

# ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S

## TOUR IN SCOTLAND

*How He Is Remembered By Those Who Saw Him Then.*

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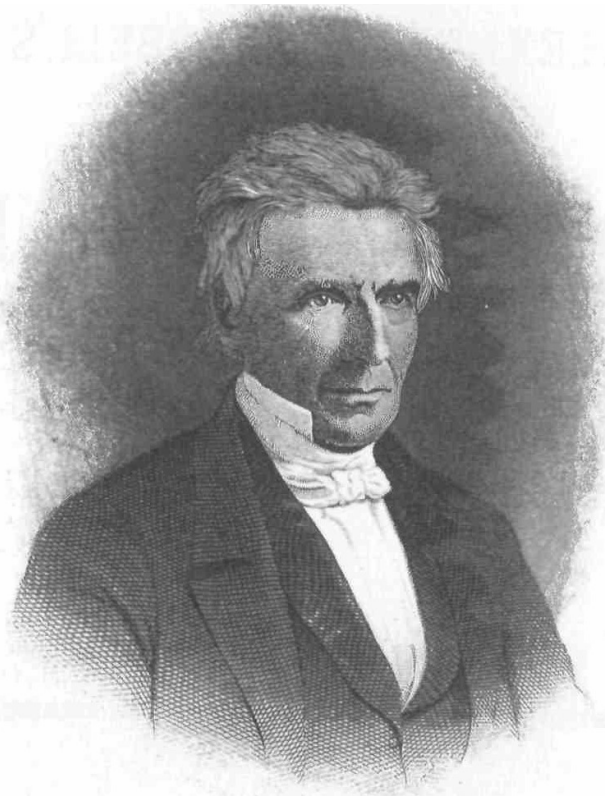
Philosophy as well as religion teaches that to conquer enemies is not the work of swords, or lances or bows of steel. It is not to bind men's persons to a triumphal car, to incarcerate them in strongholds, or to make them surrender to superior bravery, prowess and strength. To conquer an enemy is to convert him into a friend. —*Alexander Campbell* in 1830.

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A. CAMPBELL.

Anno Ætat 65.

*affectionately and truly yours*  
*A. Campbell*

TO MY MOTHER

Whose patience and appreciation were my encouragement during the writing of these papers, this little book is dedicated.

# Preface.

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In justice to myself and respect to the reader, it is but right that I state here, that when the papers of this little book began to appear in **THE GUIDE**, it was no thought of mine that they should ever take a more permanent form; and it has been only at the urgent desire of many friends, known and unknown, that I consented to their publication. During the four months while these papers were being written and published weekly, the author was busier than at any other time in his life. With the care of a congregation of over five hundred members, the editing of a bi-weekly church paper, preaching every night for three weeks of that time, moving from one congregation to another with all the burdens and confusion incident to such a change, doing considerable other miscellaneous writing, he wrote these papers, each one as it was needed by the publisher.

The narrative as a whole is authentic, though it would be too much for me to claim that I have produced *verbatim* the speeches of my informants. The whole matter required such a developing as to make it symmetrical and complete, and this I have not hesitated to do, though it has been my constant aim to be true to my text.

If the story here told leads the young people of our homes, our Sunday-schools, and our societies of Christian endeavor, to a better appreciation and a greater interest in one of America's chief reformers, it will have fulfilled its mission.

THOMAS CHALMERS.

Brooklyn, N. Y., March 25, 1892.

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# Introduction

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## **HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL.**

Alexander Campbell appeared on the field of religious conflict at a "psychological moment." The disturbed condition of theology in the public mind demanded the work which he did. There was a lull in the battle which had raged on Christian territory for more than three centuries. Persecutions had ceased, the mighty engines of the Inquisition rested, and the last embers of the fagots at the stake had become cold. The lull was one of dazed confusion. The warriors had stopped to breathe and look about them to see really who was right and who was wrong. They surely could not all be right, but for toleration's sake—for peace and rest—each one decided to give all the others over to Satan and perdition, and let them work their own damnation if they chose.

That something was out of joint was plain, but in the unskilled theological surgery of the time, no one could see just where the fracture was, or how to deal with it. Just then Alexander Campbell came. "We are all wrong," said he, "and can never live in Christian concord, even though we may agree to practice mutual forbearance so long as we stand off looking at each other at these angles. Let us return to the original church as it is developed and portrayed in Scripture." That was a novel idea. The disputants looked each other in the face and smiled; but many were ashamed to obey the summons immediately, though it had a salutary effect even on those who stood still in their tracks, and from that day many have been the longing, lingering glances cast toward the primitive church. And we may be assured that, from this day on, the great Christian movements which contain the elements of permanency, will be in the direction of the early church.

The present religious awakening in France will carry the church, says M. Vogue, toward a more "primitive evangelical faith." The waves of Campbell's influence have spread far beyond the circle of his own religious household. In a conversation last year with one of the most eminent clergymen in New York City, who has been the spokesman of his denomination for Christian unity, I found what seemed to be an explanation

for his progressive spirit and views when he said he had early read much of Campbell's writings. I would not, however, be understood to believe that the great movements of which I speak, are the effects of this one man's influence. They have a greater meaning for me than that— but that Alexander Campbell was the greatest and ablest exponent of the idea which underlies these movements, as Calvin was of the Divine Sovereignty idea, Wesley of the personal piety idea, and Channing of the divine humanity idea, is what I mean to say. His name stands for the new doctrine, of a return to the conditions of primitive Christianity. "To come firmly and fairly to original ground," taking up things where the apostles left them; to be able to produce a "Thus saith the Lord," either in expressed statement or approved precedent, for everything *that is required*; to rebuild the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem; —this is *Campbellism* if Campbellism is anything, and if any one wishes to apply to these *human* efforts that name, and is understood to mean no more, it would be difficult to reject the designation.

A sketch of Campbell's life and the external or objective conditions that contributed to the success of his great ecclesiastical enterprise viewed in relation to his great intellectual make-up, should be the trend of these preliminary pages.

Alexander Campbell was born in Antrim County, Ireland, September 12, 1788. His maternal ancestors were Huguenots who, driven from France, after Louis XIV had revoked the edict of Nantes, had sought refuge among the Presbyterian population of the North of Ireland. The blood of these intelligent, God-fearing, but man-defying and courageous Frenchmen was no slight legacy. On his father's side Alexander was of Highland Scotch descent. No Highland clan has played more important and respectable a part in the history of the world than has the clan Campbell of Argyle. It was on the territory of this clan, and through its steady support that the light of Christianity and education, as kindled on the little isle of Iona by Columba, in the sixth century, was long kept burning, and it was as late as the eleventh century that the ancient and purer religion of the Culdees was replaced on the western coasts of Scotland by the ecclesiasticism of Rome. There is something innately inimical to religious corruption in the sturdy stock of the western isles of Scotland, for it was here that the restored Gospel in the early days of Protestantism was received back again, as something precious

but lost, by these people who have so stoutly maintained it since. The Roman church held dominion for less than five centuries over the Scottish ancestors of Alexander Campbell. His grandfather was a Roman Catholic, but became an Episcopalian; his father, Thomas Campbell, advanced one step farther and became a Presbyterian, and Alexander completed the return to the primitive faith. These steps indicate the tendency of the stock; there was something in it antagonistic to ecclesiastical power and ritual, and whenever a step was taken, the face was turned toward Jerusalem. Opposite tendencies are often noticed. In the early part of this century the Oxford movement made itself felt in the whole religious society of England, turning the faces of Puritans toward Canterbury, and of Anglicans toward Rome where its logical end was, and resulting as it inevitably would, in a wide-spread secession to the Roman church, where Newman, Pusey, Keble and Froude constitutionally belonged any way. There was no cause of alarm to Protestants; it was a natural and temporal reaction from the uncouthness and ugliness in the Puritan idea of worship. But the faces of the Campbell family were not turned toward Rome or Canterbury—they were not seeking beauty and symbolism in church worship; they were lost in the woods and were "seeking for the old paths"—they turned their faces toward the city of the Great Pentecost, that they might find the old landmarks; then beauty of worship might be considered, but not till the true church is found.

Thomas Campbell, the father of Alexander, was graduated from Glasgow University in three departments—the college, the theological seminary and the medical school. In his college class was his eminent cousin, the poet of his own name. He returned to his native place in the north of Ireland and became employed in the double profession of preaching and teaching. He founded and became the Principal of Rich Hill Academy. It was here that Alexander received the rudiments of his education, and was prepared for college. As a youth he was not remarkable for his diligence in study, being a fond lover of nature and out-of-door exercise, though to manual labor he seems, like many other boys who afterwards became eminent, to have been averse. He was, however, both physically and mentally vigorous; his mind was "alert, comprehensive and retentive, and the vast fund of information on all subjects of history and literature, in the use of which he showed such astonishing facility in his later life, was largely accumulated in these early

years. He assisted his father as a teacher in the Rich Hill Academy, at the same time he continued his own studies, under paternal tuition, and thereby developed his wonderful faculties of assimilating, arranging and distributing facts and theories as he required them. His grasp of a subject, and quick power of discrimination made him at all times consistent with himself, for no idea was ready to be dealt out until it found a place for itself in his own system of philosophy according to the fundamental principles on which he rested. His education was already a liberal and thorough one when he entered Edinburgh University in the fall of 1808. He had started with his mother and brothers and sisters for America, but the vessel was wrecked on an island off the west coast of Scotland. It was then, that, sitting on the stump of a broken mast amid the gloom and uncertainty of his surroundings, he made a covenant with God, that if he was rescued from the misfortunes of that day the services of his life would be laid at the altar of the Lord. How well he kept that promise for sixty years, all the world knows. In Glasgow University he was instructed by some of the most eminent scholars of their time—Young, the grammarian; Jardine, the logician; and Ure, the physicist. Besides the classic atmosphere of the University which he breathed, he was thrown into intimate association with some of Glasgow's greatest preachers. The man whom, more than all others, he found congenial in religious matters was the eminent Greville Ewing, divine and lexicographer, who was at that time one of the ablest advocates of the principles of Christian faith and practice, then urged by the Haldanes. Many were the doubts and questionings of young Campbell—natural condition of mind to the young collegian when his intellect is stirred to its greatest activity, and the philosophy of his childhood is being reconstructed—but his doubts and questionings never shook his faith in the fundamentals of the Christian system; they laid hold of the external trappings of the church which surrounded and obscured the orb of "the sun of righteousness."

In the summer of 1809 he, with the remainder of the family which his father, who had come to America two years before, had left in his charge, sailed a second time for the new land across the seas, this time to reach his destination safely. He was nearly two months on the sea, landing in New York, September 29. That he was by nature something of a poet, is shown by a few lines written during the voyage, on "The Ocean." In them we see



his spirit of reverence, his feeling of awe in face of the powerful and grand, and his sense of the sublime. This was the character of his religious sensibilities, —it was the grandeur, glory and majesty of God as manifested in the sublime and transcendent excellence of Jesus Christ, our prophet, priest and king, which carried him to heights of pulpit eloquence that have been seldom reached. One who has witnessed a storm at sea in the night time may see here the picture which he so thrillingly paints: —

"When night comes on and darkness veils the skies;  
When black'ning clouds and howling storms arise:  
When dismal horror broods upon the deep,  
And awful terrors wake the mind from sleep,  
See, from the poles, the forked lightnings fly,  
And paint in solemn glares the black'ning sky;  
Then from the south begin the dreadful blasts,  
Hark! how they roar amidst the groaning masts:  
See hemp and canvas to their force give way,  
And through the air in shreds and fragments stray."

Though these lines bear the marks of the youthful pen, and are clothed in the style of the eighteenth century classicism, which was about that time in its death throes, they contain a vividness of drawing and vigor of expression that make them a credit to the young man, and they doubtless would have been received with greater favor by Francis Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Reviewers*, than was the much berated, but triumphant *Excursion*. But the swing of the pendulum of literary taste in this century has been toward Wordsworth and his Lake School.

Thomas Campbell had already, when Alexander arrived, begun the Reformation in the wilds of Western Pennsylvania. The spirit of bigotry and sectarianism was here as exclusive as it was in the Old World, where there was so much in the traditions of the soil to preserve it. The spirit of Thomas Campbell could not but grieve at the divided and discordant condition of Christians in this new land where they certainly should have dwelt together in peace and harmony, being drawn as they were near to Nature's heart, surrounded by all that was wild and primeval. But they had brought with them the creeds which were made by men in theological conflict in a distant

age and land, and which ever reopened the old sores, that in the forests of America should have been permitted to heal. To bring about a better understanding between Christians of differing orders, Thomas Campbell, with a few congenial spirits, wrote and published what has become famous as "*The Declaration and Address*" of Washington, Pennsylvania. It was a proposal to drop the denominational distinctions, such as names, creeds, etc., and take up the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. The statement of Sir Thomas Browne in the *Religio Medici*, concerning the church, was re-adapted to the New World, and became, "Where the *Scripture* speaks, we speak; where the *Scripture* is silent, we are silent." This is the only consistent rule for Protestants. If the religion of the Bible is the religion of Protestants, what else can we say? The consistency of this principle was at once recognized by Alexander, and he determined to devote himself without pay to its advocacy. He was a young man, fresh from college, and the resolution which he here made had the appearance of the rashness of youth, and had we lived then we should have said, "A few years will cool the young man's ardor;" but the record of nearly three-score years would have falsified our surmise, for though the young man was shortly afterward offered a position of dazzling prospect as Principal of a promising Academy in Pittsburg, at what was then an enormous salary—\$1,000 a year—he declined with unshaken resolution. What the future had in store for him he did not know, but, with apostolic courage, had said, "This one thing I do," and he did it; and to the day of his death he never received one dollar for his services as a preacher of the Gospel. This precedent which I believe was not repeated, but which has left its influence on the brotherhood, has been severely criticized. It has no doubt been an injury to our religious body—we might have been more vigorous today if he had set a different example—but that is not the point we are considering; it was an act of noble self-sacrifice which has made the picture of human nature brighter in these days of Mammonism. But the disinterested resolution of the young man was afterward greatly blessed even with the goods of this world.

