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm obliged to separate from them. They load the Doctrine of Election with the most heavy Curses, and plead up for an absolute sinless Perfection. Some already Blaspheme.

George Whitefield.²³

This was the second account that Erskine had received of Wesley's 'gross and heterodox Doctrine'. It was sufficient:

I not only gave up with all Correspondence and Communication with him, but lost all my good Thoughts and Opinion of him, and of any extraordinary Effects of his Ministry that he and others had talked of.²⁴

He still had hopes, however, of fruitful co-operation with the Calvinistic wing of the Methodist movement. To Whitefield he wrote on April 10th with great enthusiasm about the projected visit of the English evangelist to Scotland:

Glory to God! who has enlightened you so clearly, and enabled you to give testimony so faithfully, against the dangerous errors that are springing up. . . . I am persuaded that your coming to us would be matter of great joy. . . . Come, if possible, dear Whitefield, come. There is no face on earth I would desire more earnestly to see.²⁵

Even Whitefield, however, did not come up to Erskine's expectations. Naturally enough, Erskine sought to claim Whitefield's labours for the Associate Presbytery alone, at the expense of the misguided Church of Scotland in general. Naturally enough, again, Whitefield urged his desire to 'preach the simple gospel to all who are willing to hear me, of whatever denomination'. Ralph Erskine enlisted his elder brother Ebenezer to check this misguided zeal. Ebenezer, while commending Whitefield for his stand against the Wesleys, pleaded with him 'not to strengthen the hands of our corrupt clergy and judicatories, who are carrying on a course of defection, and worrying out a faithful ministry from the land'. Whitefield was not convinced, but resolved to give 'the first offer of [his] poor ministrations' to the Erskines.²⁶

The long-awaited and controverted visit commenced on 30th July 1741, when Whitefield arrived at Dunfermline to stay in Ralph Erskine's home. A special assembly of the Associate Presbytery was summoned to confer with him on 5th August. In the name of his colleagues Ebenezer Erskine urged Whitefield to transform himself from free-lance evangelist into church-founder. Whitefield continued to maintain that his duty was simply to preach the gospel, no matter what happened to his converts afterwards, and claimed that he 'had no freedom to separate from the Church of England, until it excommunicated him'. The Associate Presbytery's hopes of their new champion were dashed to pieces. He had turned sour in their mouths. There was an open breach. Whitefield went on his way through Scotland, pursued by the taunts and bitter calumnies of those who had so eagerly welcomed him as their own exclusive friend.²⁷ Sufficient illustration is provided by the title-page of a pamphlet by one of their number, Adam Gib:

*A Warning against Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr George Whitefield, published in the New Church at Bristow, upon Sabbath, June 6, 1742. Together with an Appendix upon the same Subject, wherein are shewn, that Mr Whitefield is no Minister of Jesus Christ; that his Call and Coming to Scotland are scandalous; that his Practice is disorderly, and fertile of Disorder; that his whole Doctrine is, and his Success must be, diabolical; so that People ought to avoid him, from Duty to God, to the Church, to themselves, to Fellow-Men, to Posterity, and to him.*²⁸

It was a sad *dénouement*, even though it had the undesired effect of increasing Whitefield's popularity with the Scots in general. Whitefield's own comment may be echoed to this day: 'To what lengths may prejudice carry even good men! From giving way to the first risings of bigotry and a party spirit, Good Lord, deliver us!'²⁹

It seemed that the promising courtship between Methodism and the Secession Church was over. One final halfhearted attempt was made to re-open it, this time by John Wesley, in his last letter to Ralph Erskine:

Newcastle upon Tyne, Nov. 30, 1742.

Reverend and dear Sir,

I believe I have wrote to you since I heard from you, but whether I did or not is of no great Concern; the Reason of my not writing again, was my Apprehension that it would not be agreeable to you. Difference of Opinion is indeed with me a very small thing, but with you I fear it is not so, at least if any Credit be to be given to the Accounts I have lately seen and heard.

My Design was, a while since, to have desired your Acceptance of the last printed Extract of my Journal, but I could not believe anything of that kind would be welcome to you when I had read the Pamphlet published by Mr Gib. O Sir (if you can yet receive any thing from one whom you declare to be actuated by Satan) let me press that single Advice upon you, *Let these Men alone*, lest haply you be found even to fight against God. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your still affectionate Brother and Servant,

John Wesley.³⁰

Had Wesley followed out his intention of sending the third published extract from his *Journal*, covering the period August 1738 to November 1739, Erskine would have found on pp.62-4 his own approving answer to Wesley's first letter to him, though signed only with the initials 'R.E.' That printed letter (somewhat mangled) provided material for Alexander Webster, minister of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh, to defend Methodism against the Associate Presbytery's attacks. Whereupon Erskine, instead of replying to Wesley's latest letter, published their correspondence in its entirety, in the extremely rare pamphlet which forms the basis of this article:

