

THESIS

"The Life and Thought

of

John McLeod Campbell"

Submitted to the University of Glasgow for the Degree of Ph.D.  
in the Faculty of Divinity, by Douglas A. Shanks.

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THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF JOHN McLEOD CAMPBELL

A Summary of the Thesis by Douglas A. Shanks

The aim of this work is an attempt to consider in detail the life and thought of John McLeod Campbell and, in particular, his teaching upon the nature of the atonement. As an introduction to our study, we outline certain elements in Campbell's youth and especially in the early years of his ministry at Row which were formative in his later development. His relationship with his father, made more intimate by the premature death of his mother, was a determining factor in his life as was the spirit of independence and zealous resolution which characterised his work at Row.

Part One deals with Campbell's life beginning with the proceedings against him in the courts of the Church. In less than three years, his youthful vigour and the concerted attempt to break down the barriers of pride and self-delusion among his people had evinced opposition which eventually came to the notice of the Presbytery. The celebrated libel and deposition followed in due course and Campbell was ejected from the Church of Scotland to pursue his search after truth independent of the fellowship and concern of his brethren inside the Church. Yet the loneliness of deposition did not embitter him. Campbell spent his life preaching

and ministering wherever he was given opportunity and we find the outcome of his learning and experience in his book, The Nature of the Atonement.

Part Two consists of a detailed study of Campbell's teaching as set forth in his trials of 1830 and 1831. He was accused of holding three particular doctrines which were declared contrary to the teaching of the Bible, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the General Assembly Act of 1720; namely, the doctrines of universal atonement and universal pardon, and the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith and necessary to salvation. His own evidence as well as that presented by the churchmen who opposed him is here studied and compared. In Part Three, we consider an analysis of Campbell's developed thought as set down in The Nature of the Atonement, and this later teaching is finally compared with the earlier.

In our concluding chapter, we find that four principal features of Campbell's thought emerge for our consideration. (1) The Fatherhood of God demands that the Father's love for all mankind act in accordance with the whole character of God. (2) The doctrine of the incarnation is the source of our thought concerning man's salvation, out of which springs the doctrine of atonement. (3) The Westminster Confession of Faith, although an important and informative document, valuable to our understanding of the faith, ought not to be used as a proof of heresy and orthodoxy in matters

pertaining to Christian doctrine. (4) While insisting ultimately that the atonement has an objective aspect, this must be coupled with an individual's subjective acceptance of it as a power working in him.

After stating these features in summary, they are further considered and discussed by comparison with the thought of two outstanding theologians of the Church of Scotland, namely, James Denney and Donald Baillie. Finally, looking at the church to-day, we attempt to comment upon Campbell's thought and these four features in particular as they are relevant and important for us.

Our aim throughout has been to walk with John McLeod Campbell, to study the formative events in his early life and the gifts which he gave to the world, and to discern in modern theology and in our present situation the many ways in which we are indebted to this devoted servant of God.

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## PREFACE

This work was begun as an inquiry into the universal nature of the atonement which since the celebrated trial and deposition of John McLeod Campbell by the Church of Scotland has always been associated with his name. Campbell was deposed in 1831 for holding views which had been condemned by the Westminster Confession of Faith and specifically by an Act of the General Assembly of 1720.<sup>1</sup> The original purpose of this thesis was to trace the roots of the doctrine of universal atonement and to follow it through Campbell's deposition and into the present century. However, it was soon apparent that no part of Campbell's teaching could be treated in strict isolation from the rest nor indeed from his life as a whole. In course of treatment therefore the emphasis has shifted from a narrow inspection of a particular aspect of his teaching to a more general study of his life and thought. It is with this in view that we shall consider in detail Campbell's early background and especially his years as minister of the parish church at Row<sup>2</sup> in Dumbartonshire. The charges laid against his teaching and his own defence will be set forth and compared with the development of his thought in "The Nature of the Atonement."<sup>3</sup>

The main purpose of this thesis lies in the attempt to assess the

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1 See Appendix C.

2 Rhu, in present usage.

3 Campbell, J. M. "The Nature of the Atonement" London: Macmillan, 1856.

significant contribution made by Campbell to the theology of the atonement rather than in a partisan attack upon or defence of his views. These latter aspects will no doubt emerge in our treatment of the charges of heresy brought against him by the church. Finally, a brief attempt will be made to relate Campbell's thought to the work of more recent theologians and to the contemporary situation.



## AN OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF JOHN McLEOD CAMPBELL

- May 4            1800   Born at Armaddy House, Kilninver, Argyllshire.
- April            1806   Death of his mother.
- November       1811   Matriculated in Arts in Glasgow University.
- October        1817   Entered Divinity Hall at Glasgow.
- July 16         1821   Licensed to preach by Lorn Presbytery.
- September      1825   Ordained and inducted at Row Parish Church.
- December       1828   First petition against Campbell.
- September 7    1830   Libelled for heresy.
- May 25          1831   Deposed by the General Assembly.
- August 15       1831   Farewell sermon to the people of Row.
- December       1832   Gathered an independent congregation in Glasgow.
- September 17   1837   Opened a new chapel in Blackfriars Street, Glasgow.
- September 26   1838   Married Mary Campbell.
- January 17      1843   Death of his father.
- 1856   Published 'The Nature of the Atonement.'
- April            1859   Retired from active ministering.
- May 1868       1868   D.D. degree conferred by Glasgow University.
- April            1871   Removed to Achmashie at Rosneath.
- February 27    1872   Death.



## CHAPTER I

John McLeod Campbell and the Factors which Influenced his Life and Theology.

It was six o'clock in the morning of May 25, 1831. The General Assembly had been in session since the morning of the previous day and members must have been wearied beyond description for in that time they had given their attention to more than five hundred pages of evidence and had listened to over twenty witnesses. When the roll was called, more than half the members had retired and the remainder decided, by one hundred and nineteen votes to six, that John McLeod Campbell should be deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland. Before the sentence of deposition was pronounced, the Chief Clerk of the Assembly rose to speak concerning a point of procedure. In the height of his emotion, and meaning exactly the reverse of what he said, he declared, "These doctrines of Mr. Campbell will remain and flourish after the Church of Scotland has perished and is forgotten." One of those who remained in the visitors' gallery remarked, "This spake he not of himself, but being High Priest--he prophesied."

"It is now my painful duty--painful, indeed, beyond expression--to pronounce the solemn and deliberate judgment of the General Assembly. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of his Church, and by virtue of the power committed by him to it, I do now solemnly depose Mr. John McLeod Campbell, minister of the parish of Row,

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1 Hanna, W. 'Letters of Thomas Erskine' vol.i. p. 137.

from the office of the holy ministry, prohibiting and discharging him from exercising the same, or any part thereof, in all time coming, under pain of the highest censure of the Church; and I do hereby declare the Church and Parish of Row vacant, from and after the day and date of this sentence." <sup>1</sup> In these words, the Moderator of the General Assembly, in the name of the Church of Scotland, drove a young man from the ministry of that church. In doing this, it would appear that the Moderator was expressing the view of the general public of that day. The editor of the Glasgow Courier wrote, "We never anticipated a milder decision. When Mr. Campbell first broached his heresy, his only right and honourable course was immediately to have withdrawn from a church with whose standards he could not in all things conform." <sup>2</sup> The Scots Times similarly remarked, "We confess that we have not the slightest dubiety as to its justice." <sup>3</sup> Again, the Scotsman declared coldly, "The subject has excited an interest in the country perhaps disproportioned to its real importance, when the abilities of the parties implicated are considered. We have kept our report within a moderate compass, thinking the subject too technical for the great mass of readers, and having much matter on our hands relating to the elections, which we were unwilling to abridge too much. ... We believe the Assembly carry public opinion with them." <sup>4</sup>

Campbell had been a minister of the Church of Scotland for only

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1 Minutes of the General Assembly of 1831.

2 Courier, May 26, 1831.

3 Times, May 21, 1831.

4 Scotsman, May 25, 1831.

six years, but in that time he had endeared himself to his own congregation and to some of his fellow ministers. Ninety-five per cent of the adult population of the Row Parish petitioned the General Assembly in these moving words. "A few individuals only discontented with Mr. Campbell's ministrations, have carried on the prosecution against him, without the concurrence of your Petitioners--who now would most humbly make known to the Venerable Assembly, their affection and regard for Mr. Campbell of whose zeal and assiduity in performing his duties as their Minister, this cannot too strongly testify. And your Petitioners would further beg leave to assure the Venerable Assembly, that instead of desiring the connexion to be broken between them, and their Minister, they earnestly pray, that any decision of the Venerable Assembly may not be such, as to deprive them, even for a time, of the watchful care of their Minister over their souls, whose assiduous and laborious endeavours for their good has excited, throughout the Parish, such a desire for spiritual instruction, such a searching of the Scriptures, such feeling regarding divine and eternal things, as had not formerly occupied so much of our attention, as the vast importance of the subject required." <sup>1</sup>

Among those who supported Campbell through the courts of the church was his friend and kinsman, Norman McLeod, who later became famous as minister of the Barony Church of Glasgow. At the time of Campbell's death, Dr. McLeod said, "Doctor Campbell was the best man, without exception, I have ever known. This is my first, most decided, and

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1 Lusk, R. B. 'The Whole Proceedings in the Case of John McLeod Campbell' Greenock: R.B.Lusk, 1831. Sec.iii. p.176.

unqualified statement. His character was the most perfect embodiment I have ever seen of the character of Jesus Christ. ... Towards God, his love was deep, constant, and, what I dare to describe as an all-absorbing personal affection, combined with a profound reverence and awe. God, as his Father, was the ultimate rest of his whole being, the life of all his actions, the source of his secret inner joy, and his infinite reward. In this light he saw and judged of all persons and things, and examined whatever demanded his faith as moral or spiritual truth. All he enjoyed or hoped for, was inseparable from thoughts of God. ... To him the written word presented to the outer eye or ear what was in harmony with all he saw or heard of God as seen by the inner eye, or heard by the inner ear of the spirit, as taught of God. More touching still were his prayers. These were, indeed, an opening up of his whole heart in holy awe and loving confidence in God, and in righteous sympathy with His will. ... Such love to God as this was the necessary and organic growth of what he believed regarding God's relationship to himself and to all men, as revealed in Christ, and confirmed by experience. His theology and life were but a development of his knowledge of God as a Father, whose name is Love. The incarnation and the meaning of the life and death of Christ were seen in this light of love, and as manifesting that love in Christ to man."