His first sermon was preached in a near Washington, Pennsylvania, to a congregation. This day was the real opening of his career. It not only secured for him an enviable and valuable reputation in the community, but

revealed to him his own powers, and these self-revelations have often more to do with our lives than the applause of the multitudes. "After the audience was dismissed, there seemed to be but one opinion as to the qualifications of the speaker. All seemed to be forcibly struck with what they had heard. The young gazed upon the youth with wondering eyes, while the older members said one to another in subdued tones, 'Why, this is a better preacher than his father!'—a decision which in view of Thomas Campbell's reputation as a speaker was one of the highest compliments they could bestow." (See Richardson's "Memoirs of A. Campbell.")

The success of this first discourse gave him plenty to do, and during the course of the first year he preached no less than one hundred and six sermons.

On March 12, 1811, he was married to a refined and beautiful young lady named Margaret Brown, the only child of a wealthy Virginian. In the following year, on the birth of their first child, the subject of infant baptism came up for consideration in practical form. Hitherto he had regarded it as a matter only of mutual forbearance on the part of Christians, and as having nothing to do with the reformation in which he was engaged. He now determined, as his custom was with troublesome questions, to make a thorough study of the whole subject, and therefore put it beyond further peradventure. He read all the pedobaptist authorities he could find, but his mind was far from satisfied with their conclusions. He then read the Greek New Testament very carefully through, examining the etymological significance of the word *baptism*, and arrived at last at the conviction that only *the immersion of believers* was scriptural baptism. He and his wife and all his father's family were accordingly baptized in Buffalo Creek, June 12, 1812, and to the Baptist preacher who immersed him he said, "I will be baptized *into the primitive Christian faith*." He was, therefore, never a Baptist in a partisan sense, but from the time of his baptism a Christian of the apostolic order. But for convenience he became connected with the Redstone Baptist Association and remained so until the agitation following his famous sermon on the law led him to seek more congenial companionship in the Mahoning Association of Ohio. This memorable discourse was delivered in a grove on the banks of Cross Creek in the picturesque scenery of West Virginia. This "*Sermon on the Law*" created

such subsequent excitement in the Baptist community that it is commonly regarded as the parting of the roads between the Baptists and Disciples. The former have, however, advanced to a point as far as this sermon. The late Dr. Jeffrey of Brooklyn, a leading Baptist, preached the same sermon once before a Baptist Association in Philadelphia and at another time to one in Warren, Rhode Island, and at both times it was received with profound attention and admiration. This was a sufficient test that, if the Baptists made that discourse the signal for breaking communion with Disciples in that day, they would not do it in this.

In 1820 Campbell accepted rather reluctantly a challenge to a debate on baptism with a Rev. John Walker, a Presbyterian preacher. It was his first experience in a character of work in which he afterward so eminently distinguished himself. The debate was held at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, and was a most obvious triumph for Campbell. The printed discussion went through two editions and widely extended the fame and influence of the rising man who had already become quite generally known as a scholar and orator. In 1823 a second debate was held with another Presbyterian preacher, named McCalla, in Washington, Kentucky. This debate being also published, and the victory quite generally conceded to Campbell, his reputation was further extended, and he became favorably known to the Baptists in Kentucky and Tennessee. In the same year he had begun the publication of *The Christian Baptist*, a monthly religious journal, polemic in tone, but devoted to the interests of no sect, unless it was to that sect which was in the early days everywhere spoken against. The effect of this publication was electrical. It was just what many were praying for. He recognizes this want from the first. In the preface to the first edition dated July 4, 1823, he says:

"We are very certain that to such as are praying for illumination and instruction in righteousness, and not availing themselves of the means afforded in the Divine Word to obtain an answer to their prayers, our remarks on many topics will appear unjust, illiberal, and even heretical; and as there are so many praying for light, and inattentive to what God has manifested in his word, there must be a multitude to oppose the way of truth and righteousness. This was the case when God's Messiah, the mighty Redeemer of Israel appeared. Ten thousand prayers were daily offered for his appearance, ten

thousand wishes expressed for his advent, ten thousand orations pronounced respecting the glory and character of his reign; and strange to tell! when he appeared, the *same* ten thousand tongues were employed in his defamation! Yea, they were praying for his coming when he stood in the midst of them, as many now are praying for light when it is in their hands."

Ideas so bold, and language so forcible, could not but greatly impress the wide-awake and inquiring mind of those days of theological shaking up. "We know from acquaintance," said he, "that there is a goodly number of sensible and intelligent persons, at this day, entirely disgusted with many things *called* religious; upon the whole it is an age of inquiry." So it was, and a magazine so bristling with striking and novel expression of old truths, almost forgotten, had its place at just that time. I continue quoting from the first preface, sentences that "went home," and do what they would, whoever read them could not get away from them. They were new, but self-evident for all that. "We have been taught that we are liable to err; we have found ourselves in many errors; we candidly acknowledge that we have changed our views on many subjects, and our views have changed our actions." It was a new idea that views should have much to do with one's actions in theology. Many continued to practice what their views could hardly correspond with, and *vice versa*. That last clause rang in their ears, "*Our views have changed our actions.*" Again, in the same preface, the author states that one of the rules of his life has been "Never to hold any sentiment or proposition as more certain than the evidence on which it rests; or, in other words, that our assent to a proposition should be precisely proportioned to the evidence on which it rests. All beyond this we esteem enthusiasm—all short of it, incredulity." It would be impossible for us to describe the effect produced by so few words on the minds of those who *thought* on religious subjects. Some of his utterances were fearless, even to apparent rashness, but it was the only kind of speech that had any place in the iconoclasm in which he was engaged. He deemed it a matter of no greater consequence that the heathen should be converted "to the popular Christianity of these times" than that popular Christians themselves should be converted to the Christianity of the New Testament. In these papers he loved to dwell on the beauty and grandeur of the Christian religion, and to

lead his readers to a nobler and loftier conception of what they had before looked at only through their respective theological spectacles. Read these sublime words of the first article in the first issue: "Christianity is the perfection of that divine philanthropy which was gradually developing itself for four thousand years. It is the bright effulgence of every divine attribute, mingling and harmonizing, as the different colors in the rainbow, in the bright shining after rain, into one complete system of perfections—the perfection of glory to God in the highest heaven, the perfection of **PEACE** on earth, and the perfection of **GOOD WILL** among men."

We have not time to dwell longer on the contents of the *Christian Baptist*, wonderful storehouse of riches. It was enlarged and changed into a more gentle and less polemical channel after a continuance of seven years, and named the *Millennial Harbinger*. The former was a paper for its day and hour; the latter, for all time.

In 1829 the most widely known debate of Campbell's life took place in Cincinnati with the great socialist, Robert Owen of New Lanark, Scotland. The latter had been establishing his cooperative communities in various parts of the United States, but found religious principles a considerable annoyance to him. He, therefore, issued a challenge at the close of a course of lectures in New Orleans to the clergy in the United States to discuss with him in public debate the evidences of Christianity, in which he would undertake to prove "twelve fundamental propositions" which we have not space to enumerate, but which were calculated to make short work of the whole Christian religion. His challenge met with no acceptance until Alexander Campbell, alarmed at the situation, for silence on the part of the clergy would be a concession of weakness, inasmuch as Robert Owen was too eminent a man to be ignored, came forward and presented himself as the defender of the assailed religion. The debate lasted eight days; it was afterward published in Cincinnati and republished in London, and, more than any other printed discussion of the issues between Christians and infidels it has served to strengthen the Christian faith. I need not further allude to this discussion here, for considerable attention is given to it in the papers of this book.

In 1830 Alexander Campbell held a place as delegate in the most illustrious assembly which ever met in Virginia—the convention to remodel the civil constitution of the Commonwealth—and in which, as delegates, were such statesmen as James Madison and James Monroe, former Presidents, Chief-Justice Marshall and John Randolph, of Roanoke.

A few years later a second great debate was held in Cincinnati—this time with Bishop, afterwards Archbishop, Purcell on the issue between Romanism and Protestantism. The learning and ability here displayed on both sides were conspicuous. It closed with the apparent satisfaction of the friends of Purcell, and with great rejoicing on the part of the Protestants.

In 1840 Campbell founded Bethany College among the romantic hills about his own home in West Virginia. This college under his inspiration, attracted the young men of minds congenial with his own, and who revered him as the sage in whom dwelt learning and philosophy, from all parts of the Union, North and South. Here a brilliant *literati* discussed the themes of God and the universe. It was an educational enterprise of considerable magnitude for those days and in those regions, and the service that it did to the cause of the Reformation in that incipient stage, can not be overestimated. The prime movers in the Reformation were preeminently scholars, educated in the best institutions of the old world. A more educated and brilliant trio than Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott, a graduate of Edinburgh University, has seldom appeared in the history of religious movements, and the diversity of their talents and characteristics, with the oneness of their minds in things religious, has been a legacy to the Disciple brotherhood that should be warmly cherished. The gentleness and sweet spirit of the learned patriarch are ours, and we rob ourselves of a part of our legitimate possession when we suffer these elements to rust in disuse. The fervid, emotional temperament of Walter Scott, secret of his wonderful moving power as an orator, should also be ours if we can possess it, for it was one of the elements of our early prosperity. But the personality of the supreme mind of the trio has left its impress so deeply upon us, that none of us need be charged to cling to the memory of Alexander Campbell.

In 1843 the great debate with Rev. W. L. Rice, a Presbyterian, took place in Lexington, Kentucky, at which Hon. Henry Clay presided as Moderator.

Throughout the debate the boastful manner of Mr. Rice and his readiness and ingenuity in reply and improvisation, quite deceived the less intelligent listeners, and the Presbyterians were greatly encouraged with what seemed this time to have the effect of a victory. They eagerly, purchased the copyright of the debate for \$2, 000, and began to publish and distribute it, but to their great disappointment, the *printed* discussion did not have the effect they had desired, and wherever it went it made converts to Campbell's views. Presbyterianism began to decline in Lexington and throughout Kentucky from secessions to the ranks of the Disciples and Baptists, and has never been vigorous since.

No view of the Reformation Campbell inaugurated is complete without a consideration of the great Kentucky Revival under B. W. Stone, which created such a sensation in those parts as has never been equaled in this country. It was a reaction from the irreligion which the struggles with the new country had brought upon those early settlers. They had wandered away from Christ, and this great revival was the loud wail or piercing cry of the child which has thoughtlessly wandered away from the side of its mother, only to suddenly look about and realize that she is lost. It is then that the child wants her mother. She cannot be soothed with sweets, or quieted with toys; —she *wants her mother*. So with these poor people in Kentucky and Tennessee who suddenly awoke to their helplessness without Christ. Nor could they be soothed with theology and creeds; they wanted to go directly to Christ. It is thus that the work of B. W. Stone ran so parallel with that of Alexander Campbell, though the men were intellectually entirely different, and the movement of the former became absorbed in that of the latter. I quote from "*The History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky*" by Dr. Robert Davidson, a professor at the time of its publication in 1847, in Transylvania University: "In all the affairs connected with the schism (the great Revival), the organization of the Springfield Presbytery, and the subsequent formation of societies known under the various names of New Lights, Christians, Arians, Marshallites, and Stoneites, he (Stone) was the leading spirit until they were merged in the all-embracing vortex of Campbellism in 1831."

In the summer of 1847 Campbell visited Europe, but we need not more than mention it here, for the events of this tour constitute the theme of the



following papers. I must, however, beg leave to quote the letter of Henry Clay, which Campbell carried with him. It is interesting both because of its author, and the relation it bears to the subject of this book.

The Rev. Dr. A. Campbell, the bearer hereof, a citizen of the United States of America, residing in the Commonwealth of Virginia, being about to make a voyage to Europe and to travel particularly in Great Britain, Ireland and Prance, I take great satisfaction in strongly recommending him to the kind offices and friendly reception and treatment of all persons with whom he may meet and wherever he may go. Dr. Campbell is among the most eminent citizens of the United States, distinguished for his great learning and ability, for his successful devotion to the education of youth, for his piety and as the head and founder of one of the most important and respectable religious communities in the United States. Nor have his great talents been exclusively confined to the religious and literary walks in which he has principally moved; he was a distinguished member, about twenty years ago, of the convention called in the State of Virginia to remodel its civil constitution, in which, besides other eminent men, were ex-Presidents Madison and Monroe, and John Marshall, the late Chief-Justice of the United States.

Dr. Campbell, whom I have the honor to regard personally as my friend, carries with him my wishes and my prayers for his health and happiness whilst abroad, and for his safe return to his country, which justly appreciates him so highly.

H. CLAY.

**ASHLAND**, Kentucky,  
May, 1847.

What the world will have to say of Alexander Campbell cannot now be fully foreseen, but the dawn of a brighter day for his memory is certainly appearing. Among the denominations in which a half century ago no one could do him justice, and remain, are preachers today who dwell in pulpit lectures on his life, and, in glowing terms, give him rank among the old

world reformers. \* We are truly coming to a juster appreciation of a hero "of whom the world was not worthy."

\*See sermon on "Campbell, the Disciple," by Dr. Kerr B. Tapper of Denver, Colorado, in recent issue of the *Christian Standard*.

# I. How He is Remembered by Those who saw Him Then.

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About forty-five years ago Alexander Campbell, then in the ripeness of his age, with a life of immense labors and wonderful fruits behind him, but yet in the vigor of his intellect left his adopted America for a tour in the old world, the purpose of which was as much to disseminate the principles, to the advocacy of which he had dedicated his life, as to recuperate his relaxing strength. This tour by some of its unfortunate circumstances has become famous to all who know anything of the life of the man. It was the writer's good fortune while in Scotland a few months ago to meet two gentlemen whose reminiscences on this subject are interesting, one an aged kirk of Scotland clergyman who has a vivid remembrance of Alexander Campbell in his visit to Scotland, who heard him speak several times and bears the picture on his mind of the great American reformer as if he had but seen him yesterday. He is familiar with every circumstance of his accusation and imprisonment, with all its causes and details. But before entering into this description of our venerable Scottish friend, let us

rehearse briefly the commonest outlines of these events as we have them from our biographical sources.

