

Accordingly, along with a small group of sympathizing ministers and ultimately his brother Ralph, he formed a secession under the name of the Associate Presbytery. They were evangelical and they needed support; and, being few, they turned to Whitefield, whose name had gone abroad over the land. In May, 1739, Ralph Erskine invited him to Scotland; in June, Whitefield's Journal reports him as reading the sermons of the Erskines, and thereafter he first mentioned his Calvinistic views in a sermon. The inference is that he drew his Calvinism, as well as his conception of religion, from Scotland; but this must be qualified by the fact that his contemporaries attributed it, not to Scotland, but specifically to Jonathan Edwards, with whom he came into contact in New England.

Let us turn now to consider the elements in the early Methodists' preaching which would put them into sympathy or antagonism with the Scots. This brings us to John Wesley. He also was of Oxford and of the "Holy Club." Indeed, he ultimately supplanted his brother Charles in the leadership of the "Methodist" circle. It is fair to assume, then, that he knew Scougal's "excellent treatise" and was helped by it, but the little book did not create the transformation of view and of feeling in his life that it did in that of George Whitefield. That which he regarded as his conversion came somewhat later through the influence of German Moravians (how international the christianity that is of the heart really is!), at a prayer-meeting in Aldersgate St., London. Let him describe the whole occurrence: "About a quarter before nine, while he, [one who was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ; I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. . . . I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."