Before considering in detail the events which led up to the deposition, the teaching behind these events and <sup>the</sup> development of Campbell's

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1 'Good Words for 1872' Edited by Norman McLeod.  
London: Strahan & Co., 1872.

theology, let us consider several factors which influenced Campbell in his early days and immediately preceeding the first cries of 'Heresy.'

The first and most important factor which influenced Campbell from the days of his youth was his relationship with his father. As a boy, Campbell attended the parish school at Kilninver, although he claimed to owe much of the beginning of his education to his father. "At the age of eight he was reading Caesar, and his Sunday task, a few years later, was to learn by heart one of George Buchanan's Latin Psalms."<sup>1</sup> When Campbell was six years old his mother died, leaving his father with three children of whom John was the eldest. Thus, "circumstances combined with natural disposition to make the relation of father and son in this case one of peculiar tenderness."<sup>2</sup> Many years later, a family friend, Mr. William Penney, described the relationship between father and son. "Your dear father," he said, "being in some sense both father and mother to you, naturally concentrated in himself the feelings due to both, and possessed from you the affection which, in its peculiar strength, a mother generally claims."<sup>3</sup> This relationship of 'peculiar tenderness' is evident in all that Campbell wrote to his father, especially at the time of his trial and deposition and up till his father's death in 1843. There can be little doubt that this was a formative power in much of Campbell's thought on the nature of the atonement, and this particular aspect will be discussed more fully at a later stage.

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1 Campbell, J. M. 'Reminiscences and Reflections' London: Macmillan, 1873. p.2.  
 2 Campbell, J. M. 'Memorials of J.M.Campbell' London: Macmillan, 1877.  
 3 Memorials p.2. p.2.

It is certainly clear that father and son were regular correspondents and that, both in joy and in times of anxiety or uncertainty, Campbell drew on the affection, understanding and advice of his father. Not only did he refer frequently in his letters to his sermons and their dominant themes, but at periods of crisis he sought the counsel of the older man. For instance, we find that when the possibility of a call to London arose, Campbell consulted first with his father. He wrote, "How the cares of life are begun to press upon me. There are many considerations, in regard to which I find it difficult to use the scales. But I leave it to your nicer and more experienced hand."<sup>1</sup> We might point also to two occasions when the father expressed publicly his deep feeling for his son. At the time of Campbell's ordination and induction to the Row parish in 1825, in the presence of his future parishioners, the father bore testimony "that his son had never caused him one moment's pain from his birth till that day."<sup>2</sup> Six years later, addressing the General Assembly which was in the very act of deposing the young Campbell, his father said, "Moderator, I am not afraid for my son, though his brethren cast him out the Master whom he serves will not forsake him; and, while I live, I will never be ashamed to be the father of so holy and blameless a son. Indeed, Sir, in these respects, I challenge any one in this house to bring forward any who can come into competition with him."<sup>3</sup> The true significance of this relationship is well expressed by Leckie when he

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1 Memorials p. 8.

2 Reminiscences p. 7.

3 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 177.



says, "No cloud ever shadowed the light of mutual love and sympathy in which they walked until the end; and John McLeod Campbell testified, when he was himself in the evening of life, that his experience of his earthly father had made real to him in youth the Fatherhood of God."<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, let us notice how highly he regarded the office of the ministry. "He began his ministerial charge of the parish of Row as a fervent young Evangelist; a spiritual Cavalier aglow with the zeal of salvation, ready to destroy by swift assault the forces of evil."<sup>2</sup> In a letter to his sister in India, Campbell described something of the feelings with which he looked forward to his work. "I have the comfort of telling you, my dearest sister, that I go to Row with all the guarantee of usefulness, which a most affectionate and cordial reception from all the people can give. I think I have also the guarantee of devoted purpose of faithful labouring; and I have the kind wishes and fervent prayers of many whose interest is no less of a professional than of a personal kind, who, while they desire to see me happy, would only be content to see me so in doing good. ... By the time you receive this letter I shall be among them, speaking to them from the pulpit on the Sunday and on the week-days from house to house, after the example of Paul at Ephesus, concerning those things that belong to their peace. When my dearest Jane thinks of me, let her not forget how I am engaged, and the importance and lasting interest that may depend on the effect given to my words."<sup>3</sup> In the

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1 Leckie, J. H. 'Fergus Ferguson, D.D.' Edinburgh: Clark, 1923. p. 8.

2 Ibid. p. 9.

3 Memorials p. 15.

Reminiscences, Campbell describes this factor as being most influential early in his ministry. From the time of his induction, he set about his pastoral duties in such a way that every visit was taken up with serious "religious discourse."<sup>1</sup> Campbell was urgently aware of how many of his people were willing to give a little time to God in order to ease the burden of conscience, rather than actually to "count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the love of God in Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

Travelling on horse-back, the young Campbell went about zealously preaching and catechising in farm-houses and at loch-sides. On his first day of visitation, he visited an old couple who "came with him to the brow of the hill ... and each had a parting word for the young minister. The old man said, 'Give us plain doctrine, Mr. Campbell, for we are a sleeping people;' and his wife solemnly quoted the words, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'<sup>3</sup> " On another occasion, a certain Peter McCallum of Helensburgh called upon Campbell and told him of his sister-in-law who was in need of spiritual guidance. In trying to teach her, McCallum himself had been led to more careful study and prayer, and "he at last came to a clear and soul-composing view of the truth. Mr. Campbell often recalled that visit, and the comfort that it had given him to find that someone had really got good from his teaching."<sup>4</sup> Some months after having left Row, Campbell wrote to his friend in these words, "My dear Peter-dear in many recollections

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1 Reminiscences p. 12.

2 Philippians 3:8.

3 Memorials p. 21.

4 Ibid p. 29.

of you since the night you called on me at Shandon—the first that ever told me that God had made me the instrument of good to their soul; and made much dearer to me by your remembrance of me since our separation.”<sup>1</sup>

In a series of letters to his father during the summer of 1826, Campbell described his preparatory work before his first celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The amount of such time and effort is indicated in the following passages from his letters. "I really have much to do; much to write and much to speak before the Sacrament, preparing young communicants, etc.; you know how laboriously I do these things, and it will prodigiously press me to go to you next week." Three weeks later, he wrote, "My not going to Kilninver arises from that being the day I meet my young communicants in this end of the parish for the last time. I have, upon the whole, had much comfort in them, though more in the anxiety to know than in their actual knowledge. But by next year I hope to have them better prepared."<sup>2</sup>

In the third place, Campbell's view of the centrality of the Bible for the work of the ministry, calls for our attention. At the very outset of his ministry, Campbell resolved that he would use no other assistance in sermon preparation but the Bible. "I never read any sermons on the texts which I selected before beginning to write myself; nor did I consult any Commentary, unless in seeking to ascertain the precise translation of the original."<sup>3</sup> It was his faithfulness to this self-imposed rule which led him to a constant and careful study of the Bible.

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1 Memorials p. 29.

2 Reminiscences p. 14.

3 Ibid p. 11.

It would perhaps be surprising if there were not early signs of Campbell's inherent spirit of independence. While still a student at Glasgow in the Faculty of Arts, we have the first intimations of this, when he received high commendation from the Professor of Moral Philosophy for an essay "in which he ventured to argue in favour of conclusions different from those which had been adopted in the lectures."<sup>1</sup> Even after he had entered the Divinity Hall, Campbell spent long hours each day studying subjects which were outside the prescribed course. During his three years of Divinity at Glasgow, he struggled with French, Natural Philosophy, English Literature, Latin and Political Economy. During his post-graduate year at Edinburgh, he continued to study Chemistry, Anatomy and Mineralogy. All these were taken up "simply from the young student's eager thirst for knowledge,"<sup>2</sup> but we might also infer that Campbell insisted upon pursuing the course of study which seemed to him most helpful. Refusing to limit himself to the pattern of study laid down by the church, he set his own standards of work and acted accordingly. In a biographical note, his son concludes, "It was not till he became engaged in the actual work of a parish that all his energies were concentrated upon subjects of religious thought; and the freshness and thoroughness with which he afterwards applied himself to theological questions was probably due, in part, to the wide range of his early studies, and his familiarity with the principles of scientific research.

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1 Memorials p. 3.