When Alexander Campbell left this country, he carried with him the highest respects and honor of a great nation. He was known and esteemed by the greatest Americans of his day, and was received with distinction by the representatives of our government abroad, being the guest, while in London, of Bancroft, the historian, the minister plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James. President and founder of one of our considerable colleges, a statesman with our Madisons, Monroes, Marshalls and Randolphs, the father of what Henry Clay then termed "one of the most important and respectable religious communities in the United States," he could not but receive the respectful attention of the people of Europe. In all parts of England he was received with honor, addressing large audiences in Chester, Liverpool, London, Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle and many other important cities. He was the most interesting American of his time outside of the circle of politics, and it is wonderful how wide his fame had spread on the other side of the Atlantic. When Beecher was lecturing in England in behalf of the American Union, he was in many places but little known—even before his great Liverpool address he was advertised in the Liverpool papers as a "certain Baptist preacher from America." The great audiences that assembled to hear him, knew him chiefly as a propagandist of abolition doctrine. But not so with the subject of this sketch. In no town in England was the name of the famed "American arch-heretic" unknown. The fact that the people who held his teaching were distinguished to the world only as they wore his name bears record to the greatness of his fame. The vast multitudes that filled the largest halls to hear him were not attracted as in the case of Beecher by their interest in a peculiar political crisis or the definiteness of some theme to be discussed—Alexander Campbell had no one definite theme to which he held himself nor political theory to be advocated—but by the peculiar interest which people will always have in a man who has prescribed the thought of thousands and exposed some of what Carlyle might paradoxically call the "eternal unveracities." To such a man the English people (for they are hero-worshipers) will pay homage. And it was quite generally accepted throughout English speaking nations that some of the "eternal unveracities"

had been brought to light under the pick of this great American. He had laid the ax at the root of more trees than one in the woods of ecclesiasticism and the light from above was beginning to shine in with no little discomfort to the promoters of darkness, but to the great satisfaction of many that dwelt therein. He was also well known in England as the Father of a marvelously growing and intelligent religious body in America with many adherents in Great Britain. It was, then, the personality of the man that drew his great houses.

I pause here to observe that the fame of our reformer has greatly waned since his death. He is not known so widely now as he was known fifty years ago. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., in a recent series on great American reformers have not a name on the list that stands for so much in the religious thought of this age as that of Alexander Campbell but his name is not there. Washington Gladden in a recent series of lectures on great reformers stops when he arrives at Campbell. He has Channing and others but Campbell is not there. We as a people are much to blame for this. We will preach in our pulpits on Wycliffe and Luther and Bunyan but we are cautious in the mention of one who has been of more immediate service to us than all these. Many of our own people hardly know the name of this century's greatest champion of religious truth. Lest some few should call us "Campbellite" we would suffer the name of a great man to die. He was, therefore, far better known when he was a living actor on life's stage than now. The contrary is true of Wesley and others whose lives are better and more widely known now than they were in the time of their lives, because of the loyalty of their followers. If our silence concerning the great man before us is to the single glory of the Christ it is a silence worthily intended, but the recognition and praise of virtue in men can never derogate from the honor of the perfect man—the world will be better and the picture of human nature richer for the knowledge of its truly great ones.

To return to my rambles let me state that when Alexander Campbell visited England and Scotland his fame had long preceded him—interest in him was so general that even his political opinions, on slavery, and other topics were retailed and discussed. This brings us to our narrative.



## II. Campbell Discussed on a Train

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On a bright July morning, I left St. Pancras station, London, for Scotland. The great train with its numerous coaches stood on the track for at least thirty minutes. A tumultuous crowd is on the platform; some in outing suits are going off to the lakes for a few days or weeks, others are seeing friends away. Some are excited, nervous, rushing about, and wasting time by hurrying—now they find themselves in a wrong carriage, and now they have forgotten something. Others are coolheaded and self-possessed, they are masters of the situation, they make no mistake, they forget nothing; they find themselves in the right carriage with all their luggage with them. Among these latter, I noticed a venerable looking gentleman with long hair that came down nearly to his shoulders and white as snow; he was tall and erect, the benignant smile of an English parson upon his smooth face, I watched him as he walked to the book stall and purchased the *Religious Review of Reviews*. Then he turned and came directly toward my compartment, and as he approached I saw he wore the clerical dress, which confirmed me in my surmise that he was an English clergyman. This was Goldsmith's veritable Dr. Primrose raised from the dead again. He entered my compartment, which I had been occupying alone, and seating himself

opposite me, began reading the magazine I had seen him buy. Soon the bustle and hurry on the platform subsided, our tickets were examined by the guards, and the train pulled out.

I settled myself down to reading the *Times*, and noticed nothing more until we were flying through one of the most perfectly cultivated and beautiful pieces of farming country I had ever seen.

We were approaching Bedford and, as if by a mysterious influence, my thoughts began to turn upon Sloughs of Despond, Valleys of Humiliation, Hills of Difficulty, and Delectable Mountains. It had been many years since I had last read Pilgrim's Progress, but all the scenes in the wanderings of poor Christian and the picture of Bedford jail now flashed upon my mind as I had always seen them in imagination. But here I now was in the hallowed city of great Bunyan's habitation.

There, at some distance from the railroad track, stands what remains of Bedford jail, though much unlike the "Bedford gaol" of my childhood's fancy. There, within those dreary walls was a great spirit confined—no, I will not say *confined*, for a great spirit is not to be held within walls of stone,—from those dreary walls rather a great light shone to the everlasting gratitude of many that have dwelt in darkness. It was not difficult now for my friend and me to fall into conversation—here was a matter of deep mutual interest. I was thinking of Bunyan, and I knew he was. Bunyan's imprisonment became the subject of our conversation.

He being, as I supposed, an Anglican clergyman, I was cautious as to what I said about the injustice of Bunyan's treatment by the Church of England. I was, therefore, quite surprised when he not only expressed his disapproval of the English church in this matter, but criticized it very unfavorably in many others—in matters of doctrine, worship and ecclesiastical organization, ending his remark by saying it was "but the Romish church with an English name and the English sovereign for its pope." It was now plain to my mind that he was a nonconformist. I felt more interest in him than ever, and entered with greater freedom into the discussion of matters of religion. I began such an argument against church establishments generally as I thought would just please my venerable dissenter, that, therefore, I



might place myself still more in his favor and be better able to learn from him all he knew of the religious condition of Great Britain.

But I was not half through with my tirade when I saw by his countenance that my ideas were not at all tasteful to him, so closing my little speech at the first stopping place, I paused to hear the effect I had produced. Imagine then my confusion when he began an earnest, but mild argument in support of church establishments, maintaining that only by them can the strongest types of national character be produced. "Non-conformity produces no really great men," said he, "it is out of the current of national life. The great men among the dissenters, the Miltons, the Wesleys, and even the founders of your own Puritan New England were reared within the influence, and educated at the colleges of church establishments;" and so he went on. I felt myself out at sea. I at first had taken my friend for an Established church clergyman, then for a non-conformist minister, but here he is neither a churchman nor a dissenter and yet a wearer of the cloth.

What could he be? He was not a Catholic priest, for but a moment ago he criticized the Anglican church as being but little better than the Romish. We were now just pulling out of Bedford, and our conversation drifted around again to Bunyan's imprisonment.

I observed that it was a strange coincidence that since the time of the Apostles, the world's greatest preachers and reformers have, some time in their lives, suffered imprisonment for their doctrine's sake—Luther, in the castle of Wartburg (though a friendly incarceration). Bunyan, the great Baptist, spent twelve years of his life here in Bedford jail. Wesley, the founder of Methodism, in a tour through Scotland, was falsely charged and thrown into prison, and Alexander Campbell, the American Reformer, suffered a similar injustice on a similar tour. As I spoke the name of Alexander Campbell, his eyes sparkled with interest. "Alexander Campbell!" said he, "yes, one of the world's truly great ones—one of the strong men that God so seldom makes. Yes, I think I ought to know something about him in his visit to Scotland; I heard him speak there several times—I had the honor of meeting him." I saw by my friend's animated countenance that he had hit upon one of his favorite topics. My own interest

was intense. Here was a man who could tell me what I could not read about one of my great heroes.

I told him how I was interested in his reminiscences and left him to his narrative. He leaned back into the corner of the carriage, and gazing for a moment out of the window, began:

"The summer of 1847 is one long for me to remember. I had just finished my education, having but the previous June completed my theological course in the University of Edinburgh. I had been settled in a wealthy and comfortable parish in a small town, a short distance from the city, with a very good living. All I could ask for was mine. Matters of theology were now of especial interest to me. I was a radical adherent to the *National Kirk of Scotland*, but like all young collegians, I was always ready to hear something new.

"Religious Scotland was much interested in the two great movements then in progress in America—the New England anti-creed rationalism and Alexander Campbell's 'anti-creed iconoclasm,' as I often heard it called. I knew little more of Campbell and his teachings than what I could learn from the religious press, and this was never satisfactory. The view of him that generally prevailed was that of a heretic to all the traditions of the church and the doctrines of the scripture, such as the divine Trinity, the Holy Spirit and many others which we orthodox Scots held as vital.

"His great debate with Robert Owen in defense of the Christian religion, however, was so able and uncompromising as to the fundamental truths of Christianity that he came to be looked upon with greater respect and even gratitude by many clergymen of all faiths. But it served to make many fear him the more and the news of his presence in Scotland was received with no little apprehension on the part of the most of us. A large number of intelligent people in Edinburgh regarded his religious views with favor. Several members of the Congregational and Free churches had recently gone over to the small band of his followers in Edinburgh. Many of the University students, influenced by Campbellistic views, were beginning to make dangerous investigations, and it was with considerable effort that we were able to subdue the cry for 'restoration' in our own congregations. Such

questions as 'Where is your scriptural authority?' and such demands as "Give me a 'Thus saith the Lord' for that" were becoming quite troublesome, especially as they came from our parishioners whose questionings we had always felt bound to satisfy. It was a very inopportune time for this greatest living preacher of heresy, who was the author of the very notions among our people that were most threatening, to visit Scotland. I was myself, though young, conservatively orthodox and fearful of the honor and stability of the doctrines of John Knox. Our great solicitude was how we might detract the public interest in Mr. Campbell from his religious views and fasten it somewhere else, or how we might entangle him in the discussion of other and unimportant questions and such as would destroy his influence with the Scottish people. You are surprised that we ministers of the gospel should stoop to such unfairness, but such things we deemed justifiable when the very foundations of Christian orthodoxy were imperiled."

"Yes," I soliloquized, "Orthodoxy! oh orthodoxy! how many crimes have been committed in thy name!"

"One Friday evening," continued my friend, "as I sat in my study, I was surprised by a call from the Congregational preacher of the town, a man named Kennedy, with whom I had not been on the most intimate terms because of the natural hostility between our congregations. I knew that some religious trouble was brewing, but such things were so common in those days of great interest in religious questions that I thought little of it. I took no papers except religious monthly publications, and was, therefore, out of the current of events. My interest was awakened, and I waited for my fellow preacher to state his mission. He came soon to the point, as he was an abrupt man, and broke out something like this: 'Scotland is on the verge of falling into the most damnable heresy. The time-honored faith of John Knox is to be tainted by the blackest Antinomianism. Alexander Campbell has been in England for a month, and is within the borders of Scotland now. He arrives in Edinburgh tomorrow, and next week has appointments in Waterloo Rooms, and will do the best he can, with the assistance of the Prince of Darkness, to destroy our religious peace. Several of my parishioners whom I had placed most dependence upon have left us and gone over to the Campbellite. Many of your members, though you may not know it, are tainted with these doctrines. Edinburgh is more disturbed than

the outlying towns, and if this man preaches for one week to the audiences in Waterloo Rooms, which will be sure to flock to see him, notwithstanding all that may be done to discourage them, there will be greater sorrow in the national kirk than she has known since the *Disruption* four years ago, and greater than she can stand at this juncture. Our duty is to devise means and work together against a common enemy. It is a fact that Mr. Campbell comes from Virginia where all are slave-holders, and it is reported that he is a defender of that institution. Now, this is the issue we must catch him on. Scotland will give no hearing to any man who will apologize for man-stealing. A committee of clergymen has been called for Monday afternoon in Edinburgh, and as you would understand best the sentiment of the students, we want you to take your place as one of this committee to determine what to do in this emergency. '

"Having said all this, he did not wait for a direct answer, but in his abrupt manner left me to myself."

### III. "Excitement was Loud against the Great American"

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We left our venerable friend just where his strange consultation with the Rev. Mr. Kennedy closed—a consultation on the best means of preventing the mischief which the great American reformer was likely to cause in the religious systems then most popular in Scotland—a consultation which brought together antagonistic teachers to fight a common enemy. This was the oft-repeated story of Scotland over again.

"Rival clans with one another fight,  
Till Norsemen boats along the coast they see;  
Then feuds aside are laid, they all unite  
To meet their enemy."

Mr. Kennedy had held his own as an Independent minister by the side of his friend's established kirk. This he did not fear, but Campbell's doctrines from far-away America had already crossed the ocean and broken into his congregation, taking from him some of his best members. And here was Alexander Campbell himself ready to upturn all Edinburgh, and with

Edinburgh all religious Scotland which took its light from that intellectual and literary center. And this at the time of a great theological ferment when the restoration of the primitive church was the spirit of the age and there was a general seeking for the old paths. Verily it was a time for apprehensions and we must not surprise ourselves that our friends across the sea, so zealous for their ancient faith, were busy at this time.