*Fraud and Falshood discover'd: or, Remarks upon Mr Webster's postscript to the second Edition of his Letter. With a true and full copy of Mr Ralph Erskine's Letter to Mr John Wesley, and Observes on Mr Webster's false Copy of it, leaving out the marks he gave therein of a truly divine work. Also Mr Wesley's testimonial sent to Mr Erskine, in a Letter from Mr. Whitefield, &c. In a Missive to a Brother who sought Mr Erskine's Thoughts upon that Postscript. . . . Edinburgh Printed, and sold at the Printing-house in the Parliament-close. MDCCXLIII.*³¹

This was, in effect, the end—not so much the publication of the correspondence as the avowedly antagonistic motives which prompted the action. Nevertheless when Wesley paid his first visit to Scotland in 1751, he was still striving to keep an open mind about the Erskines and their work. Further study of a volume of Ralph Erskine's sermons, however, completely disillusioned him. The entry in his *Journal* for 20th September, 1751, acknowledged that the breach was complete:

I read, with great prejudice in their favour, some of Mr Erskine's Sermons, particularly those which I had heard much commended, entitled 'Law-Death, Gospel-Life.' But how was I disappointed! I not only found many things odd and unscriptural, but some that were dangerously false; and the leaven of Antinomianism spread from end to end.

It was the end of the chapter: and the two youthful reform movements did *not* marry and live happily ever after.

FRANK BAKER

¹ *Biographica Evangelica*, 1786, IV.281. ² *Encyc. Rel. and Ethics*, X.254.

³ *John Wesley's Journal*, Standard Edition, II.167-8.

⁴ Donald Fraser, *Life and Diary of the Reverend Ralph Erskine*, 1834, p.287.

⁵ Luke Tyerman, *Life of the Rev. George Whitefield*, 2nd ed., 1890, I.216.

⁶ *A Continuation of the Reverend Mr Whitefield's Journal*, 1739, p.3 (9th June).

⁷ Tyerman's *Whitefield*, I.274-5.

⁸ Fraser's *Ralph Erskine*, p.299.

⁹ Fraser's *Ralph Erskine*, pp.301-10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.289-90. For Benjamin and William Seward, see Tyerman's *Whitefield*, I.164ff.

¹¹ R. Erskine, *Fraud and Falsehood Discovered*, 1743, pp.5-6.

¹² John Wesley's *Journal*, II.274-6; *The Letters of John Wesley* (Standard Edition), 1931, I.336-7. In annotating the letter, Mr Telford suggested that the conversation took place on 21st September, but its dating on the 13th is confirmed by the fact that the following paragraphs are dated 'Friday, September 14', etc. It seems fairly certain that both accounts refer to the same occasion. The Scot may have been a friend of the Erskines: see Ralph Erskine's letter of 31st January 1741, quoted below.

¹³ R. Erskine, *Fraud and Falsehood Discovered*, pp.6-7; Fraser's *Ralph Erskine*, pp.291-7; Wesley's *Journal*, II.230-1. During the following days Erskine's mind continually dwelt in prayer on the Wesleys and their work: see Fraser, *op. cit.*, p.288.

¹⁴ Tyerman's *Whitefield*, I.333-4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I.352.

¹⁶ Fraser's *Ralph Erskine*, p.301, and Wesley's letter of 26th June 1740, given below.

¹⁷ E. Erskine, *The Stone Rejected*, Edinburgh, 1732, pp 14, 39. Cf. Ralph Erskine's *Gospel-Compulsion*, 1739, p.10.

¹⁸ See J. S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, 2nd ed., 1937, pp.20-1.

¹⁹ See Wesley's *Journal*, II.369-71.

²⁰ R. Erskine, *Fraud and Falsehood Discovered*, pp.32-3, where Erskine claims that he has 'not omitted or altered one word'.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.34-5.

²² Fraser's *Ralph Erskine*, pp.318-20.

²³ R. Erskine, *Fraud and Falsehood Discovered*, p.36.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.36.

²⁵ Tyerman's *Whitefield*, I.504.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I.505-8; D. Fraser, *Life and Diary of the Reverend Ebenezer Erskine*, 1831, p.427.

²⁷ Tyerman's *Whitefield*, I.506-14; Fraser's *Ralph Erskine*, pp.326-35; Fraser's *Ebenezer Erskine*, pp. 424-7.

²⁸ Copy in the British Museum, 4175.aa.103(6). Cf. items (2), (3) and (4) in the same collection for other Scottish attacks on Whitefield. For extracts from Gib's pamphlet, see Tyerman's *Whitefield*, I.511-13.

²⁹ Tyerman's *Whitefield*, II.22.

³⁰ R. Erskine, *Fraud and Falsehood Discovered*, p.37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12mo, pp.(ii),61. The copy I used was that belonging to Mr D. S. M. Greenhalgh, of Harrogate.