2 Reminiscences p. 3.

It was thus that he was led so soon to ask himself, not, What is the doctrine which has the authority of great names? but rather, What doctrine agrees best with the Scriptures and the facts of human experience?"<sup>1</sup>

The fifth factor which influenced his life and work was the religious situation in which he found the people of Row. Of course, it will be seen that this was the constant frame of reference in which Campbell worked and thought. Whatever he taught, he did so with a view to his people believing and living more in accordance with the will of God for them. Dealing, at an early stage in his ministry, with the subject of repentance, Campbell concluded that most of his people repented because of regret for having exposed themselves to the wrath of God. "So-called confessions of sin were, in truth, confessions of folly and imprudence."<sup>2</sup> Campbell was shocked by the hollowness and hypocrisy of men thus approaching God, and further, he believed that God was being mocked in the prayers of men who admired God as just, holy and good, "not because their hearts are full of His excellence and enamoured of His bearty, but because they think it will please Him and recommend themselves to Him."<sup>3</sup> With a view to making these distinctions clear to his people, Campbell tried to set up standards of conduct by which they might "detect the deceptions of their own hearts."<sup>4</sup> In this way, he endeavoured to combine the high standard of what God wants man to be, with the power of the Gospel to

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1 Memorials p. 8.

2 Reminiscences p. 17.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid p. 18.

accomplish this in man. The danger was that they would look upon this as another duty rather than as a gift, "that is to say, I found the ideal of what men ought to be realised more in fear than in hope."<sup>1</sup> Campbell saw that whatever he preached, his people heard only the demand of what they must become, rather than the power of the Gospel to help them toward this end. They did not question the power of Christ to save them, but only doubted themselves, which rendered conditional the conscious possession of Christ as Saviour. This condition they spoke of as "repentance, faith, or love, or 'being good enough,' which last expression gave really the secret of their difficulty."<sup>2</sup> For them, the message of Christ as a call to put their trust in him, was merely an additional burden to the other demands of loving God and loving their fellow men. It was not, as it should have been, the power by which the latter demands were made possible. Therefore, Campbell sought to fasten their attention on the love of God rather than the individual's response to that love. He taught them to admit their not being what they should be, so as to bring them under the power of the forgiving, redeeming love of God in Christ. As a result, he began to press the doctrine of assurance of faith upon them, that is, that the first step in religion must be that of resting assured of God's love in Christ to them as individuals. So he found that, "what my pressing of high attainments, as the fruits of faith had been unable to accomplish, I now found produced by the earnest demand

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1 Reminiscences p. 131.

2 Ibid p. 132.

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for the truth itself."

Finally, the debased moral situation into which Campbell entered at Row must be considered since his struggle against it also played a formative part in the development of his thought and character. W. C. Maughan, in his brief history of the country round about the Gareloch, referred to Campbell in the following terms. "When he succeeded to the living, the religious life of the people was at a very low ebb, there being a great deal of drunkenness and immorality. Smuggling and other unlawful practices were rife in the neighbourhood, and were regarded in a very indulgent light by the inhabitants. Though the population of the parish of Row was but little over two thousand, there were no less than thirty public houses scattered over its narrow bounds, and thus ample facilities were offered for intemperance. All this Mr. Campbell set himself to reform, and he earnestly and prayerfully laboured to this end. He sought to present the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in a solemn and striking manner, pressing home, as a free and priceless gift, salvation for all who were willing to receive it, through the great atoning sacrifice on Calvary." Yet, in spite of Campbell's efforts at reform, the Rev. John Laurie, his successor wrote, "There are about thirty public houses in the parish, a far greater number than ought to have been licensed among a population of so inconsiderable an amount. Nine of them are on the Garelochside, where one or at most two would have

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1 Reminiscences p. 19

2 'Annals of Garelochside' Paisley: Alex. Gardner, 1896. p. 70.

been abundantly sufficient. Considering the rapidity with which habits of drunkenness are increasing everywhere, it is much to be wished that some effectual means could be resorted to for checking this fearfully ruinous vice.<sup>1</sup> With regard to poor relief in the parish, Mr. Laurie urged, "The expenditure ... is now threatening to exceed the income, and must ere long do so, unless some means are taken to arrest the increase of the growing number of paupers; and by far the most effectual means would be to introduce some public works, and curtail both the facilities and the places for dram-drinking. There is still a disposition on the part of the poor of a respectable character to refrain from asking parochial aid, except under strong necessity. But with those of idle and intemperate habits there is scarcely a shadow of such delicacy either here or anywhere else. The dram-drinker has usually drowned every good feeling in his progress to poverty."<sup>2</sup> "Like most of the districts in the neighbourhood of the Highlands, smuggling seems to have prevailed some time ago to a considerable extent. But, for some years, this degrading and demoralizing habit has been rapidly decreasing, and now it has almost ceased to be practised. It is much to be wished that the same thing may be said of poaching."<sup>3</sup>

The kind of situation into which Campbell entered might be more easily visualized by reference to what was going on in the neighbouring parish of Rosneath, as described by Robert Story. "Drunkenness was very

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1 'The New Statistical Accounts of Scotland' Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1845. Volume viii, p. 82.  
 2 Ibid p. 81.  
 3 Ibid p. 77.



general, rows frequent, smuggling universal. There was a still in every glen, and the illicit manufacture and traffic were carried on with very little concealment. So blunted was the moral sense of the community, that it was considered no stigma on any man's character that he should be a smuggler; and persons even making a decidedly religious profession perceived no inconsistency in combining therewith the avocation of the unlicensed distiller. Nor did they recognize any reason why the minister should look coldly on such a profitable employment. The smuggler felt no delicacy, and no apprehension in bringing to the Manse a gallon or two which he could recommend as 'nane o' yer clatty muckle-still whusky, but a wee drap that I ha'e jist made mysel',<sup>1</sup> and in the old Doctor's days he found most probably a ready purchaser. 'I pay the duty on the maut,' said one man in reply to Mr. Story's remonstrances-- 'I alloo nae sweerin' at the still, and everything's dune dacently and in order. I canna' see ony hairm in't.'<sup>2</sup> On one occasion, during a service of worship in the Rosneath Church, Mr. Brown, the assistant minister, fell down in the pulpit. Known as "a gran' preacher, but a wofu' drucken body," Mr. Brown was revived, "after a pretty strong dram," and carried on with his sermon for a further one and one-half hours, in spite of the remonstrations of Dr. Drummond from the manse-pew.<sup>3</sup>

At christenings and marriages and funerals, and especially after the annual celebration of the Holy Communion, there was much intemperate

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1 Dr. Drummond, Story's predecessor.

2 Story, R. H. 'Memoir of Robert Story' Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862. p.48.

3 Ibid p. 47.

merry-making. "At funerals, four rounds of whiskey were considered due to wounded affection and departed worth, and respect was shown to the dead by the intoxication of the living. A company, each of whose component members had imbibed four glasses of raw whisky, could hardly be expected to offer a very staid and orderly escort to the grave; and it not infrequently happened that a good deal of squabbling and fighting<sup>1</sup> took place among the mourners on their way to the churchyard." "At marriages, for example, numerous crowds assembled, and generally they were very boisterous festivities. On the intermediate days, before the kirking, the young pair with their attendants, preceded by the bagpipe, perambulated the parish, visiting the cottages that had furnished their quota to the carnival. The ceremonies were closed by the whole party, after Divine service on Sabbath, adjourning for refreshment to the contiguous tavern."<sup>2</sup> The following description comes from a letter addressed to Mr. Story. "The bousing match which I am lamenting was nothing else than the clerical dinner which usually follows the celebration of the Sacrament, and my fellows in iniquity were blameless priests and holy elders, high-minded heritors and Highland Chieftains. We drank, and roared, and sang, in a style which would have shamed our most illustrious meetings at Turnbull's. ... About eight in the evening, some were sick, and others were groaning."<sup>3</sup> Such was considered by some to be a seemly termination of a solemn religious ordinance.

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1 Story, Memoir p. 50.

2 New Statistical Accounts viii, p. 133.

3 Story, Memoir p. 52.

It is perhaps all too easy, when seeking to determine the forces which help to shape great men, to find them almost exclusively in their early and formative years. In Campbell's case however, both in terms of environment and personal character, history seemed from the outset to be fashioning and moulding him to that stature which was later to confront the church in his writings. The state of the parish at Row was perhaps only typical of the general state of others in Scotland at that time, but for the young Campbell the challenge was clear. He came to his task with a high sense of dedication and a sincere conviction of the power and relevance of the Gospel message, equalled only by his rugged independence of spirit. To resist the evils of the situation no doubt called for courage and determination, the source of which was not simply a personal drive and energy, considerable as these must have been in the circumstances, but the constant inspiration and guidance which he drew from God's Word. Moreover, as if making more real the constant and unfailing love of the Heavenly Father, there was always the sympathy, interest and concern of his earthly father.

1. The Presbytery of Anderson.

In December of 1828, opposition to Campbell's views was presented officially to the Presbytery of Anderson in one form or another, which was signed by "some individuals of union ground."

After having been received by the Presbytery with some delay, it was

**PART ONE**

according to the Rev. Dr. Graham of Williams, "it was the subject of a letter of information the omission of a date, which might have been

**HIS LIFE**

at the time." Less than four months later, in March, a petition was presented by three or four persons, together with the

support of its members, one was rejected as having been a member of the membership for many years, and the other was permitted to remain

petition for one year "in the expectation that Mr. Campbell would discuss the subject, and be confined, in his discourses, of the nature of the

offense." Dr. Graham stressed the leniency with which the subject was treated at this stage when he said, "He must have well known the

in which the Presbytery was placed; he must have seen that he might be able so to compromise matters as to

his character; and so firm was our opinion that he was not to be

of the nature of the offense, and so firm was our opinion that he was not to be

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## CHAPTER II

The Proceedings Against Campbell in the Courts of the Church.

i. The Presbytery of Dumbarton.