Our friend the narrator, whom, by the way, we shall call the Rev. John Laird, continued his interesting story:

"When Mr. Kennedy left my study after the consultation which I have described I devoted myself to devising some means by which the religious arisings, which I knew would follow Alexander Campbell's advent into Edinburgh, might be prevented. To prevent them would be much easier than to suppress them when they had come up. This was the important question. It did not occur to me that there might be anything which we could bring personally against Mr. Campbell which would prejudice him in the eyes of Scotchmen. I had always heard of him as an earnest and disinterested preacher of the gospel, who, though the cause of great mischief by his teachings, was yet in all his circumstances in life unassailable. I was, therefore, in considerable trouble of mind when one of my parishioners, a kind, fatherly man of unusual intelligence and much piety, came in. His name was Solomon Morton. The only fault I had in him was the very thing which now was troubling me most. He was an admirer of Campbell, had first become acquainted with him by reading the Owen debate, was a reader through a friend of the *Millennial Harbinger* and had some other of Campbell's works in his library. He had never advocated Campbellistic principles openly, though I knew that he privately indorsed the most of them. He had not been with me long when he informed me of what I had already learned, that Alexander Campbell was to give a course of lectures on the Christian religion in Waterloo Rooms, Edinburgh, the following week, and he hoped I could attend them; that he was going to attend himself and placed great expectations on seeing and hearing a man whom he considered one of the greatest of the time. He said he could not but dissent from some of his views, but on the whole he considered his work of inestimable service to the Christian world, in presenting their religion in a new and brighter light, so that it stood out clear, distinct and rational, and in

teaching the world a lesson no man had ever taught before—that the Bible was a book of definite doctrine and that it may be intelligently read. Many other things I listened to, but this was enough to fulfill my darkest apprehensions. Here was one of my own parishioners who could henceforth be counted upon as a genuine Campbellite. How many more there were in my congregation I did not know; how many there were in the churches scattered through Scotland I could not tell. When my friend continued and told me how general these doctrines were becoming in Bible-reading Scotland, my fears indeed ran high. Poor National Kirk! Another split she could not stand. From now on I was the sworn enemy of a man I had never seen, and who had never done me harm. So far it had not for an instant occurred to me that perhaps this man was right, that he had a case of his own. I was young and impetuous; if I had been turned his way, I would have been his loudest follower, but I had turned my face away from him and my prejudice was against him.

"My brother Morton did not stop with his high expression of Mr. Campbell's services to religion and the Bible, but mentioned many things of his practical Christianity which I had not known before. One of these was that he never accepted anything for his services, in behalf of the gospel, but being a wealthy Virginia landowner, he was able to devote the whole of his time and much of his means in support of the principles of his Reformation. Here was the point on which hung all the subsequent trouble. Campbell was a Virginian and a wealthy landowner, and therefore, without doubt, a slave-holder. This was in accord with what Kennedy had said, and it was just what we wanted. Scotland so overflowing just at this time with the most radical antislavery sentiment, would never tolerate a man who had anything to do with slavery. My friend soon left me, and I immediately wrote a note to Rev. James Robertson who was one of the few who were to meet and talk over any way of destroying the effect of Mr. Campbell's religious notions on the people of Edinburgh, and who was president of the Anti-Slavery Society, to ascertain, if possible, whether or not Campbell was a slave-holder, or what his ideas were on the subject. Our meeting and consultation as appointed was held in Edinburgh. Reverends Robertson, Kennedy and myself and many other clergymen were present, and as care had been exercised in selecting them, we were all intent upon the same aim,

to shut Alexander Campbell out of Scotland. Mr. Robertson had not yet found out anything about Campbell's position on slavery, other than that he had been an owner of slaves and had liberated them, but that he was to some extent an apologist for the institution. This information immediately disarmed some of us, and we were compelled, in the sight of fairness, to say that if this man had freed his slaves, he could not be the object of attack along that line. We, therefore, dissented from any further movement against him in this direction, unless sufficient justification could be found for it in fact. But Mr. Robertson and Mr. Kennedy were very rabid and were inclined to think that condoning an evil was as censurable as actual guilt. They attributed to him sinister motives for liberating his own slaves, and advocated instant advertisement of him as a man-stealer. But against this we still emphatically protested. At last Mr. Robertson and Mr. Kennedy, who held to this as their only rope, suggested sending a committee of three to Mr. Campbell after his arrival, and finding out what his sentiments concerning slavery were. This we all assented to as fair and right. Mr. Robertson, Mr. Kennedy and another clergyman whose name I have forgotten, were appointed as this committee.

"One evening, shortly after, I went again to Edinburgh to learn the state of things, and was met at every turn with large placards, printed in crimson letters: 'Citizens of Edinburgh! Beware! Alexander Campbell of America has been a slaveholder himself, and is yet a defender of man-stealers.'

"These immense bills were stuck up in every public place in the city. Excitement was great; groups of people were seen standing everywhere, talking about Alexander Campbell, America and slavery. The tide had been turned against him. Few were the words that any one spoke in defense of one who was so branded. Occasionally a word of disapproval of such a contemptible manner of treating a stranger, whoever he was, was expressed, but on the whole the excitement was loud against the great American."



## IV. "Very Unsavory Allusions to Mr. Campbell Himself"

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The evening of August 9, 1847, was a summer night such as drew out of their homes all classes of the whole city's population. The Scotch people are especially noted as a deliberative race. Questions which we would look upon as of little interest they enter into with earnestness. But upon this occasion the excitement was especially intense and discussions unusually loud. The anti-slavery fermentation was now swollen to its largest dimension, the religious state of Scotland was ready for such a convulsion as Alexander Campbell was capable and likely to produce, and he was, with many of the best and most enlightened, immensely popular. Any more attention turned into the channel of religion would have resulted in quite, a general overflow of banks and boundaries; the same excitement turned into the anti-slavery channel would result only in a harmless social ebullition.

"I looked then," continued my venerable narrator, "upon our calumnious misrepresentations with some complacency and self-justification. But this is a night I shall not soon forget. I remember passing down the West Bow to Grassmarket, and there was a vast crowd gathered together before one of

these naming placards, and I heard some one saying above the noise of the multitude that 'no horsewhipping man-stealer and slave-trafficker, whether he disguised himself in the garb of a minister or not, should be permitted to sleep one night in the city of Edinburgh.' To this I heard many loud affirmative responses. It was now that the wickedness of what we had done dawned full upon me. Here was a man, for aught I knew, might be godly and honest, abused and shamefully misrepresented—a man who deserved the highest commendation for his action in the very thing for which he was so grossly maligned and spoken against. We cried loudly for abolition, but what slaves had we ever freed? This man had no anti-slavery harangues to offer, but he, though an owner of a large plantation of them, had executed abolition in his own household—yes, more than this, he had educated his slaves and sent them forth with the legacies that are greater than simple freedom—the Christian gospel and civilized citizenship.

"I could stand it no longer, and in the impulsiveness of my younger days, I started to edge my way into the crowd, that I might tell them the whole truth, and show them where the shame and evil really lay, when whom should I see coming toward me but the Rev. James Robertson himself, who recognized me immediately, and approached me smilingly.

"'The thing is working well, isn't it,' said he.

"'Yes,' I responded, 'but I'm ashamed of the whole business, and have the strongest mind in the world to get right up here and tell all these poor deluded idiots the whole truth of the matter. '

"'Pshaw! pshaw! brother Laird, you're beside yourself. We've held ourselves within the bounds of truth. And at any rate it was necessary for us to present this thing in this way, or who knows but that this man Campbell would have torn the National Kirk and all other churches from centre to circumference? '

"'If the National Kirk must live only by damning the reputations of good men by the blackest misrepresentations, then I say she should die. If she can not live as a Christian church, embodying the principles of Christ, then she should not live at all. '

"Tut? tut! my dear boy. You're young yet. A few years will bring you about all right. And really I have not the least doubt that Campbell is a bad man. There are many very dark stories that have reached me concerning him from America. '

"What are some of them?' I asked.

"Oh, well, they are various in nature, and I have not the least question of their truthfulness, for I find them in some of the most reliable American journals and in letters from different individuals. '

"Name some of those journals. Perhaps I shall find them taken at the University Library. I am seeking for the facts in this case. If Alexander Campbell is a bad man, I want to know it. If he is not, I shall take no more part in this persecution. '

"I can not refer you definitely to the exact names of these papers. You would not likely find them at the University. But if I am not mistaken, there is a religious paper published in Washington, which speaks of the Campbellite in very harsh terms, and makes very unsavory allusions to Mr. Campbell himself. At any rate, my dear boy, we are in God's work—saving the religious peace of Scotland and promoting the cause of human liberty. '

"Yes, but we are using the devil's way of doing it, and sooner or later we shall have to answer for all this.'

"With these words I left him."

I pause here to advert to the consultation which the committee of three, composed of Robertson, Kennedy and a gentleman named Hunter, had with Alexander Campbell in the afternoon of this same day. You will remember that the Anti-Slavery Society, a few of whose members met on this same afternoon to take measures to destroy Campbell's influence in Scotland, deputed this committee to visit him at the earliest possible moment, to learn and publish the facts in his slavery record, and his present feelings toward the institution. This committee went immediately to Mr. Campbell, apparently to pay him their respects. Their courtesy and the lines into which they directed his conversation were designed to put him at his ease, and entrap him by the unguarded utterances that any man would be likely in

such circumstances to make. They therefore so planned their questions and remarks as to encourage him into a justification of the slave traffic; but in this they failed, for he very positively condemned it, saying it had wrought untold sorrow and remained the "largest, blackest spot upon the American escutcheon." He regretted that the traffic had been ever begun, and said he had always advocated the emancipation of slaves by the owners themselves, and had set them the example by freeing his own slaves after educating them in the gospel and good citizenship.

The committee felt greatly baffled in this business. It was surely not possible to make out any case on Mr. Campbell's slavery record, nor even his present position on the question. They next drew him out on the ideas of the red radical abolitionists, who were then quite generally looked upon in this country as fanatics, and with a great deal of justice. To Mr. Campbell as well as to most other great men of his time their extreme notions were both distasteful and visionary. And looking back upon them from this advanced ground we can not see that they really played any great part in the destruction of the institution of slavery. It would have taken a long time for the eloquence of Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison to have persuaded the Southern slaveholders to emancipate, or to have convinced the United States government that it would be an act of political wisdom to forcibly break those chains of bondage. It was a great civil crisis that compelled the emancipation of the slaves of this country, and that only after sore trouble and deep deliberation, and with many misgivings and misapprehensions.

Mr. Campbell spoke his mind freely in disapproval of the course taken by the extreme abolitionists. He thought their efforts could come to no good and were calculated to throw the nation into a civil and sectional war and perhaps destroy the nation. He deplored the interference of British societies in the American situation as causing more harm than all the good they could do. He even remarked that the relation of master and servant was not of itself sinful—that the Scriptures did not condemn it, but even recognized it. It was, however, though lawful, not expedient nor just, and he regretted its existence for many reasons, moral, political and social.

The committee, though considerably handicapped, resolved on making their fight against the great preacher, whose influence upon the religious public of Scotland they now, after having been for an hour in his presence, so greatly feared, upon this ground, for it was this or nothing—they had no other. In a few hours therefore after this pleasant and friendly chat the city of Edinburgh was aflame with the fiery posters we have called attention to.



## V. "May the Lord have Mercy on the Villifiers of this Good Man"

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The excitement on the streets of Edinburgh did not subside for several days. It was such as was calculated to make it not only unpleasant, but to a certain degree perilous for Campbell to remain in the city. My friend informs me that he, following the advice of his friends, took advantage of the intensity of the feeling against him to go to Dundee where he filled certain appointments that had been made for him. And that the truth might be fully known, he here wrote a letter to the *Edinburgh Journal* for publication, the purpose of which was to set himself right in the eyes of the Scotch public, by making known the facts of his slavery record, and the opinions he then held on the slavery question.

The editor of the *Journal*, who was closely connected with, and in the control of the anti-Campbell committee, refused to publish the letter. Several days passed in which Campbell was speaking in Dundee and elsewhere, but Edinburgh had not yet resumed her usual quiet. Misrepresentations had been freely manufactured and floated by his enemies, and contrary to the wishes of his most solicitous friends, that he

should not yet appear before an Edinburgh audience, he determined to wait no longer. He had announcements made for his next appointment in Waterloo Rooms. This is the substance of my information as I received it from my friend. I now follow him again in his narrative:

"It was with grave apprehension that I read the announcement that Campbell would fill his appointment in Waterloo Rooms for Wednesday evening. I knew something of the state of feeling against him, which I feared that he did not know himself. I almost decided to write him warning, but I knew he had his friends who would surely be as wary and as careful for his welfare as I could possibly be. I greatly admired his courage, but I questioned his wisdom. He was no doubt a great man, and possessed a wonderful power over audiences, but he would find that the Scotch people are not easily played upon by the orator's skill. His fiery eloquence (for so I had imagined it) might very well avail him in flighty and unstable America, but in Scotland it might work to his disadvantage. An orator may play upon the Irish passions and fill a mob with fire and slaughter by the inflection of a word, or the skillful manipulation of the tone of his voice, but the Scotch people are moved only by the bare recital of actual injustice or the violation of an eternal principle of right. They are of a cold metaphysical turn of mind."

I am here reminded of an incident in the life of William Hazlitt.

Once in a heated discussion with Charles Lamb's brother, the latter in a moment of anger, struck him over the eye and knocked him down. His friends immediately came to his assistance and raising him from the floor bruised and bleeding, endeavored to console him.

"Oh, I don't mind anything of that kind," he responded. "Nothing ever affects me but an abstract idea." So it is with the Scotch people. They are more inflamed at the violation of an abstract principle than they would be at a blow in the face. I am speaking hyperbolically. Slavery was a matter of principle with them, and no man who stood as slavery's champion, could win their favor.

"They had been aroused against Alexander Campbell, and more than the skill of an orator would be required to turn them. His record on slavery had,



I knew, been honorable and philanthropic, but the placards and news paper articles were, strictly speaking, founded upon truth, though, in spirit, malicious misrepresentations of it. But nothing less than a bare denial of the facts upon which these accusations rested, would satisfy a Scotch audience. Attempts at explanation and apology would only make matters worse. I feared the issue of this thing. The same day that I noticed the announcement that upon Wednesday evening Mr. Campbell would speak in Waterloo Rooms, I saw brother Morton. He came to my study as he said to counsel with me. He always came to 'counsel' with me when he thought I deserved some reproof, or might benefit by a suggestion. His spirit was so fatherly and gentle that I was always glad to see him come. Unusual gentleness marked his countenance this time. That he was uneasy, and in trouble could be plainly seen, and the cause of it was not hard to guess. His hero, a man in whom he placed the most absolute faith, and whom he knew to be more than innocent of the malignant accusations which were brought against him, was now enduring the basest persecutions that had been heaped upon any religious teacher since the days of prelacy, and this, by his own Presbyterian Scotland. And these persecutions he had learned, were partly due to the unrighteous activity of his own pastor. Poor brother Morton! This was cause enough to him for sorrow and disappointment in human nature. But more than this was troubling him. It had been whispered around through the parish that Deacon Morton was the champion of Alexander Campbell, and since Alexander Campbell was the champion of slavery, what could brother Morton be himself, but an apologist for a wicked institution? Others who had before been favorable to Campbell and his teachings on religion, were now quiet, and brother Solomon, who had exercised more valor than discretion, was likely to be taken in hand and disciplined by the Kirk session for heresy, and perhaps deprived of his office in the deaconate, which he prided himself to have held for thirty years. It had never been his thought to leave the National Kirk, nor had it ever occurred to him that in Bible-loving Scotland he could be censured for holding doctrines which the word of God plainly taught—much less disciplined for holding such doctrines by the church which rested upon the creed that made the Bible the only rule of faith and practice for Christians. He had, nevertheless, been accused of heresy, and would likely be required to vindicate himself at the church court. But such a trial was the least of his troubles. He was more

solicitous now for the welfare of the great man who was at this time the object of so many poisoned arrows."

"'Brother Laird,' said he, when he had seated himself, 'May the Lord have mercy on the villifiers of this good man, for if ever sinners should cry for mercy, they should. "Do not bear false witness against thy neighbor," said God. May he take pity on those of his professed servants who have forgotten those words of his everlasting commandment. You are young, you may be forgiven for the part you have played in this dishonorable business. The effect of this evil day will require the years of eternity to measure. '

"'Brother Morton,' said I, 'I am as indignant at the issue of this business as you can be, and in much greater sorrow for it, because my hand was in it. I am in great apprehension for Mr. Campbell in his determination to appear before an Edinburgh audience Wednesday evening. Mr. Robertson and Mr. Kennedy have turned public opinion wholly their way, and Mr. Campbell will not be given a candid hearing even if the motley crowd that is likely to assemble there for mischief or curiosity should not attempt to do him injury. The whole tone of the placards and the newspaper notices is that Mr. Campbell is not a fit man to rest in the city of Edinburgh, much less presume to instruct the people on religion in a public auditorium. These are the foundations of my fears. '

"The Deacon remained silent for a moment as if in deep thought; then rising up suddenly said, *'If God be for me, who can be against me.* If Alexander Campbell is a man of God, an agent of the truth, and I have never yet ceased to believe that he is, I have no fears, and let me tell you this—you will hear something Wednesday night the like of which you have never heard before. You will hear a man who is not to be wheedled and brow-beaten by a few hot-headed alarmists, but who can stand before an Edinburgh audience with as little fear as Paul before Agrippa. You will not hear a silver-tongued orator, a dramatic actor, sniffing and weeping to play upon the cords of sympathy, but a second John Knox of whom it may be said, while he is yet living he does not fear the face of man.' Having said this brother Morton left me.

"Wednesday evening at seven o'clock found me in Waterloo Rooms. The vast auditorium was then filling, nearly an hour before the great American was to be heard. I succeeded in securing a good sitting for myself, in the right of the room, about forty feet from the platform. The audience now in their seats numbering upward of three thousand were quiet, little talking was done; all eyes were intent upon the rostrum, though the time for the appearance of the speaker was over half an hour ahead. The crowd kept pouring in—the room got hot and stifling, and the only sound was that of waving fans. Fifteen minutes more passed, and every seat in the whole hall was filled, but the crowd seeking entrance seemed increasing. All standing room was soon taken, and before the hour of eight arrived, every available space in the whole building into which a human being could crowd himself was packed. Interest became intense—but hardly a word was said. The rooms which now held between 6,000 and 7,000 people grew hotter and closer. The word is given that a woman has fainted in the rear, but we all hold our seats. Now some one on the left cries out 'Air! Let us have some ventilation.' This suggests a response from the far rear, where some one cries out, 'There is likely to be more ventilation than some of us care for before this meeting closes.' This was greeted by a hearty 'Hear! Hear!' from all quarters of the audience. It sounded good. It looked as if this audience had some Campbell men in it who were not afraid to show their colors, and who were informed of the trickery of his enemies. I was now almost a Campbell man myself—the only thing I feared from him was his religious teaching. At this moment the door at the rear of the rostrum slightly creaks on its hinges, and all is hushed—every eye is strained in that direction. But it closes, and we are left again in suspense."



## VI. "A Man who Stood Head and Shoulders Above All that were in the House."

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It may now be interesting for us to recapitulate for a moment. Let us raise our heads, look about us, and see where we find ourselves. The Midland train had been rushing at a rapid rate through England, while my friend was rehearsing to me his interesting narrative. We had passed through many important manufacturing towns on our way. After leaving Bedford, but a few miles further on, stood the old hamlet of Olney some distance from the railroad. Here is where the poet Cowper lived in a family of very devout Methodists, and where he wrote his principal poetical works and religious hymns. It was here that he wrote "The Task" on the suggestion of a lady friend, that he should compose a poem about the sofa on which she was sitting. This was "the task" that she gave him. Here he also composed that popular ballad, "John Gilpin's Ride." But among religious people Cowper is known more as a psalmist. While yet a young man, he lost his mind, because of the great fright with which he anticipated the approach of an

occasion on which he was to appear before court as a judicial reader. Upon the recovery of his reason, his temperament, which had before been skeptical and reckless, was changed—he was intensely religious, and as this was just the time of the great Methodist revival, he joined the Wesleyans and became the great poet of Methodism, as Milton had been of Puritanism. His hymns are mighty evangelical in spirit and eminently orthodox in tone, as the following well known verse will show:

There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

Such a mode of expression sounds rather vulgar to us now; its language is grossly material and even coarse, but it was such language as this that characterized the great Methodist revival, and was, to a great extent, the source of its power with the lower classes.

So profound had been my interest in my friend's narration, that in all the long distance from Bedford northward, I was hardly conscious of what we passed. With all the beautiful and varied scenery which the route ran through, —the rocky, rough and hilly land from Leeds northward—the antique looking stone houses, the beautiful stone fences built without mortar, and winding about the hills and mountain sides, the green and well-kept hedges, which took the place of the stone fences from Appleby on; with all this and much more, the route had not impressed me either one way or the other, and had not my return over the same road given me an opportunity to see what I had missed, I never would have known what that trip contains. Such was the interest of the story to which I was listening that I had seen and not seen like the village girl in *Enoch Arden*, "Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring, hears and not hears and lets it overflow."

At the point of the narrative where the last paper closed, we had just left Carlisle, on the borders, and were rushing on toward Edinburgh through the Scottish lowlands. Again we resume the story where we last left our friend:

"The vast multitude crowded in that largest auditorium in Edinburgh was getting restless and nervous—about seven thousand people, all drawn there

by a lively interest, whether of curiosity or personal admiration, or desire for Christian enlightenment, were now awaiting the appearance of the famous American. At just 8 o'clock the door at the rear of the platform again opened, and Alexander Campbell, accompanied by a gentleman I did not know, advanced toward the audience. They seated themselves, and the gentleman who was with him, leaned over and whispered to Mr. Campbell. The latter, without taking his eyes off the audience, which he had been scanning with swift, flashing, eagle glances, nodded approval, and his companion arose and stood before the assembly to make the introductory speech. What he said I can not remember—I doubt if any one would have known five minutes afterwards, for all eyes and minds were chained upon the illustrious stranger, who, with an air of perfect ease, sat before us with one arm resting on the arm of his chair, and the coolness of his behavior betokening his full mastery of the situation. It was with no sign of timorousness that he took in his audience. That flowing gray hair solicited our reverence, that dignified bearing commanded our respect, those keen dark eyes shining from under an intellectual forehead and heavy eyebrows, filled us with a certain admiration and awe. This man would be no humble petitioner for our grace—he would not play upon our passions, nor stoop to the exercise of the orator's trick to gain our favor and sympathy. From the moment I set my eyes upon him, my previous impressions vanished—this was not the Alexander Campbell whom I had seen in fancy. A like change came over the minds of the audience. A murmur of surprise and admiration went through the whole house, when he sat down.

"A whisper behind me, which I overheard, will represent the first impression with which Alexander Campbell inspired that assembly. 'He is the Saul of this company,' spoke a voice just behind me as Mr. Campbell sat down and looked over the mass of humanity which lay before him. And this was the feeling of that night—here was a man who stood head and shoulders above all that were in the house.

"When the brief remarks of introduction were finished he arose and advanced to the front of the platform. He was rather tall, but firmly built. His complexion was ruddy and even youthful; but his hair was nearly white. His carriage was erect and imposing, but his pose was not that of an orator who has carefully studied pantomime and stands for effect. He seemed

oblivious of his attitude; he had something to say, but no piece to act. My memory of his opening words is quite distinct.

*"My Friends and Citizens of Edinburgh:* It is with gratitude that I see so vast an audience in this room, and we shall hope, and surely our hopes will be fulfilled, that the motive which has brought you here is your desire to know the truth in whatever directions of it we may choose to follow. '

"These words were given in a full and rounded voice, and with a confidence and force which was calculated to quiet all opposition and question. Nevertheless, a great disturbance arose in the rear which had been previously arranged for by Campbell's enemies. It began with a simultaneous coughing and scraping of feet. The speaker's method of procedure during this annoyance was the best I have ever seen. He knew that the great majority of his auditors were curious to hear what he was going to say, and were anxious to catch every word. Instead then of stopping for the noise to subside, in which case a general hubbub would have been brought on, he continued in his cool, easy and interesting way of speaking, without raising his voice, or taking the least notice of the disturbance. In a few moments so annoyed were the remainder of the audience, who were hardly able to follow the speaker's thoughts in all the noise, that they soon hissed the roisterers into shame and silence. This was the great man's first victory—we were all now getting into sympathy with him. In the general quiet that followed the hissing, he caught his first chain of union that helped to bind him more to his audience; his face lit up with a renewed fire, and his expression took on a fuller vigor; he had been from the beginning master of the situation; he was now lord of all he surveyed. A gradually swelling volume of voice and thought began from this point. His well-rounded and finished periods rolled one upon another laden with thought, compact but clear, and logic, close and rigid. Not a sentence but the freshness of the thought, the force and aptness of the expression, the convincing logic that held it, surprised us. I have not a distinct recollection of what he said; not even of the line of argument which he pursued, but I see his form before me after the flight of nearly half a century as I saw it then, strong and commanding, quiet yet animated. I can hear again, as the rush of distant but mighty waters, the volume of that voice, bearing on its tide facts and arguments that seemed to place all things on which he touched beyond



all peradventure. I can see once more that spell-bound multitude that sat for three hours under the matchless torrent of eloquence of the highest kind, inspired, as it was, by the occasion, the vast audience and the causes which had brought them there. One more attempt at a disturbance had been made early in the evening when Mr. Campbell was reading the letter he had written to the *Journal*, offering to debate with any man whom the Anti-Slavery Society might choose, on the subject of American slavery, even with the Rev. James Robertson himself, provided he was not the James Robertson who had been expelled from his church for violating the fifth commandment. At this point the cry of 'Libel!' was raised by some friends of Robertson, which suggested to him, no doubt, his subsequent course of action. But this cry Mr. Campbell treated in the same method he had used with the first disturbance, and it was soon quieted."



## VII. "A Sort of Confused Expression of Surprise"

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The address of Alexander Campbell before an audience prejudiced greatly against him at the start, and composed of a people peculiarly difficult to work upon, was a feat of oratory such as has but one comparison in this century—that of Henry Ward Beecher in Liverpool. But there are points of difference between these two very similar facts in the history of oratory. Beecher's audience, in the first place, not so large, was not prejudiced against *him*, but his cause—of him as a man they knew little. The audience that met him was louder and more boisterous in its interruptions—it was of a coarser and more illiterate class of people, not so serious in its prejudices, nor so embarrassing in its opposition. There were many Americans who were with Beecher, and a large percentage of the assembly was in sympathy with him, and exerted its influence to quiet disorder, and render him encouraging applause. But none of these things were points in Campbell's favor. He had to face an enormous assemblage of intelligent people, wrought up to a high degree of righteous indignation and intense prejudice against him personally, they met him not with the tumult and uproar that

confronted Beecher, but with that repellent expression of distrust and suspicion which is often more embarrassing and unnerving to a speaker than a riotous and noisy opposition.

But the calm dignity and repose with which he appeared before his audience, and the easy but respectful confidence which he manifested in himself, the supreme contempt with which he treated the interruptions that began with the opening of his speech, the entrancing power of his language, and the fascination and force of his delivery, made him master of his audience—they seemed to forget themselves and sat at his feet as learners.