In December of 1828, opposition to Campbell's teaching came officially to the Presbytery of Dumbarton in the form of a petition which was signed by "some individuals of much practical ungodliness."<sup>1</sup> After having been received by the Presbytery with much reluctance, according to the Rev. Dr. Graham of Killearn, "it was rejected on a mere matter of form--the omission of a date, which might have been supplied at the bar."<sup>2</sup> Less than four months later, in March of 1829, a similar petition was presented by three or four persons, two of whom appeared in support of it.<sup>3</sup> Of these, one was rejected as having been refused church membership for many years, and the other was persuaded to withdraw the petition for one year "in the expectation that Mr. Campbell might review the subject, and be cautious, in his discourses, of giving further offence."<sup>4</sup> Dr. Graham stressed the leniency with which Campbell was treated at this stage when he said, "He must have witnessed the difficulty in which the Presbytery was placed; he must have seen that our wish was, that he might be able so to compromise matters as to leave no stigma on his character; and so firm was our opinion that he would act in this way, that we resolved that no notice should be taken of the petition in our minutes."<sup>5</sup>

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1 Reminiscences p. 27.

2 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 235.

3 Ibid p. v.

4 Ibid ii p. 236.

5 Ibid

At the end of the probationary year, on March 30, 1830, a Memorial was presented to the Presbytery by twelve heads of families from the parish of Row. In this document, the Presbytery was reminded of the petition of the previous year and was urged to take action in the matter. The memorial requested that, since Campbell, far from compromising or curbing his offensive doctrines, had continued to teach them with increased earnestness, the Presbytery "take measures for effectually checking that constantly increasing, most painful and pernicious state of discord into which the Parish has fallen; and for securing our youth from unavoidably falling into what we conceive to be hurtful errors."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Graham said, "Error must be always injurious in the same proportion as truth is salutary, which is often compared to a draught of living water to a thirsty traveller. We saw a different river, whose waters were bitter, rush like a torrent through our land. We lingered not on the brink,--we searched for, and arrived at its source, determined either to heal this fountain,<sup>2</sup> or to shut it up for ever."

At the same meeting, another memorial was presented by about eighty house-holders and heads of families of the parish of Row, testifying to their undiminished attachment to Campbell as their pastor and to his zeal in teaching and preaching the Gospel. They urged "that nothing would be done by the Presbytery to weaken the hands of so faithful a minister of the Gospel."<sup>3</sup> However, the Presbytery refused to receive this memorial

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. vi.

2 Ibid ii p. 238.

3 Ibid p. vii.

in favour of Campbell, and ordered the other to be laid on the table. After some discussion, a committee of six was appointed to confer with Campbell personally and to report to the next meeting. When Campbell rose to protest against the appointment of this committee, he was declared<sup>1</sup> out of order as the matter had been closed.

At the meeting of the committee, Campbell refused to converse with them on matters pertaining to the doctrine and worship of the church for the following reasons.<sup>2</sup> First, the Presbytery had refused to hear his objections to the appointing of the committee simply because the decision had been made, although the Presbytery was still in session. Moreover, the memorial involved was still lying on the table of the Presbytery and had not been properly considered by the house, and finally, the Presbytery had rejected the memorial of some of his most respected parishioners without consideration, or "without any notice even of its rejection in the Presbytery's minutes."<sup>3</sup> These reasons accompanied the committee's report, which was presented to the Presbytery on May 4, 1830. Immediately that this report was heard, the rejected memorial was read and received.

Mr. Dunlop of Keppoch, an Elder, spoke at some length to the Presbytery, contending that before considering an accusation against a minister, they were bound, by the form of process, to inquire into the characters of the accusers. Therefore, he moved "that seeing it is so important for the interests of religion that no charge be preferred lightly, or by improper, or incompetent, persons, against either the life or doctrine of a minister

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1 Story, Memoir p. 153.

2 Lusk, Proceedings p. ix.

3 Ibid p. x.

of the Gospel, that before any proceedings take place in consequence of this memorial against Mr. Campbell, the religious knowledge, and life and conversation of the petitioners be inquired into, as enjoined in the form of process, and that for this purpose the whole of the petitioners be cited to appear at the bar at the next ordinary meeting of Presbytery."<sup>1</sup> This motion was opposed by Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane on the ground that "to inquire into the religious knowledge or character of the memorialists, was quite incompetent, seeing that they were in communion with the church, which fact, of itself, testified both as to their knowledge and character."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, Mr. Dunlop's motion was withdrawn.

Campbell objected to the court that, according to the form of process, the memorialists ought to have come first to him, as their minister, whereas none of those in court had ever had any communication with him on the subject. Dr. Graham and Dr. Hamilton argued that the purpose of this requirement in the form of process was merely that the minister should be informed of the intention of such complainers, and Campbell admitted having discussed the matter with two of them. After this, Dr. Graham moved that the Presbytery ask the memorialists to convert the memorial into a libel, and Mr. Dunlop moved that the lives and characters of the petitioners be inquired into. The former motion was carried by seven votes to two. Dunlop complained to the ensuing General Assembly, but when the Assembly met on May 26, 1830, his counsel withdrew the complaint, whereupon the Assembly instructed the Presbytery to inquire

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. xii.

2 Ibid p. xiii.



further into the case, to receive any libel that might be presented, and to proceed in whatever manner they deemed just.<sup>1</sup>

It was arranged, therefore, that the Presbytery should make a parish visitation to Row on July 8, 1830, in order to hear Campbell preach and to talk to the members of the parish. The sermon was taken from the passage, Matthew 5:1-12, and the Presbytery recorded "their decided condemnation and abhorrence of the doctrine contained in the following expressions. 'God loves every son of Adam with a love the measure of which is the agonies of his own Son.' 'The peace makers are those who know that Christ died for every human being.' 'The peace makers are those who can say to every individual the Lord Jesus shed his blood for you.' "<sup>2</sup> After meeting with the elders and several of the memorialists individually, the Presbytery moved to recommend that the memorialists convert their memorial into a libel to be presented to the next meeting. This motion was opposed by Mr. Dunlop, who directed some very serious charges at members of the Presbytery. He suggested that there should be parochial visitations made to every parish, and he expressed deep concern at the manner in which Campbell's case was being conducted. Moreover, he declared that members of the Presbytery had urged the parishioners to petition the court and had given them promises of support.<sup>3</sup> It might be taken as some indication of the veracity of Mr. Dunlop's observations that no reply by the Presbytery is recorded.

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1 Minutes of the General Assembly of 1830.

2 Minutes of the Presbytery of Dumbarton of 1830 p. 135.

3 Lusk, Proceedings p. xx.

During the first week in September of 1830, the Presbytery met to receive the libel <sup>1</sup> against Campbell, which was subscribed by eight of the twelve memorialists. During the discussion, Mr. Story alone opposed the serving of the libel, pointing out that the terms used were not sufficiently well-defined. However, "all the other members of Presbytery who were present, took a different view of the libel; and Mr. Campbell was accordingly summoned to appear before the Presbytery at their next <sup>2</sup> meeting on the 21st September."

In the course of the latter meeting, both the libel and Campbell's written answers were read, after which Mr. McGeorge, counsel for the libellers, addressed the court. He began by paying tribute to the life and character and talents of the defendant, and cited these as making <sup>3</sup> this trial all the more imperative. A self-confessed layman in Biblical studies, McGeorge asserted that the relevancy of the libel depended upon the Westminster Confession of Faith. He said, "I do not apprehend that the Reverend Presbytery will permit the standards of the Church to be called in question by one of her ministers, as not in accordance with Scripture, or to be opposed by other authorities not recognised by the <sup>4</sup> Church: to entertain such arguments would be a dereliction of principle." In reply, Campbell declared that he had no wish to discredit the Confession of Faith, for he still adhered to it freely and fully, but he insisted upon regarding with much regret the Assembly Act of 1720.

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1 See Appendix A.

2 Lusk, Proceedings p. xxii.

3 Ibid p. xxiii.

4 Ibid.

At this point, it might be helpful to observe that we are dealing specifically with the procedure of the trial, while the teaching of the defendant and the content of the church's case against him will be discussed in a later chapter. In order to recapture something of the atmosphere of the trial, we shall consider, in some detail, the remarks of the various speakers.

Dr. Graham spoke first and "went at considerable length over the different doctrines libelled, and contended that they were contrary both to the Scriptures and the Standards; and concluded by moving that the Presbytery find the major proposition of the libel relevant."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hamilton, after pointing out the folly of quoting detached portions of Scripture, declared his unconditional allegiance to the Westminster Confession, "for to it we must bow." "By my subscription," he said, "I am bound to receive the Bible in the sense of the Westminster Confession."<sup>2</sup> He concluded by referring to a licentiate of the Church of Scotland who had recently tendered his resignation because he could not accept that chapter of the Confession which says, "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ ... but the elect only."<sup>3</sup> In declaring the libel relevant, Dr. Hamilton said, "This individual (the licentiate) found it to be his duty to leave the Church on the very grounds on which our friend finds it to be his to remain."<sup>4</sup>

The Rev. Mr. Gregor of Bonhill was willing to praise Campbell for his talents, his zeal and ingenuity, but he ridiculed his venturing into

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. xxvi.