Beecher is more human than Campbell—he was troubled by the hissing and mimicking that he received and sometimes even lost his temper, as where he said after a very exasperating season of hissing and uproar, "I think the bark of those men is worse than their bite. They don't mean any harm—they don't know any better." This was in harmony with Beecher's temperament, though not quite representative of his usual presence of mind, but nothing could have been less consonant with the tone and spirit of Campbell than to have shown such irritation. The Liverpool rabble received patronage for their coarse jests and sarcastic ridicule in the attention which the speaker paid to them, but there was no satisfaction to the interrupter of the Edinburgh orator; his carriage and demeanor, as well as the momentum of his thought and speech, and the positiveness of his personality made such frivolity and play very much out of tone. Beecher's speech, with all its interruptions, was an hour and a half long. Campbell spoke continuously for nearly three hours, and during that three hours a gradual but very complete change was produced in his listeners. They were not Goldsmith's "fools who came to scoff" and "remained to pray," but they were intelligent people who came as censors to listen to a criminal's attempt at self-justification, and then condemn him, but they remained as humble disciples, hanging upon the lips of one who had been to them the type of all that was unworthy. I refer to the great bulk of the audience, and neither to the friends, nor irreconcilable enemies of Campbell, who were there in large numbers, but composed only a small proportion of the whole assembly. Campbell was not greeted with applause once—it was a quiet affair. I resume my friend's narrative again as he describes the closing of the great meeting:

"At the close of the address, they seemed to remain for a moment in their seats, and turned with a sort of confused expression of surprise as they looked now for the first time in three hours into each other's faces—there had been a revulsion of feeling, and they seemed as if ashamed to talk with one another. Slowly and quietly they passed out. I looked over the mass of moving people, and there I saw my friend Robertson. He had received some very dispassionate, but rough handling by the speaker of the evening, whose power of administering a dignified but smarting castigation I have seldom if ever seen equaled. There was a cloudy expression of evil in Robertson's countenance, mingled with the shrinking signs of humiliation and disappointment. He had been baffled. Alexander Campbell was now a hero, and he himself a villain in proportion. I could read his feelings well enough, and told Deacon Morton whom I saw smiling and exultant, as we were passing out of the door that the thing was not ended yet, if I rightly interpreted the handwriting on the wall, for Robertson's face did resemble a stone wall in its blank, cold determination. But we had no time nor opportunity for a conversation, for soon we were separated again by the jam. I went immediately to my lodgings in the city and retired."

Now while our friend Laird is enjoying his refreshing slumber after the great address which he has described, let us take a view of the religious situation in Scotland. Four years before this time the disruption of the National Kirk had taken place, and Thomas Chalmers, with 400 of the most pious and learned men of the old Kirk, went off and formed a communion of their own, since known as the Free Church of Scotland. This became at once a very powerful body, and has, since that day, contributed to Scotland a large part of the brains that gives her such a high status in the world of intellect. A wave of religious excitement had from 1840 and earlier passed over Scotland which did not spend its forces for several years. It affected all denominations. The following clipping from the *Glasgow Chronicle*, in 1839, gives us a representative picture of the revival mania in Scotland:

"It appears to have been understood among the revivalists that there was to be on Sunday, 'a great manifestation of the power of God,' at Kilsyth; and in consequence there were assembled in the village that

day people from the farthest north to the English borders. Beds had been bespoken for weeks previous; but the accommodation was quite inadequate for the multitudes that poured in, and hundreds had to bivouac in the open air. Every kind of conveyance from Glasgow was taken up, and fares were inordinately raised. The greater number of clergymen present belonged to the Established church, but there were also Dissenters of different denominations—Baptists, Methodists, etc. The services began in the parish church at 10 o'clock in the morning, and in an open field soon after, where they were persevered in until 6 o'clock on Monday morning. They were resumed Monday at 10, and were continued through the whole day and ensuing night. A third time the vast congregation assembled yesterday afternoon, and we understand the proceedings were not yet at a close, and scenes of a most deplorable nature were exhibited. Nor was the language of the preachers calculated to calm the storm. One reverend gentleman told a portion of his audience that he 'saw the devil looking out of their eyes;' on which several women fell down insensible. On this, as on previous occasions, the chief actors in the scene were the clergy and the women. This revival mania (says a correspondent), has boarded our canal boats, and where formerly a blind old man might be found drawing a few pence from the compassion of the passengers, through the strains of his fiddle, we have now regular conventicles. Yesterday evening I came into Glasgow from Kirkintilloch, in one of the canal boats, and was astonished to find a company of people engaged in religious exercises, with all the fervor peculiar to them. The service was led by a clergyman who gave out a Psalm which was sung by the followers (mostly women); he then prayed and preached in the revival strain. A number of the other passengers, conceiving that this mode of acting was quite improper in a promiscuous company confined together on board a small boat, exhibited symptoms of impatience, on which they were denounced as children of the devil and heirs of hell."

The religious fanaticism was a sort of epidemic that spread over the whole of the island. It was about this time—a few years later—that the outbreak of

the "Canterbury Fanatics" took place. About the beginning of the year 1842, a stranger made his appearance at Canterbury, who attracted considerable notice by his handsome and commanding figure. He put forth pretensions to superior sanctity, and mysteriously intimated that he had a great work to do. The state of the public mind was such that devotees soon surrounded him, largely of the low and ignorant class, but also a few of wealth and respectable station. He passed himself off as Sir William Courtney, but his real name was John Thom. This man, though half-crazy himself, and a most transparent religious fraud, was able to put himself at the head of a multitude of followers, for he had persuaded them that he was the Messiah, and marching through the country in their lawless frenzy, they were repulsed only after much bloodshed and the death of the impostor himself. Nearly all human movements, though they be good on the whole, are likely to bear some of the evil fruits. These are some of the evil fruits of the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century.

This general religious fanaticism gradually cooled down and was superseded by a deep and intelligent interest in religious matters such as was at the basis of the "Disruption" of 1843, and as gave a profound interest in the restoration of apostolic Christianity. Individuals here and there were breaking away from sectarian Christianity and seeking to realize the primitive model as developed in the New Testament; churches were heard from in different parts of the kingdom, which were already walking wholly in the light of the New Testament. Timothy Coop had trod the path of the Restoration alone, and had founded a congregation after the apostolic example before he had even heard of the Current Reformation. The movement of the Plymouth Brethren was a systematic attempt along the same line.

The picture of religious Britain for the closing decade of the first half of this century is one of exceeding interest for all these reasons.





## VIII. "The Great Misfortune of His Tour"

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We have dwelt sufficiently upon the Edinburgh sensation of Alexander Campbell's Scottish tour—an incident of no little fame both here and in Scotland, even to this day. The religious principles of which he was the great exponent, and for the dissemination of which his British trip had been largely planned, had suffered greatly in the noise and excitement of this sensation—the public mind was too much engrossed by the personal troubles in which he was entrapped, for such a cool and deliberate consideration of his views as was calculated to make adherents to the system of truth which he advocated. The plans of his enemies had in a certain degree been successful. They had detracted popular attention from the principles to the man, from the work to the instrument of it, from the fountain to the channel, from the truth to the medium; and although Campbell was more than justified in the eyes of Scotland, so that even his enemies became his friends, the course which led to his arrest and from thence to his justification, though a course for which he was not in himself in the least at fault, was not propitious for the growth of his system of

religious faith. Seasons of great personal, social and political agitation are most unfavorable to religious interest and activity. These personal troubles of Campbell were the principal cause of his failure to enlist the attention of the people to his Christian doctrines. But great social embarrassments and afflictions also unfitted the people of Britain for the hearing of religious truth in polemical discussions at this time. The Irish Famine was at its starving period. This great event held for the moment the profound attention of both islands. It was the theme of orators in the pulpit and on the platform, the subject of the press, and the great question of Parliament. Sir Charles Trevelyan in 1848 said in the *Edinburgh Review*: "The time has not yet arrived at which any man can with confidence say that he fully appreciates the nature and the bearings of that great event which will long be inseparably associated with the year just departed." "Ireland is in your hands," cried Daniel O'Connell, in February, 1847, the last time his voice was ever heard in Parliament, "if you do not save her, she must die." The queen in her message proroguing Parliament, in the summer of '47, said: "I join [with my people] in supplications to Almighty God that the dearth by which we have been afflicted, may by the divine blessing be converted into cheapness and plenty," At this time also Great Britain found herself in widespread financial distress. So complicated were her commercial relations that the abundant harvest which came in the autumn of '47 did not end her troubles. Chas. Knight in his history of England says that "in September and October there had been such a pressure upon the merchants and traders as had not been experienced since the great panic of 1825. Mercantile houses in London of the highest eminence suspended their payments. Corresponding disasters occurred at Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow.... In October the alarm swelled into a general panic; the crash of eminent houses went on in London; in the country not only mercantile firms but banks were failing; the funds fell rapidly; exchequer bills were at a high rate of discount." As a result of these social and financial troubles, the political life of Great Britain ran high. The navigation laws were suspended in the spring of '47, the corn laws were repealed, and the protective duties abolished or reduced.

Such was the social, commercial and political state of Great Britain in the summer of '47. It was therefore an unfavorable season for religious reform.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, very unusual and quite immediate fruits followed Campbell's preaching in Scotland. In this specific work, even cold and conservative Edinburgh was not behind the rest of Scotland. George Gilfillan in his *Scottish Covenant*, says that "Edinburgh, with all its intelligence is a cold, skeptical and heartless city. From the influence of Hume's atheism it has passed into the shadow of the modified materialism of Combe. Religion is indeed able to maintain its ground, but little more, and dwells too evidently in an enemy's country, sneered at by one species of philosophers and ostentatiously patronized by another, finding many partisans in all parts of the city, but not pervading it all like a transforming leaven." But in the face of all the obstacles that stood in the way, Alexander Campbell made a deep and lasting impression on the religious life of Edinburgh. There is there to this day a strong, influential, and intelligent body of Disciples, which we visited last summer, but which, if it had been of any other shade of faith, would, by all that has worked against it, have been long since in its grave. Campbell, with all the detractions and difficulties which he met in that city, left his followers (if we may so speak of them) greatly strengthened in intellectual and social influence, and stronger, I believe, than they are comparatively today. From Edinburgh he visited the other important cities in Scotland, filling his previously made appointments and complying with as many of the numerous calls which came to him, as his appointed time would permit. But in this we shall not follow him, as nothing eventful marked his journey till we find him in Glasgow, where the great misfortune of his tour, and, as we might say, of his life, befell him.

*Apropos* to the remarks I have made upon the religious condition of Britain in the last decade of the first half of the present century, I wish to quote from Dr. Robert Baird's *Religion in America*, a work of eight books, first published in Edinburgh in 1843, four years before Campbell visited that land. This work was immediately translated into French, German, Swedish and Dutch "and obtained a wide circulation on the continent as well as in the British Isles." Dr. Baird was an American writing for Europeans. The work was revised in 1855, and his statistics were brought up to that time. He ranks the "Disciples of Christ, or Reformers, as they call themselves, or Campbellite, as they are most commonly called by others," as one of the

smallest Baptist denominations. "It is," says he, "with some hesitation that, by placing these in this connection, I rank them among the evangelical Christians. I do so because their creed, taken as it stands in written terms, is not heterodox. Not only do they not deny, but in words their creed affirms the doctrine of the Trinity, of salvation by the merits of Christ, and the necessity of the regenerating or sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Yet, I understand that there is much about their preaching that seems to indicate that all that they consider necessary to salvation is little if anything more than a speculative, philosophical faith in connection with immersion as the only proper mode of baptism; so that there is little after all of that 'repentance toward God' and 'faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' which are the indispensable terms of the Gospel."

"And what does Dr. Campbell propose to do?" our author further enquires. He then answers his own query in the following quotation from Campbell himself. "Simply 'to ascertain from the Holy Scriptures, according to commonly-received and well-established rules of interpretation, the ideas attached to the leading terms and sentences found in the Holy Scriptures, and then use the words of the Holy Spirit in the apostolic acceptance of them!' But let us hear him further: 'By thus expressing the ideas communicated by the Holy Spirit in the terms and phrases learned by the Apostles, and by avoiding the artificial and technical language of scholastic theology, they propose to restore a pure speech to the household of faith.' And in this way they expect to put an end to all divisions and disputes and promote the sanctification of the faithful. And all this is proposed by those who reject all creeds for churches; excepting, indeed, that which consists in making the Bible speak theirs! However plausible it may be to talk in this way all church history has shown that there is no more certain way of introducing all manner of heresy than by dispensing with all written creeds and formularies of doctrine, and allowing all who profess to believe in the Bible, though attaching any meaning to it they please, to become members of the church. [Now here comes a prophecy]. For awhile, possibly this scheme may seem to work well, but before half a century has passed, all manner of error will be found to have entered and nestled in the House of God." How well this prophecy has been verified those who have been eye-witnesses of the growth in faith and works of this religious community

for the last half century (for it has been nearly a half century since these words were written) can testify. There is not today a more intelligently and rationally orthodox people in this country than the Disciples of Christ. The philosophy of Dr. Baird and that of Alexander Campbell have been weighed in the balance that Dr. Baird selected—a half century's experience—and the former has been found wanting. The principles of the great reformer have stood the test. If our fathers fifty years ago could have foreseen this, many thousands more would today have been walking with us. Then after speaking briefly upon the character of the faith "it is not difficult to see that churches may soon be gathered, in which there will be but little true religion."

"It is on this account," he continues, "that evangelical Christians in America, Baptists as well as Pedobaptists, have many fears about Dr. Campbell and his followers. It is believed, however, that as yet there are not a few sincerely pious people among his congregations, who have been led away by his plausible representations respecting the evil of creeds. Time can only show the issue."



## IX. "The Heresy Trial of Solomon Morton"

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Having spoken thus at length on the religious spirit that prevailed at the time of Campbell's visit to Scotland, and the ideas concerning him and his work that had been previously published abroad, we shall resume the thread of our friend's narrative.

"After the Edinburgh meeting I was particularly interested in Mr. Campbell's movements. His victory over the Edinburgh audience was local, not general. It served rather to unite his enemies and intensify their bitterness for him. 'Campbellism,' which had before been but a harmless delusion became in the danger that now threatened Scotland's religious peace, a 'damnable heresy.' No man now defended Alexander Campbell, the arch-heretic from this on, with impunity. In my own congregation there had been many who held views similar to those preached by Campbell and who had even advocated them before his coming, but they were quiet now unless they dared to face the music. Among these daring ones was Solomon Morton. Heresy had been whispered against him before— now it was loud, since he was fearless in his defense of Campbell and his views. I tried as

much as I thought prudent to shield my friend, but he had become so fully converted to the new ideas (or the old ones as he used to call them) that he could not refrain from openly expressing his confidence in them. This was going a little too far, and against my earnest action, he was brought to trial, charged with 'holding doctrines contrary to the teachings of the Holy Spirit and perilous to be held both for the soul's salvation and the safety of God's church.' I tried very hard to prevail upon Morton to retract, but he firmly held his ground. The day for trial came—it was held in the vestry of the church and many ecclesiastical dignitaries from abroad were there to witness the first trial for the Campbellistic heresy. It began at ten o'clock. After a prayer by a visiting preacher the proceedings of the day began. The presiding presbyter stated the purpose of the meeting, and the general charge, which we have mentioned, was read, and followed by a warm discussion on the part of his prosecutors. He was accused of sympathizing with slavery and man-stealing, of holding doctrines not in consonance with the Westminster Confession, of having discarded the Presbyterian name, and of many other things which made him unworthy of further Christian communion. Morton was then called out to answer these charges. He came forward, took out his Bible and opened it. Just then one of the prosecutors arose and reminded the chairman that a categorical answer should be required of the heretic on trial, he should respond 'yes' or 'no' to every separate accusation. The injustice of such a requirement was obvious, and, besides, it was contrary to the custom the Scottish Church had always observed. I immediately arose and objected to such a course of action as unworthy of the church and as likely to do us more harm in the eyes of our people than all the protection it could be in this case. I trusted we were not so fearful of Morton in his use of Scripture that we could not accord him such a hearing as heretics had always been afforded. At this, one of the prosecutors responded that permission should not be given anyone to desecrate the Word of God by using it in support of heretical notions. 'We are all convinced,' said he, 'of his heresy. I move that we proceed at once to a vote.' Deacon Morton then spoke: 'Brethren,' said he, 'is this a matter in which I am to have nothing to say? Am I to be condemned upon the testimony of others, who can not, by the nature of things, possess quite as accurate knowledge of the state of my heart and mind as I possess myself? I have been charged with sympathizing with and believing in certain things.



Full and unhindered testimony has been rendered in this matter by others. Is not my testimony on a subject concerning which I claim to be as well informed as they, worth something, and can they not accord me as much patience, *while I defend myself as* I have given them *while they were accusing me*? I ask, will you hear my testimony on this subject?' After some discussion, Morton was voted ten minutes in which to make his reply. 'The specific, written charge against me,' said he, 'is that I hold doctrines contrary to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. To this much I can give a categorical answer. I hold the words of the Holy Spirit in my hand. I deny that I cherish one doctrine contrary to the teaching of this book. Let my accusers specify one and I shall humbly retract it in your presence today. This answer covers the whole of the written charge, for if my doctrines are not contrary to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, they can not be 'perilous to the soul's salvation' nor to the safety of God's church. I deny the charge until more definite accusations are made. Wherein do I offend the Holy Spirit? It has been said today that I sympathize with slavery. For this charge there is no foundation, and I hardly need take the trouble to deny it. It has been also said that I do not respect the Westminster confession. I frankly own that it exercises no power over my convictions. If it is the voice of the Holy Spirit, then have I offended against God, but if it is not the voice of Holy Spirit, why should you or I respect its *spiritual* dominion over us? I ask you, is it the voice of the Holy Spirit? If so, then, it have I offended. If not, then surely I have avoided that same offence in refusing to place it in the throne of the Holy Spirit, an offence which you commit, and not I. The only question, therefore, which determines whether heresy lies on your side or on mine, is whether the Westminster creed is the voice of the Holy Spirit.

"I have also been charged with rejecting the Presbyterian name. Show me where such a rejection is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and again I shall own my fault and abjure my heresy. Again the point upon which our respective orthodoxy is to be hung is whether the Presbyterian name has been applied to us by the Holy Spirit. If it has, then am I a heretic for rejecting it; if not, then you are the heretics for assuming it. '

There was no response to anything that Morton had said. He was called down by the chairman on the second, but his ten minutes had been sufficient. His prosecutors became more rabid in their remarks, but the

more reasonable portion of the session considered him with some favor. The vote was taken and by a plurality of two votes against him he was pronounced a heretic. This trial did us more harm than anything else that had happened to us. It was universally condemned as an outrage and such a reaction followed that several of our best members went with Morton and joined the Disciples in Edinburgh. It was the first and last trial for heresy of Campbellism that was ever precipitated upon a Scottish Kirk-session to my knowledge."

Just as my friend Laird was concluding his account of the heresy trial of Solomon Morton, the Midland train which we had taken that morning from London, went thundering into the Edinburgh depot. He was met at the train by his family, and after introducing me to them, he urged me very earnestly to go with him to his home and accept his hospitality while in Edinburgh, hoping, as he said, that we might have an opportunity of further conversing on this theme, which was so interesting to him. But as my traveling plan did not favor my accepting his invitation, I begged to decline, and, hastily bidding each other good-bye, we were soon lost in the jam that gathered upon the platform. I watched him with a feeling of strange loneliness as his tall form and flowing hair vanished from my sight in the evening twilight. I had learned much from him; he had given my young hero-worshiping enthusiasm a wider field of action; he had given me a straightforward record, honest and simple, of some sad experiences in a great man's life; a kind old man he was and now I should see him no more. The narrative of John Laird is ended, but the saddest trial of our Reformer is yet to be told.

## X. "I have Known and Heard Alexander Campbell"

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It has been said by a certain writer that Campbell's "journey through Scotland was more like a triumphal march of a conquering hero than that of a preacher of the gospel." In this statement there is much truth; Aberdeen, Dundee, Montrose, Glasgow and all the great cities of Scotland which he visited, paid him such distinction as had been seldom showed to any American. But through his whole journey there was much unpleasantness; at every point he stopped, he found that the great red placards to which we have referred, had preceded him, forwarded from Edinburgh by Robertson and his colleagues.

After leaving John Laird at Edinburgh, my journey was chiefly among the Highlands, and I had little chance of seeing any one who might draw out to its end the broken thread of his narrative. But in my diary I find the following memorandum:

"July 24. —Came from Oban last night on steamer 'Clansman,' had another interesting talk with a man about Campbell, landed at Greenock, proceeded to Glasgow."

July 23, we had left in the morning for a sail along the Ross of Mull to the ancient island of Iona or Icolmkill, and the not less interesting island of Staffa, returning to Oban in the evening. In this trip was a Glasgow shoe merchant, who was spending his summer in this popular resort. He was an old man of fine presence; he had the stature and manner of a Highlander. I enjoyed his intelligent conversation. On the following morning, when I boarded the "Clansman" for Greenock, this gentleman was on board. We immediately recognized each other and gradually fell into conversation. Our discourse turned on America and Americans, then upon religion in Scotland and America. I freely expressed my views as to the most feasible solution of denominational difficulties, and to my surprise he echoed my sentiments. Here is a man, thought I, who, like many others that are not informed of the movement toward Christian union, now in progress along this line, sees the ideal beauty of the scheme, and seizes the conception with enthusiasm. I thought it would be interesting to him to know that a definite movement had taken up this thought, and was bringing it out of the regions of abstract theory into the clear light of life and practice. I told him of the Disciples in America, and referred him to the work of Alexander Campbell, of whom, as I said, he might have heard. He heard me patiently through, and then with a smile, asked me if I had ever seen and known the great man whose name I had mentioned. My reply, that Campbell had died before my birth sufficiently answered his question.

"Then, possibly," said he, "I can tell you something about him. I have known and heard Alexander Campbell."

Once more I was a learner, and, begging him to relate his reminiscences of the great Reformer, which he began with interesting earnestness, I listened.

"The summer of 1847," he began, "is one I shall not soon forget. I had been a member of the Free church in Paisley—a young man just starting in business for myself. I was not particularly religious in nature. In fact, I was considerable of a skeptic. I was twenty-two years old that summer, and

engaged to be married to a young lady of fine family, intelligence and beauty. Her name was Jeanette Craig. She was a member of the Congregational church, which was then one of the largest in the city. My skepticism, which I had not had the consideration to conceal from her, was, I knew, a cause of sorrow to her. Although she said little about it, she often handed me books and pamphlets to read, in the hope of staying the landslide of my faith. But none of these things had effect upon me. I was a great admirer of Robert Owen and his socialistic views as well as his infidelity, and one after another every dogma and article of faith as expressed in our standards vanished from my mind. I saw them go with sorrow and regret, but I could not help it; they were gone.

"Nothing had stood between Jeanette and me until the laxity of my religious views began to be whispered about, and Mr. Craig became alarmed at our intimacy, and, as I afterwards learned, told her she could never marry an infidel. For several months she had concealed the family opposition to my suit, all the time exerting her utmost endeavor to remove the cause of her parents' complaint. All her efforts in my behalf had failed. My love for her could not change my faith; her tears could not make real a truth which I believed did not exist, and I would not profess a faith to her which I did not possess, and I resolved to set myself about my own conversion, using every means in my power to honestly remove this ugly barrier.

"One morning," continued my informant, "as I was sitting behind the accountant's desk in the store, meditating thoughtfully upon the great problem of life, and the personal problem which was just then resting as a burden so heavily upon me, I received a package by express—it was a book. Business was dull, it being in the heat of the summer season, and I hailed with delight anything that seemed fitted to break the monotony of the dreary hours. I opened the package, and found the enclosed book to be the record of a debate between Robert Owen, my great hero, and a certain Alexander Campbell, of America. The book had been somewhat worn. Within the cover was a slip of paper, upon which were written these words, 'with a prayer for your conversion.' It was Jeanette's handwriting. I was sincere in desiring my own conversion, but I feared the issue of reading such a book. In Robert Owen I had the greatest confidence. Of Alexander Campbell I had never heard, with any certain knowledge. But I determined to give it a fair

trial, though I had no hope of any change in my faith. Instead, I feared that this would complete its downfall. Jeanette had meant well by sending me this book, and for her sake I would do it justice. I commenced at the beginning; I read the whole account of the preparation for the debate. I read every word of Owen's introductory address. I liked it; I found myself back again, skeptic—in sympathy with infidelity, and almost anxious for the downfall of the great Christian superstition. But before I read through Mr. Campbell's masterly reply, my position was doubtful; I was not so sure that Owen could sustain his 'proposition.' The second address of Owen's was a slight disappointment; he had not been successful in answering his opponent's reasoning, and had for the most part avoided it. I became absorbed; the concision and force of the American's argument, the majestic flow of his incomparable style charmed me. His manliness and courage in attacking his opponent's reasoning, and his integrity in holding closely to the points in question as long as there seemed to be any hope in holding Owen to the same close work, called out my young admiration. The power of his logic was convincing. If I was any longer an infidel, it was not because I had not sufficient foundation upon which to build my faith. As for Robert Owen, he was a failure; his propositions proved nothing; he was not equal to the grounds he took; he stood as a dwarf in the palm of a giant's hand. Through chapter after chapter I read; the hour for luncheon came, but I read on; dinner hour came, and I was yet reading. I closed the book where Campbell, after having tried to maintain a close debate and hold Owen to the points in question, gives it up as a thing impossible, and lays out in an elaborate course of reasoning, the evidences of Christian fact—the basis for Christian faith.

This day marked a *cross* in the history of my life. If I remained longer an unbeliever, I had nothing but myself to blame; I now had less as a skeptic to stand upon than as a Christian. I was happy; I felt like shouting for joy; the whole world looked bright; the gloomy clouds of unbelief had rolled away, and I saw clearly the full orb of the sun of righteousness. How reasonable Christianity was to me now! I did not need to read more. No barrier would now stand between Jeanette and myself; I could hardly wait. That same evening I went to see her and told her I was a Christian with faith as firm as her own—that she had wrought my conversion. The scene that followed I

shall not need to describe. She called her parents, and before I left that night, the day was set.





## XI. "Alexander Campbell had Done It!"

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"Imagine, if you please, my surprise when a few days after this I read a long account in the paper, of Alexander Campbell's visit to Scotland, and that he was on his way to Glasgow, and would, on the following Sunday, preach in the Baptist church in Paisley. I was elated beyond measure, and began at once to notify my friends, and tell them who Alexander Campbell was, but to my further surprise, I found that every one knew all about it, and very few informed people were not familiar with the great man's name. My experience over forty years ago was what your own has been today.

"Every day's papers from this on contained accounts of Campbell—some favorable, some unfavorable, and some indifferent. Much of the week he lectured in Glasgow, and I went one night to hear him, but, getting there rather late, was not able to obtain entrance. Before Sunday came the people of Paisley were worked up to some degree of excitement concerning him, and his doctrines, his life and his Edinburgh troubles, but I remained his staunch companion through it all. Saturday night rolled around; crowds upon the streets were talking about the man who was to preach in the

Baptist church on the following day. Some one stated that he was a slaveholder, but this was successfully contradicted. Another old Presbyterian deacon said that Campbell did not believe in the divinity of Christ and, he feared, would unsettle the faith of young people. Now was the time for me to speak *and I spoke*. One week ago I was skeptic; I was now a full believer; Alexander Campbell had done it!"

The next day was the Sunday toward which I had so hopefully looked. A bright and beautiful summer day it was—the air was cool and balmy. A half hour before the regular church service hour, Jeanette and I were on our way to the Baptist church. The vast house—for it was one of the largest church edifices in the place—was, even this early, nearly filled, and the crowd was pouring in. Every one in Paisley seemed to be here whatever his church affiliations may have been. The pouring in continued—the ushers were compelled to pack the seats, and then a few minutes before the appointed time for the appearance of the speaker, chairs were brought in and lined the aisles. All eyes were on the pulpit—it was expected that the speaker would appear there. The fame that went with the name of Alexander Campbell, and the excitement in many places, that had accompanied this visit of his to Scotland, the prominence of the men who had felt it their duty to oppose him, and of those, also, who had espoused his cause as well as the reports and rumors which had flooded the land concerning his great power as a speaker, logician and theologian, had filled us with a sense of curiosity, which these few moments of waiting made quite impatient. Be not surprised, then, that a slight commotion and simultaneous turning of heads—even though grossly in violation of church etiquette—passed, like a wave, over the audience, when the whisper ran through the seats and galleries, 'There he comes!' I could not resist the impulse to turn my head slightly, and there I saw walking up the aisle three or four men.