2 Ibid p. xxvii.

3 Chapter III.

4 Lusk, Proceedings p. xxviii.

the field of divinity, and he concluded his brief remarks by declaring the Westminster Confession the only ground of judgment. He said, "We are far from appealing to the Word of God on this ground; it is by the Confession of Faith that we must stand; by it we hold our livings. ... I have no doubt as to the course we ought to pursue, and conclude with finding the libel relevant."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Proudfoot of Arrochar spoke of the most cordial relations which had existed between Campbell and himself, and he expressed sorrow and regret at these proceedings, "but the doctrines he now holds are contrary to the Standards of the Church which I have sworn to uphold till the last breath of my existence. I have nothing further to say, but to conclude with finding the libel relevant."<sup>2</sup>

Speaking in favour of the defendant, Story of Rosneath reasserted his belief that the libel did not contain any specifically libellous material, and he declared that the wording of the libel itself made it necessary for the court to consider Campbell's teaching in the light of Scripture as well as the Standards. Paying tribute to the candour with which Campbell had placed his views before the Presbytery, Story expressed surprise that previous speakers had made no mention of this fact. While attempting to explain his thinking upon the case, Story became so heated in his observations that the Moderator found it necessary to interrupt and caution him.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Story objected to so much weight being given to the Act of 1720 and he urged the Presbytery to make a fuller investigation into the matter.

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. xxix.

2 Ibid p. xxx.

3 Ibid p. xxxii.

The Rev. Mr. Sym of New Kilpatrick chastened Story for his remarks regarding the Act of 1720, pointing out that, as an 'Act declaratory,' it was still held to be in force as interpreting the Confession of Faith on these matters. Sym concluded his brief remarks by finding the libel relevant and suggesting that the case was sufficiently clear to dispense with witnesses.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Mr. Niven of Balfron spoke at some length, objecting strongly to the form of the libel and suggesting that the case be remitted at once to the General Assembly, because he believed that Campbell held doctrines which were even worse than those stated in the libel and answers. After Dr. Fleming of Old Kilpatrick had upheld the validity of the Act of 1720 and declared the libel relevant, Mr. Dunlop urged that Campbell's doctrines were neither contrary to Scripture nor to the Standards, and the libel, he held, was not relevant.<sup>2</sup>

It was at this point that the Moderator put the question, 'Is the libel relevant or irrelevant?' All the members of the court voted 'relevant' with the exception of Story and Dunlop, and both Campbell and Story appealed against this decision for the following reasons.<sup>3</sup> They objected to the indefiniteness in the wording of the libel, that is, it did not specify passages in Scripture or in the Standards as proof of the charges made, nor were the terms used therein defined or explained. According to the definitions given by Campbell, it had been shown in court that the libel was irrelevant, as containing no libellous material. Moreover, they denied the charge that the libelled doctrines were contrary

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. xxxiv.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid Sec. 1. p. 70.

either to the Scriptures or the Standards.

On the following morning, September 22, 1830, the Presbytery continued the hearing of the minor propositions of the libel. As a result, of the ten propositions, five were declared relevant as they were, four were relevant with certain deletions and one was dismissed as irrelevant. Again Campbell protested against the indefiniteness of the terms of these minor propositions. He objected to the Presbytery making continual reference to 'assurance of salvation,' when the libel referred to 'assurance of faith,' and he complained at having most of the tenth count deleted, for he claimed that the original tenth count contained "the nearest approximation to an intelligent statement of the doctrines taught by the appellant to be found in the libel, and therefore ought to be the most relevant."<sup>1</sup>

Before adjourning, Dr. Fleming made an unexpected suggestion which Campbell described in a letter to his father, written that evening. He wrote, "Now that they had disposed of the libel, he (Dr. Fleming) felt it right to state that he felt there were some distinctions introduced in the defences, some of which he understood, and some of which he had not sufficiently considered; and that therefore, before going farther, he would propose appointing a meeting to confer with me on the subject of my defences to hold yesterday fortnight."<sup>2</sup> It was recommended that Campbell should have his defences printed and placed in the hands of Presbytery members, and this he proceeded hastily to do. In another

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<sup>1</sup> Lusk, Proceedings i p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Memorials p. 73.

letter to his father, concerning the meeting on October 5, Campbell wrote, "When they met they at first seemed determined to make it a mere sham, simply asking me judicially if I adhered to my answers, and proposing to go no farther when I replied that I did. But Dr. Fleming insisting that this would be no conference at all, he was allowed to read some passages in the answers, and then some in the Act of Assembly, 1720, and in the Confession of Faith, etc. After the reading of each passage, with the corresponding passages in the Standards, I was permitted to speak in explanation, which I did, but they heard in silence and made no reply. Thus passed the conference."<sup>1</sup>

At their next meeting, on December 7, 1830, the Presbytery, after much deliberation, decided to proceed to the probation of the libel,<sup>2</sup> against which decision, Campbell protested once more. He objected to the inconsistency which was implied in looking at his answers as a confession of guilt, yet proceeding to prove the guilt. He insisted that probation was entirely unnecessary in that he was prepared to state his teaching at first hand, and he pointed to the danger of receiving as evidence the imperfect recollections of his hearers. By submitting the answers and by presenting himself for oral examination by the court, Campbell had hoped to avoid the necessarily unhappy consequences of a trial of probation.

During the hearing of witnesses, Campbell wrote several letters to his father, and in these, he spoke very highly of the conduct of his

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1 Memorials p. 74.

2 Lusk, Proceedings i pp. 78.

witnesses before the Presbytery, and especially Mr. James Whitshead Hawkins of Dunnichen, of whom he wrote, "If all the best and most guarded and most explicit statements, which I had myself made on any occasion, had been culled out of my discourses and put together, they would not have done me more justice. In short, I might safely substitute them for my answers; and yet they contain internal evidence that they were truly the recalling of what he had heard."<sup>1</sup> This hearing went on for some weeks during February and March of 1831, and at times, Campbell seemed to feel that the opposition was weakening. For example, he wrote, "Even Dr. Hamilton was obliged to confess that it was not so bad a doctrine as he had supposed,"<sup>2</sup> and, concerning another of the witnesses for the defence, he wrote, "Captain Stirling's testimony drew from Dr. Graham a most complimentary speech."<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Presbytery's judgment was postponed until the end of March in order that the case might be fully printed and perused by all concerned, and for this delay, Campbell was most grateful. Nevertheless, on March 10, he wrote to his father, "I will not conceal from you that I have little expectation of anything less than deposition."<sup>4</sup>

The final scene in Campbell's case before the Presbytery took place in the Elephant Inn, Dumbarton, on March 29, 1831. During the discussion, Dr. Graham congratulated the court on the prospect of a speedy termination to such a tedious and troublesome investigation.<sup>5</sup> He reminded the members of their reluctance in taking up the case and of their indulgence and

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1 Memorials p. 75.  
 2 Ibid p. 76.  
 3 Ibid p. 77.

4 Ibid p. 78.  
 5 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 351.



forbearance toward counsels and witnesses at the bar. He discussed briefly Campbell's teaching and concluded by proposing that the case be referred to the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr for final judgment. Dr. Hamilton condemned the whole of Campbell's teaching as a misapprehension of the language of religion, and he charged Campbell and his witnesses with inconsistency in their evidence. Mr. Lochore, in finding the libel proven, declared that the case rested entirely upon the Westminster Confession. "Mr. Campbell," he said, "is at liberty to maintain and propagate any opinion, on any subject--this is the age and the land of freedom--but, Mr. Campbell, having connected himself with a society whose opinions are defined and recorded for its regulation, he ought to consider himself as bound to stand by the tenets of that church, or honestly to withdraw from that church, to the doctrines of which he had subscribed; but from some of which, I think, he has departed."<sup>1</sup>

Speaking on Campbell's behalf, Mr. Story began his remarks by reminding the court that, in the beginning of the case, he had urged that further proof was unnecessary, and he pointed out that others had come to share this position. He paid tribute to the witnesses who had given evidence so conscientiously, although he found it necessary to reach a different conclusion from those who preceded him, when he dissented from the finding proposed by Dr. Graham. Mr. Dunlop objected to the evidence of Dr. Burns of Paisley, who had evidently been prejudiced in his judgment. Of Dr. Burns, Dunlop declared, "He had written a pamphlet"<sup>2</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 367.

2 'The Gairloch Heresy Tried' Paisley: Alex. Gardner, 1830.

against Mr. Campbell--perhaps made money by it--he was a party man--it  
 was Burns versus Campbell." <sup>1</sup> For Mr. Dunlop, the libel had not been  
 proven.

The conclusion reached by the meeting was as follows. "The Presbytery  
 having considered the Libel, and the Answers of the defender to said Libel,  
 the evidence adduced and whole productions and proceedings, and being  
 well and ripely advised, Find, that the defender has entertained and  
 promulgated the doctrine of universal atonement and pardon through the  
 death of Christ; and also the doctrine, that assurance is of the essence  
 of faith, and necessary to salvation." <sup>2</sup> This Finding was submitted to  
 the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, to be heard, along with the various appeals,  
 beginning April 13, 1831.

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 371.

2 Ibid p. 165.

ii. The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr.

After some discussion, the Synod agreed that Campbell's case should be heard by the appeals against the judgment of the Presbytery which declared the libel relevant. As a result, there appeared at the bar, Mr. Story as complainer, Mr. Campbell as appellant and Mr. Carlyle as his counsel. Supporting the libel, there was Mr. McLellan, with Mr. McGeorge as his counsel. The minutes of the Presbytery sessions were read, including the libel and Campbell's answers, and the various complaints<sup>1</sup> and appeals were heard in order.

Story supported his complaint by insisting that since the libellers had attached no definitions to their libel, the church courts must accept the meanings which Campbell put to the words used in his teaching. Concerning the Assembly Act of 1720, Story claimed that it had no reference to the interpretation of the Westminster Confession in general, but was concerned simply with the doctrine contained in a particular book,<sup>2</sup> 'The Marrow of Modern Divinity.' Therefore, this act could have no relevance to Campbell's teaching unless he were accused of the very doctrines of the Marrow. Turning to the Scots Confession of 1560 and to other protestant standards where Campbell's doctrines were explicitly stated, Story declared that the Confession contained nothing contrary to these earlier doctrinal statements, and finally, he went over the minor charges, maintaining the irrelevancy of them all, "either because they consisted of detached sentences, the meaning of which could not be

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii pp. 170.

2 Fisher, E. 'The Marrow of Modern Divinity' Edited by C. G. McCrie. Glasgow: David Bryce, 1902.

ascertained without the context; or because, understanding the terms agreeably to Campbell's own understanding of them, they contained nothing contrary to the Scriptures or Standards of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Campbell began his appeal by asking the indulgence and patience of members of the court because he expected to have to engage them for a considerable time. His son records that he addressed the Synod for five hours.<sup>2</sup> He urged the court to judge carefully and with a due sense of responsibility "because ignorance, although that of a conscientious man, is not an innocent thing in the sight of God, when a closer attention to the matter would have given clearer knowledge, and placed him in a better condition to judge."<sup>3</sup> He declared that his purpose was not to argue about words or dogmas, but that he was concerned to tell them just what he had been teaching his people as the truth of God, that since truth must be expressed in words, there is an awful responsibility upon those who speak and those who hear, as to the use of words. In discussing his teaching in much detail, Campbell compared it with the doctrines of other councils and confessions, and in conclusion, he repeated his earlier objection to the relevancy charge, which had been made without any definition of terms and without sufficient reference to his answers, for, "it is rendered quite impossible," he said, "to know in what sense the Presbytery understood the major proposition, while finding it relevant."<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Graham spoke first for the Presbytery, by giving a brief history of the proceedings, placing special emphasis upon the reluctance of the

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 171.  
2 Memorials p. 79.

3 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 176.  
4 Ibid p. 230.

Presbytery in taking up the case. He referred to the agitation in the Presbytery, caused by rumours of miraculous gifts, signs and wonders,<sup>1</sup> and he quoted from the Report of the Directors of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum, who referred to "the influence of erroneous impressions of religion" upon mental derangement.<sup>2</sup> He added, "We felt ourselves bound in duty to take up the complaint from the parishioners."<sup>3</sup> After this, Dr. Hamilton summed up for the Presbytery and said, "Any individual who can take the Scriptures in his hands, and maintain such a doctrine as Mr. Campbell has done, has a mind so formed that I cannot easily comprehend how it arrives at such a conclusion."<sup>4</sup> Dr. Hill was supported by several members when he moved that the decision of the Presbytery be upheld, and the court agreed, with regard to the major charges of the libel. The Rev. John Wylie of Carlisle dissented from this judgment, and he was supported by his elder, Mr. Morton.

On the following day, April 14, 1831, the Synod proceeded to hear the minor charges in the case. Speaking for Campbell, Mr. Carlyle began by objecting to the inconsistency of finding the 'major' of the libel proved by the 'minor,' whereas, he said, "the law unquestionably is, that the relevancy of the major can be sought for only within its own limits--that the relevancy of the minor, a posterior question, depends upon the relation of that part of the libel to the major--and that, when it is decided that the major is relevant, and then that the minor, if proved, will establish it, the sole remaining question is, whether or not

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1 See Oliphant's 'Life of Edward Irving' vol. ii pp. 128.

2 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 237.

3 Ibid p. 238.

4 Ibid p. 249.

the minor be proved."<sup>1</sup> He reminded the court that when Campbell admitted that the three volumes of sermons which had been submitted as evidence against him, were, "to the best of his belief, what they professed to be,"<sup>2</sup> they had been produced by the libellers and had not been written or revised by Campbell himself. Finally, he discussed in detail the minor charges of the libel.

After several comments by members of the court, Principal McFarlane summed up the proceedings in these words. "I think that this question should be referred simpliciter to the Assembly, and that we should send it there not prejudged by any judicial sentence or opinion of ours. I therefore move that the Synod do refer the appeals and complaint, now heard, simpliciter to the General Assembly."<sup>3</sup> Of a different mind in the matter, Dr. McLean declared, "I must say that I sympathise with the Presbytery of Dumbarton; and the only objection that I have to the proposal of my reverend friend,<sup>4</sup> is, that, after we have heard such pleading from the bar by the Presbytery, I do not think it fair that we should send away the question to the Assembly, without any opinion as to their conduct. I highly approve of the conduct of the Presbytery of Dumbarton; and they are entitled to the highest commendation of the Synod."<sup>5</sup> When this matter had been fully discussed, it was agreed that this was a matter of interest to the whole Church of Scotland, and that whatever decision was given, the case would certainly come to the Assembly.

Finally, Dr. McFarlane of St. Enoch's said that, bearing in mind

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 280.

2 Ibid p. 19.

3 Ibid p. 341.

4 Principal McFarlane.

5 Ibid p. 343.

the audacity of the appellant's opposition to the Church, and as well the forbearance of the Presbytery, he was tempted to add a strong expression of the displeasure of the court in referring the matter to the General Assembly. "But I must object," he said, "to making any addition. There are some of the members of this Court who will, of course, be judges in this case in the higher Court. Now, if you were to send the case to the Assembly with an expression of any opinion on the subject, you are virtually prejudging the case; and, I hesitate not to say, that it would be a strong ground of objection to the members of this Synod taking a part in the proceedings of the Assembly; for, depend upon it, the individuals at the bar would perceive it, for they are marvellously quick-sighted in a thing of this kind, and they would at once take it up against the reference from this Synod to the Assembly. I say, therefore, let the reference be simpliciter." <sup>1</sup> Ultimately, it was agreed, and the case was referred simpliciter to the General Assembly of 1831.

The general tone of the Synod was evidently impatient and unfriendly. The members' speeches "too generally indicated less of a candid and generous impartiality, than of a sheer abhorrence of the teaching ascribed to the defender, and were in their tone polemical rather than judicial." <sup>2</sup> In a letter, Campbell wrote, "Dear Mr. Carlyle spoke for three hours and ten minutes, and gave a far better and fuller analysis

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<sup>1</sup> Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Story, Memoir p. 169.

of the proof than at Dumbarton; but they went almost all out while Mr. Story and he spoke, and only returned towards the close of the speaking from the bar." <sup>1</sup> To the General Assembly's judgment, Campbell looked forward with little hope when again he wrote to his father, "I never came to Row Manse with so heavy a heart as last night, and unless by such a miracle as the stopping of the sun I can expect nothing but the most awful things from the Assembly. ... I shall write again before I go 'home.' <sup>2</sup> That word will soon return to its old exclusive meaning. Oh, my father! I am afraid my letter has had too sad a tone. My afflictions do indeed abound, but I can assure you that through the grace of God my consolations do more abound." <sup>3</sup>

- 1 Reminiscences p. 36.  
 2 i.e. Kilninver.  
 3 Reminiscences p. 37.



iii. The General Assembly.

The Assembly took up the Row Case on Tuesday, May 24, 1831, and in one session, of twenty hours duration, heard all the evidence and made a most solemn judgment. Evidence from previous trials was read, complaints and appeals were heard, and eventually, Campbell was called to address the Assembly. Before entering into another detailed presentation of the libelled doctrines, he referred to the position of the Westminster Confession in cases of heresy. He said, "The principle on which I stand is this, that nothing can be held heretical--that nothing can be denounced as error, excepting upon the express ground, that it is contrary to the word of God. This I distinctly hold. I hold, that the Confession of Faith cannot be made directly the ground of a charge of heresy.--I hold, that it has no authority but a derived authority, and that this the Church has again and again recognised; while, at the same time, I distinctly admit, that the statements of the Church's Standards, being part of the means of instruction provided by the Church, are, if true, aggravations of the guilt of any who wander into the errors which they condemn, and in this view are to be taken into account in such a case as this."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he argued, "It is a far more solemn thing, and accompanied with a far higher sense of responsibility, to apply the word of God to prove the character of a doctrine, than to apply a Confession of Faith; and therefore do I contend for the application of the word of God, and for it exclusively."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 40.

2 Ibid p. 47.

As counsel for the libellers, Mr. Robertson addressed the Assembly in reply to certain technical objections which had been raised, namely, that the libel was too vague, and that there were no specific references to passages in Scripture or in the Standards. Reading from the Act of 1720 where specific reference was made to the libelled doctrines, Robertson sought to justify the terms of the libel. He pointed out that the libel included minor charges which explained the difficulties in the major ones; moreover, he censured the defendant for introducing various distinctions and interpretations in the use of words. Concluding with an attack upon Mr. Story, Robertson said, "He stated that because Mr. Campbell does not admit all the inferences, and all the dangerous consequences that may follow from them in certain minds, and indeed in all ordinary minds from the doctrines he teaches, that therefore you are to conclude that Mr. Campbell's doctrines are harmless." After this, Dr. Fleming offered a brief description of the proceedings in the case, and then demanded that the case be tried by the Scriptures, but only as the Scriptures were defined and interpreted in the Standards. Describing the history of the passing of the Act of 1720, Fleming reproved Campbell for suggesting that it should be set aside. He concluded by urging the Assembly to do justice and to show mercy, and to do so quickly for the sake of the parish of Row. Speaking on behalf of the Synod, Dr. Hill concluded with a dramatic appeal to the Assembly. "O send us not back to our parishes to dishearten those to whom our blessed Redeemer has

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 71.

given us words of comfort to speak,--to tell the weary and heavy laden that because their burden oppresses them, it will oppress them for ever. ... I plead, sir, for the poor in spirit, for the lambs of our flock,-- for the most interesting and most needy of our people; and I pray that your decision may be favourable to them."