"The first one was the regular pastor of the church, whom I knew. He was followed by a venerable looking man of commanding appearance, slightly above the medium stature, and firmly built. He carried a cane, but his motion betrayed not the least infirmity; it was vigorous and easy. He followed the minister up into the pulpit, and was seated. I did not from the first take my eyes from him. There was a peculiar fascination in his face that I could hardly account for. He was not by the most common standard a

handsome man, and yet there was an unusual strength and masculinity of outline in his features that was very striking. His nose was aquiline—the nose of one born to command; his mouth that of the orator and teacher—inclined to be large, flexible, and in easy control; it was not the set, firm and taciturn mouth of the man who says little, but means much, but it was the mouth of one born to instruct—of the philosopher who has an overflow of thought and the sufficient gift of speech to pour it out in livid and lucid streams. But his penetrating eye—how shall I describe it? It was not, to use ornithological comparisons, the dreamy, meditative eye of the owl as she slumbers on in her proverbial wisdom, but it was the sharp flashing eye of the eagle, as she views from her lofty eyrie a wide expanse, taking it all in, in one quick grasp, and at the same time penetrates with the closest scrutiny into the most hidden coverts. So much for the face of the great man. After the opening services he arose and began his discourse. His text was I. Cor. xiii: 13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." He began by properly defining charity as love. The first division of his sermon was taken up in an elucidation of faith. Under his treatment of this theme I saw the subject grow up before my mind in a reasonableness and symmetry of form that made it a new thing; the entire audience sat entranced for the whole hour that was taken up in the discussion of this theme; the old mysticism enveloping faith, which had been thrust upon me by the irrationalism of the evangelical Christianity in which I had been reared, passed away—I saw the subject face to face; I was growing into the manhood of Christian grace and knowledge.

The second hour of his discourse was occupied in the treatment of the second Christian element, Hope, and nothing I had ever heard equaled the grandeur and sublimity of this theme under his master mind. Hope, alone, was now to me even greater than faith. He dwelt upon its beauty and its eternity—that even when all sorrow and affliction come upon us, the hope of God is our comfort. I remember I thought while he spoke, of that closing passage in the "Pleasures of Hope" by his own great kinsman, Thomas Campbell:

Eternal Hope! When yonder spheres sublime  
Pealed their first notes to sound the march of time.  
Thy joyous youth began; but not to fade

When all thy sister planets have decayed—  
When wrapped in flames the realms of ether glow,  
And heaven's last thunder shakes the world below,  
Thou, undismayed, shalt o'er the "ruins smile,  
And light thy torch at nature's funeral pile.

Then followed the treatment of the third theme—Love, which even surpassed the others. It is very distinct now in my mind. Through the whole three hours of that long and remarkable discourse, not the least restlessness was visible in any part of the great audience even in that sultry day in summer. The time had passed away unnoticed. In the first part of the sermon he had leaned easily upon the pulpit, and through the whole discourse, he hardly made a gesture. He made a complete capture of the whole audience, and from that day Paisley was distinguished for the sympathy and support it showed him in his troubles."

## XII. "He has been Thrown into Prison in Glasgow"

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"The Paisley sermon of Alexander Campbell completed my conversion. The debate with Owen had shown me the weakness of anti-Christian arguments—I was from that time on no longer a skeptic, but I was rather a negative Christian. This sermon was what I yet lacked—I went away from it in full Christian stature, a positive Christian I now was. From that day on Campbell was the theme of our conversation. Jeanette playfully called him 'our common father,' as he had also opened her mind to the light of Christian truth in a way she had never seen it before.

"What was our surprise and shock when the news flashed through the town of Paisley that he had been imprisoned in Bridewell! Various were the rumors that accompanied this intelligence. Some said he had violently attacked a venerable clergyman of Glasgow, and was arrested for slander. Others said he was in prison for assault and battery upon a reverend old Edinburgh divine named Roberts. Then the report was circulated that he was apprehended just when he was about to take boat for Ireland to flee the country, for some misdemeanor of his in Glasgow. As a result of all this

gossip, many turned against him. I remember seeing a group of men standing on a street corner; among them was a man whom I recognized to have been a few days before one of Campbell's loud supporters— his name was Sandy MacLaren. He was talking with great earnestness.

'I had my suspicions of him from the beginning,' said Sandy, 'I was convinced in my own mind that he was a hard case and not to be trusted, but I said nothing. He has now turned out to be a fraud, just as I expected. I said to myself that God would bring him to justice, and this he has done. I now have the answer of a good conscience in the exercise of Christian forbearance, when if I had pleased to say but a word, I might have opened the eyes of all Scotland to the wickedness of this man. But the like of him will always receive their just deserts, and as for me I have played the Christian part, but I ask no praise. God will remember us all according to both good and bad.'

"I could listen to this no longer. It gave me another set-back. If such men as Sandy MacLaren were God's favorite children, I had no desire for the paternity. I was a young Christian, and weaker than I before would have admitted. The man who had dissolved my infidelity, and made me all the Christian that I was, had turned out a fraud, and was lying now in a prison cell. If that man is a fraud, I thought, it will not be difficult for me to believe that the Christ to whom he leads me is also a fraud, and the religion he unrolled to me a vast deception. In this state of mind I called at Deacon Craig's, and found Jeanette sitting on a rustic bench under the shade of the garden tree.

'I have been reading,' said she, 'this great debate. If it were not for what it has done for you, I think I should find it very tedious reading. My! isn't our common father learned? and what big words he uses! When I read his arguments, I forget all about the thoughts, and am lost in the charming labyrinths of his language. He must be very great! He certainly is no *common* father. But why do you look so troubled? '

'You have not heard of the great calamity that has befallen Dr. Campbell,' said I, 'he has been thrown into prison in Glasgow. '

'Alexander Campbell in prison! I don't believe it. It's a false report. What is he in prison for? '

'As nearly as I can learn from the papers, he has been arrested for libel against Rev. James Robertson, president of the Scottish Anti-Slavery Society. '

'Mr. Campbell,' said she, 'is not in prison for libel. There is persecution in this matter. I remember hearing my father and another man talking about something like this a few days ago. Alexander Campbell is innocent, and in a short time there will be a great reaction in his favor. Don't feel that you have been deceived. Christianity is true, and God yet reigns, and Alexander Campbell will be vindicated. '

"A few days after this I went to Glasgow, and visited the great reformer in his cold dungeon-like cell in Bridewell. I was presented by one of the deacons of the Baptist church in Paisley. The cell was crowded with visitors, many of them persons of distinction. The illustrious prisoner discoursed to them for hours upon all manner of themes pertaining to religious matters.

"His friends begged of him to accept bail, awaiting the decision of his case, but he resolutely refused. 'I would still be a prisoner,' said he, 'and I prefer to be a prisoner confined than a prisoner at large. I desire to see how these anti-slavery philanthropists, bearing upon their standard the watch-word of *liberty*, will treat a stranger wandering upon their shores. I threw myself upon the mercy of their president, whom I wronged, if I wronged any one. This man, thought I, will show me clemency, and even forgiveness, from the magnanimity of his profession. But his laconic word was: *Take him to jail*; and in jail I am. '"

It will be well for us here to recapitulate. We shall remember that when the challenge of debate on the slavery question passed between Robertson and Campbell, the latter agreed to it provided his opponent was not the Rev. James Robertson who had some years before been expelled from a church in Dundee, for disgracefully abusing his mother. There were several Rev. James Robertsons, and Campbell had reason to fear it was the same man. Upon this point Robertson based his case, and it was with great reluctance

permitted to pass the lower magistrates. Therefore Campbell was arrested and imprisoned.



## XIII. "The Trial of James Robertson for False Imprisonment"

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Ere we return to the narrative of Donald MacBrayne, for such is the name of the man to whom we have lately been listening, a brief outline of the legal proceedings to which the arrest of Campbell led, might not be uninteresting. The arrest was an obvious abuse of the spirit of the law, which was designed only to prevent solvent debtors from fleeing the country—from "crossing over into Canada," in other words. But Campbell was arrested, thrown into prison, and had to wait the slow processes of the British courts. The facts upon which Robertson based his suit for libel, were obviously insufficient; any Scottish lawyer could see that no libel was contained in the words which Campbell used and no libel was intended, although if there is any time when one man would be justified in venting his wrath on another man, it was surely then. Everything that Robertson could say which was calumnious and mean, had been posted in nearly every city to which the reformer went. A libel suit of good dimensions could have been based upon

these placards, with Campbell as the plaintiff, and Robertson on the defensive, but Alexander Campbell was not a man constructed on a small and mean pattern, and it is not likely that that libel ever entered his mind. But a serpent extracts venom where a bee might find honey, and the Rev. James Robertson saw libel in the gentlemanly but cutting letter to the *Edinburgh Journal*.

When the case came before Lord Murray, it was immediately dismissed by him—the facts were not equal to the complaint; but the reverend gentleman was not satisfied; he yet smarted under the castigation which he received from a man whom he saw growing in popularity and influence at every effort of his own against him. The case was appealed to the highest court of Scotland, the Court of Session, of which the great Lord Jeffrey, founder of the *Edinburgh Review*, was then judge. Here again we introduce our speaker:

"That the case was dismissed by Lord Murray as possessing not a sufficient cause for action was no surprise to any of us. Scottish jurists are justly famed for their integrity, and we were only impatient because every day made a change in the prisoner's health in the dark cell at Bridewell. A deep cold was taking possession of him, and the strain upon his mind and feelings was making its effects seen. He realized the whole horror of the incarceration, and with a Gethsemane sorrow, his prayer was, 'Lord if it be thy will, take this cup from me.' But with heroic courage he could also add, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' Day after day wore heavily upon him. When the news of Lord Murray's decision came to his cell, it was filled with visitors. The joy with which it was received, was unspeakable. Some even wept in their gladness. Campbell's face shone with new light, and his eyes regained their wonted life at the prospect of an immediate release. But this sunshine did not last long. In the evening of the same day, a certain Malcolm Sturme, a great friend of Campbell, came in. Malcolm was a man whose face was an open book. As soon as we saw him, we knew there was something wrong. 'Robertson has appealed to the Court of Session,' said he, 'another fortnight in this prison cell.' The indignation of those present began to vent itself in language expressive of actual feeling. But the prisoner was calm and self-possessed. Disappointment was plainly marked upon his face,

but not a word did he utter which betrayed even the least resentment against his persecutor.

"Robertson's friends very positively disapproved of the appeal—in the first place, because they saw it was useless, and in the second, because the matter was taking too much the semblance of persecution, and the sympathy of the Scottish people was becoming aroused in Campbell's favor, but Robertson was not inclined to let go of the last hold he had and so the matter had to go through. I have heard it said that Lord Jeffrey, knowing that Campbell's imprisonment would come to a close at his decision, and knowing all the circumstances of the affair, having heard Campbell's Edinburgh address, accelerated the legal proceedings as much as possible, so as to reach the case appealed from the decision of Judge Murray. Hence Campbell's days in Bridewell prison were cut shorter than they otherwise would have been. Though Campbell came out of prison with the universal sympathy of Scotland, I have heard it said he was never the same man again. A heavy cold had settled upon him, and a fever was taking hold of his hitherto robust constitution. A man nearly sixty years old is too old a man for such treatment. He had come to his fatherland in the hopes of recruiting his strength, which the cares and activities of a busy career had somewhat shattered. A damp cell in Bridewell was no place for him. I almost weep when I think now of that old man, reviled but reviling not again, persecuted but speaking no evil of his enemy. He was not such a man as one would pity—he stood on a higher plane—but when I think it over now recalling his sufferings and forbearance, I feel that there is one thing that the world ought to start back and do over again. But he has been dead now for more than twenty-five years, and such reparation as was due him must be from the hand of Him who makes no mistakes."

The thousands who waited in Ireland to hear the great man who had first seen the light in their land, were to be disappointed. The appointments which had been made for him in all the leading cities in the north of Ireland, were destined never to be filled. That voice which had been listened to by many hundred thousands, was never more to be heard in the land which gave it its first utterance. Its great power was being forever undermined by the cold, damp walls of Bridewell prison. The tedious days wore away; the iron constitution which had withstood the storms of abuse, and calumny,

and the arduous labors of a never-idle life, was now giving way. A few weeks more and the Rev. James Robertson would have been satisfied. But the decision of the Court of Sessions came in due season. The imprisonment of Alexander Campbell had been felt as the shame of Scotland, and widespread was the joy with which his liberation was hailed.

Here again we resume the thread of our friend's narrative:

"The audience which assembled in Glasgow to greet and hear Alexander Campbell after his release was one of the largest I have ever seen within the walls. The hall was packed to suffocation. For the first time in Scotland he faced an audience which was almost entirely in sympathy with him. The hectic flush of fever was upon his face. He arose to speak. Breathless was the stillness that awaited him. The erect form which had challenged the admiration of an unfriendly Edinburgh audience, was weakened; and the penetrating voice, to whose volume and charm the former victory had been partially due, would hardly do its bidding. All felt the difficulties under which he labored, and after a short effort he was again seated, and a doctor, a classmate of Campbell's in Glasgow University, was called to the platform. He immediately announced that the speaker was laboring under a high fever. The disappointed and sorrow-filled audience was dismissed. It was a silent dispersion. A few days later Alexander Campbell embarked from the land of his youth and education to return again no more. His sun had risen from behind British hills, but its last rays tinged an American horizon.

"The disgrace to Scotland was soon retrieved in the disgrace of the man who brought it upon her. The trial of James Robertson for false imprisonment resulted in his fleeing in shame from the land to avoid the satisfaction which the law would require of him, the very thing which he had made the ostensible cause of Campbell's arrest. He has never been heard of since and the weight of his own burdens fell upon the shoulders of his bondsmen. The fine which amounted to £2000 Mr. Campbell would not receive, but gave it to the Christian cause in the land of his persecution.

"Such is the conclusion of the whole matter. 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' Though the great reformer lived nearly twenty

years longer, it is said by those who knew him best that he never recovered from the sad experiences I have related."

While my friend was concluding his story, the "Clansman" was still plunging through the dark waters among the numerous islands of Western Scotland. The stars shone clear and bright. Unconsciously I had wrapped my ocean rug well about me. I looked at my watch; it was three hours past midnight, so interesting had been the history to which I had been listening. The air was damp and chilly. A faint silvery mist was beginning to besprinkle the Eastern sky when I went to seek a berth below.

My story is ended. The main facts, here touched upon, have long since passed into history. If these papers have served to add to the interest and better understanding of these facts, they have fulfilled the purpose of their writing.