Speaking in reply to what had been said against him, Campbell insisted again that he stood solely upon the word of God, and therefore found it unnecessary to state what he understood to be the meaning of the Westminster Confession. Furthermore, he objected to the assumption that the small number of people who brought forward the libel constituted 'the people of Row,'<sup>2</sup> and he pointed out that none of the original petitioners was concerned with the later memorial or with the libel. Referring again to the Act of 1720, Campbell said, "What I hold is, that an Act of Assembly is not a law of the Church. It is a different thing to say that the act took effect, and that obedience to it was imperative, and to say that it was to be quoted as a law afterwards. ... This act was, in point of fact, a decision upon a book, and no more."<sup>3</sup>

After the evidence had been heard, Professor Alexander of St. Andrews opened the discussion by commending the character and devoted work of Mr. Campbell. He said, "Before stating the views which I have been led to take of the painful but important case which is now submitted to the judgment of this venerable Court, I am willing, and even anxious, to pay the tribute of my respect to the personal character and worth of the

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 119.

2 Ibid p. 122.

3 Ibid p. 124.

Reverend Appellant at the bar. Sure I am, that in all he has done and said, in the course of that unfortunate controversy which of late has so much agitated the Church, he has been actuated by the single and sole desire of advancing the glory of God, and interest of immortal souls. I esteem, therefore, and honour the pure and high motives from which he has acted. And, sir, I do more than honour, I revere, the almost apostolical zeal with which the reverend gentleman--it is on all hands agreed--devotes himself to the work of the ministry.<sup>1</sup> Proceeding then to examine the libelled doctrines, Professor Alexander expressed the hope that Campbell might be rescued from "the entanglements of a false, sophistical theology," and from "that strong spirit of error, which clouds his understanding--which mars the usefulness, and, so long as it continues, must cast a withering blight upon all the fruits of his ministry."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Cook next observed, "I do not think there was ever a simpler proposition submitted to this Assembly. There is the libel, and there is the Confession of Faith; and we have just to say is the set of propositions contained in that libel, in conformity or identical with the set of propositions upon the same subjects contained in the Confession of Faith?, and after all we have heard, I do not think there has a single word been said that could cause the Assembly to entertain any doubts on the matter. I would therefore move, to dismiss the appeal and complaint, and affirm the sentence of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr as to the relevancy of the libel."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 128.

2 Ibid p. 143.

3 Ibid p. 143.

When the Assembly had agreed to Dr. Cook's motion, "a good deal of discussion took place, as to the propriety of adjourning the consideration of the evidence till the next day. Some members insisted on an adjournment, professing that their bodies and minds were so much exhausted, that they were quite incapable of coming to any right conclusion. A member said, that it was only that day that the printed evidence had been put into their hands; and that, if permitted to adjourn, many of them might be able to study it in the course of the morning. On the other hand, it was contended, that it was necessary to bring the case to a conclusion before separating, in order that they might do justice to the very great number of cases still to be disposed of. The motion for adjournment was negatived without a vote, upon which a very great number of the members went away."<sup>1</sup>

As the first speaker in the second hearing of evidence, Mr. Carlyle pointed to the inconsistency of the terms of the major proposition of the libel, namely, that the first part of the charge argued that Campbell's teaching was overly lax and indulgent, leading to an indiscriminate complacency, while the second part implied that his teaching was unduly severe, in refusing to acknowledge men as Christians who did not have confidence in God. Turning to the minor charges, Carlyle spoke at length on all those points which had been found relevant, and concluded his address by entreating the court to judge solemnly in this grave matter.

When parties had once more been removed, Dr. Cook said, "Our business is to uphold the doctrines of the Standards of our national Church. We

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<sup>1</sup> Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 145.

have heard an open defiance given to these Standards—we have heard the defender state that he did not consider that they imposed upon him any obligation to teach the doctrines they inculcate—that he was at perfect liberty to state what he was led to consider the truth of God. ... Sir, we are united in this at least, I believe, that there is an absolute necessity for this reverend gentleman being put out from amongst us." <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Cook concluded by moving a sentence of deposition.

The Rev. Lewis Rose, of Nigg, moved an amendment to this motion, which would have had the effect of suspending Campbell rather than deposing him. However, there were certain members of the court who refused to be satisfied with a suspension, and Dr. Cook's motion for immediate deposition was carried by one hundred and nineteen votes to six.

The Church of Scotland had banished "a man who was yet to prove himself one of the great gifts of God to the Church Universal," had driven into the desert "a loyal son of the Scottish Establishment, in whose eyes 'dissent was schism and schism was sin.' Yet, for once, the wrath of man did work the righteousness of God; for an ecclesiastical decision, that was born in strife and completed in blindness, was to have this for its effect, that a prophet was given the freedom and space that he needed for the slow perfecting of his thought, and for the fulfilment of the work that had been given him to do." <sup>2</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 170.

2 Leckie, 'Fergus Ferguson' p. 24.

## CHAPTER III

## Comments on the Proceedings.

In considering the proceedings in the courts of the church, the impression certainly emerges that Campbell's opponents were biased and intolerant in their hearing of the case. While there must have been many, particularly in the Presbytery, who laboured diligently to understand the young man and his views, one cannot fail to entertain the suspicion that the libel was actually instigated and supported by members of the Presbytery itself. We shall try, in commenting on the proceedings, to examine this suspicion more fully, although it is not an easy matter either to prove or disprove.

It may well be true, as Dr. Graham declared,<sup>1</sup> that, in 1828, the Presbytery received the first petition against Campbell 'with much reluctance,' but fifteen months later, the atmosphere in the Presbytery must have been drastically different. At the same meeting at which a document, signed by twelve heads of families in the parish of Row, was presented and received, a second one, signed by eighty such, was refused without even a notice being made of it in the minutes. The former urged the Presbytery to take action against Campbell and his teaching, while the latter testified to the congregation's love for their minister and their anxiety for him. Two months later, at the next meeting of Presbytery, after Campbell had entered a protest regarding the neglected memorial, it was received and discussed without any further recorded reference.

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 235.

Another significant incident occurred in the early meetings, when the Presbytery appointed a committee of six to confer with Campbell and to report to the next meeting. While consulting the form of process according to Pardovan, Campbell suddenly realized that the committee had been appointed and the Presbytery was passing on to the next matter of business. Rising immediately to state an objection to the appointing of a committee, he was not permitted to speak. Mr. Story described the scene, "Hearing the clerk say that the business was concluded, he started up and begged to be heard: 'No, no, it is over, the time is past,' echoed from around the Presbytery table. 'At least, if in point of justice, I cannot be heard,' said he, 'in point of courtesy.' 'You ought to have been listening,' cried they. 'From the Presbytery,' cried one voice, 'you deserve no courtesy;' and thus was it ended."<sup>1</sup>

There are several further episodes which tend to suggest an attitude of bias and intolerance on the part of Campbell's judges. At the meeting of October 5, 1830, Campbell tells us that, except for one, Dr. Fleming, the Presbytery was willing merely to accept his adherence to the answers, without discussing the matter further; and even when Dr. Fleming had read several passages and asked questions, Campbell's replies were "heard in silence."<sup>2</sup> Much later in the proceedings, when Dr. Graham was addressing the Synod, he made references and remarks which were certainly unfair and uncalled for in the situation under discussion. He said, "It is matter of notoriety the uneasy feelings that had been excited in the

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<sup>1</sup> Story, Memoir p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Memorials p. 74.



neighbourhood. Those who professed adherence to Mr. Campbell's opinions, seemed to intimate that they had received miraculous gifts from the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of confirming these opinions, and gaining proselytes." <sup>1</sup> Seeking to merge the agitation at Row with the events at Fernicarry and Port Glasgow, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Graham quoted from a document in which various men of the medical profession suggested that the principle cause of insanity was "the overweening zeal with which it is attempted to impress on youth the subtle distinctions of theology, and an unrelenting devotion to a dubious doctrine." <sup>3</sup> Campbell did not, at any time, ally himself with Mary Campbell or the McDonald brothers, or with any part of Edward Irving's 'spiritual gifts' or 'speaking with tongues.' Story wrote, "It is enough to say, that neither Mr. Story nor Mr. Campbell was in any way connected with the first stirrings of that strange religious movement which ended in the erection of the 'Holy Catholic Apostolic Church:' <sup>4</sup> they stood aloof." However, Dr. Graham was not above using this geographical coincidence to his own advantage in his case against Campbell.

In the concluding words of his address, Mr. Sym of New Kilpatrick, evidently expressed the attitude of the majority of Campbell's opponents, when he said, "On hearing Mr. Campbell declare that he believed in and taught the doctrine of universal pardon, and that of assurance of faith being necessary to salvation; on hearing all this I believe that there will be no difficulty in our finding the relevancy of the libel; and I

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 236.

2 See above on p. 41.

3 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 237.

4 Story, Memoir p. 138.

conceive that we have nothing to do but to take this voluminous document (the answers) into our serious consideration, and that there will be no occasion for bringing any witnesses here." <sup>1</sup> Without any reference to definitions of terms, without any attempt at getting to the intended meaning of Campbell's teaching, Mr. Sym and others were willing simply to condemn him.

Another comment is deserving of mention, concerning the probation of the libel. Why was probation necessary? To probate the libel meant that the charges contained therein had been denied by the defendant, and this was not so. Campbell had not denied the doctrines which had been attributed to him, but had insisted that they were irrelevant, because the meaning he intended in the wording of the doctrines libelled, was not the meaning which was generally accepted. Therefore, rather than proceeding to the probation of the libel, it might have been more meaningful if the Presbytery had spent more time in studying a comparison of Campbell's answers and the doctrinal statements of the church, a study of meanings as well as of words. It seems highly illogical that long hours should have been spent hearing what people 'thought' they had heard, over a period of several years of sermon-hearing, when Campbell was ready and willing to state and explain precisely what he believed and taught.

Finally, let us consider the suspicion already referred to, that Campbell's opposition was instigated and carried through by members of the Presbytery. Though admittedly inconclusive, the various items of

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. xxxiv.

information that we have concerning those who were willing to testify against Campbell lend support to our suspicions. Mr. Story made the following icy remark, "Into the competency of the memorialists there was no inquiry, although one of them was the notorious smuggler, and another the drunken tailor." <sup>1</sup> Furthermore, of the eight who signed the libel, only one actually resided in the village of Row, the others came from comparatively remote parts of the parish, all the places now being within other parishes; McLellan and Turner of Bolernick, which is now Shandon parish; Lennox of Helensburgh; McDougal, the grocer in Row; McKinlay of Greenfield, now in Garelochhead parish; Thomson of Helensburgh; McFarlane of Farlane, now in Garelochhead; and McLeod of Helensburgh. The list of witnesses who were called for the proof of the libel is even more revealing along the same line. Out of seventeen witnesses who were listed, only one resided in Row, namely James Brown, the parochial teacher. Of the others, two were from Paisley, three from Greenock, two from Garelochhead, one from Cardross, and the remainder from Helensburgh. It may be relevant to notice that only eleven out of these seventeen actually gave evidence before the Presbytery, although no reason was given for the omission of the others. Such withdrawals of support and the very scattered nature, geographically, of the memorialists and witnesses, tends to point to the suggestion that these individuals were gathered and organized by some influence external to the parish. This is supported further when we recall the letter which Campbell's father submitted to the General Assembly just before the deposition took

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1 Story, Memoir p. 153.

place, and which has already been cited.<sup>1</sup>

One of the memorialists is recorded to have said specifically that other ministers in the Presbytery had taken active parts in the Row affair, when he declared, "This is not a private thing, done in a corner: the ministers of the church, all around us, have taken it up. They have both written against these doctrines, and spoken against them from the pulpit, and have given them the name of 'Heresy.'<sup>2</sup> " One young Presbyterian went the length of making a service of the worship of God, an opportunity for striking a blow at a man with whose views he differed. The biographer of the Rev. William Cunningham records, "One sabbath, about the height of the Row heresy, Campbell of Row himself walked into the Square Church, after the sermon had begun, and placed himself conspicuously in front of the pulpit.<sup>3</sup> The discourse was one levelled against the Row errors throughout. Next day, one of the elders remarked to him, 'Mr. Cunningham, you were fortunate in having your discourse prepared for Mr. Campbell's hearing.' 'It was not what I had prepared at all,' he answered, 'but I thought it better to say to the man's face what I have been saying behind his back.'<sup>4</sup> " One speaker in the court of the Synod, was especially concerned that the evidence of Dr. Burns of Paisley should be discounted, because he had written a pamphlet against Campbell, and it had come to be something of a party matter, "it was Burns versus Campbell."<sup>5</sup> In such circumstances, is it possible that a consideration of the case by the Presbytery could be conducted dispassionately, and in an atmosphere even bordering on tolerance?

1 See p. 9.

2 Lusk, Proceedings p. vii.

3 in Greenock.

4 Rainy, R. 'Life of William Cunningham' London: Nelson, 1871

5 Lusk ii p. 371. p. 57.

Our concluding comment concerns the charges made by Mr. Dunlop at the June meeting of Presbytery in 1830, in which he strongly opposed the motion that the Presbytery recommend the memorialists to convert the memorial into a libel. By way of introducing his remarks, Dunlop suggested bluntly, "that a tenth part of the pains that had been taken to get up the petition which had brought them together, would bring memorials from many of the parishes, and abundance of evidence, not only of most improper doctrine preached by many of the ministers, but of great impropriety in their tempers, lives, and conversation." With regard to the motion which had been made, Dunlop asserted that the libellers, at their last meeting together, had agreed "to convert their memorial into a libel, under a guarantee from certain members of Presbytery, that the libellers should not be permitted to get themselves into a scrape." He asked the Presbytery what they would think of a judge in a court who went about advising parties to bring actions before the court, and, at the same time, assuring them that there would be no trouble and that their case was assured of success. He inferred that members of the Presbytery had held private interviews with members of Campbell's parish, and had given assistance and advice in proceeding against their minister. "Mr. Dunlop," it is recorded, "then asked whether any member of the Presbytery of Dumbarton had come into the parish of Row, and had urged the parishioners to petition the Presbytery against their minister, assuring them that they had only to petition, and that the Presbytery would manage

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1 Lusk, Proceedings p. xx.

2 Ibid.

the business without giving them any further trouble? He further asked, whether there were not several members of Presbytery who, after the petition had come before them, had had private communication with the petitioners, advised them as to their proceedings, and even concocted along with them the proceedings of that day? He said, if any of them had acted in such a way, he must object to such persons sitting as judges in the case." If these charges were not true, then it would seem incredible that members of the Presbytery did not raise an immediate outcry, and demand an apology from Dunlop.

In seeking to comment on the proceedings of a trial in which a theologian was condemned and deposed as heretical, but, whose views were later to receive the highest praise as a major contribution to the doctrine of the atonement, we are tempted to regard the unhappy proceedings as the work of schemers, whose aim it was to ensnare this worthy young man with lofty but radical views. Nevertheless, in reassessing the evidence which we have considered in this chapter, one cannot avoid the feeling that Campbell had been the object of a spurious attack, launched and encouraged by the Presbytery of Dumbarton. They had, from the beginning, treated Campbell's case with an attitude of intolerance, bordering on belligerency. Their refusal to hear Campbell speak because of a point of order, their reluctance to discuss the meaning of the expressions used in the libel and answers, and the obvious bias of Burns, Cunningham and others, lend strong support to our contention. To reject, without notice in the minutes, a memorial signed by eighty members of the parish of Row, and to disregard,

ultimately, a petition signed by ninety-five per cent of the parish, certainly suggests that Campbell's accusers were not concerned with the amount of support he had received at Row. Further, it was utterly unwarranted, in the circumstances, to merge the agitation at Row with the reckless speculations which were growing out of the 'miraculous healings' and 'speaking with tongues,' at that time so notable in the West of Scotland. Finally, considering the fact that the libellers and witnesses were drawn from a wide area, the various withdrawals of support, and the refusal of Presbytery to make any inquiry into the character and trustworthiness of these men, tends to increase the suspicion aroused by Mr. Dunlop's outspoken attack upon the Presbytery for engaging in the doubtful practice of encouraging the libellers in their action against Campbell. It is with such considerations in mind that one cannot help questioning the integrity of Campbell's opponents.

## CHAPTER IV

## The Later Years (1831 - 1872)

Before discussing Campbell's thought and the development of his views during the latter years of his life, let us consider briefly his life, from the deposition in 1831 to his death in 1872. The history of this period had little immediate bearing upon his teaching, but the completion of this survey will indicate the degree to which his teaching was an integral part of his life. With reference to the Nature of the Atonement, Dr. Leckie wrote, "Campbell's masterpiece cannot be fully appreciated unless we understand that it was the climax of a long process of development and that it is the fruit and final expression of a great man's innermost being and his unique experience. In order to value it aright, it is necessary to have in mind its author's early life and subsequent fortunes."<sup>1</sup>

After his deposition, Campbell returned home to Kilninver and lived with his father till the end of 1832, preaching frequently in the open air, especially at Oban. On two final occasions, he returned to the Gareloch to say farewell. In July of 1831, on a Sunday evening, he preached to an immense congregation in the New Churchyard at Greenock. "It was estimated that not less than six thousand were present; and his voice was heard even beyond the crowd by persons sitting in their own houses at open windows."<sup>2</sup> Then, on August 15, in a field on the outskirts

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1 'The Expository Times' Edited by Hastings. Edinburgh: Clark, 1929. volume XL. p. 203.

2 Memorials p. 87.



of Helensburgh, he preached for the last time to the people of Row. "My dear hearers and beloved people," he said, "I desire now to be enabled of God, under the blue sky which He has spread over us, to speak to you in faithfulness and in love."<sup>1</sup> "It was a beautiful summer morning, and every one familiar with the Gareloch knows how lovely at such a time it appears, how peaceful its shores, how sweet the sound of its waters. And Campbell's sermon was worthy of the scene. Not a word did it contain of recrimination, complaint, or rebellion; not even a single reference to what had passed. Rather was it a simple evangelic address, concerned with things generally believed by Christian men, central things that cannot be shaken. And so his well-loved ministry ended on a note of peace and quietness such as showed rare self-control in a man who had his share of Celtic passion, whose voice had often been heard in stern and even scornful denunciation of things and opinions that seemed to him evil or erroneous."<sup>2</sup> For his successor, Campbell had this to say, "When I remember how much the kind welcome I experienced among the people when I came first among them drew me to them, and made me wish to be taught myself that I might teach them, I feel that it is not only for his sake but for your own that I call on you to receive in all prayerfulness the man who comes."<sup>3</sup>

During the next year, Campbell went about the Highlands and islands, "preaching everywhere; and he was received with great kindness by the people."<sup>4</sup> In December of 1832, he moved to Glasgow and began ministering

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1 Campbell, J. M. 'Sermons and Lectures' in two volumes. Greenock: R. B. Lusk, 1832. vol. ii. p. 271.

2 Expository Times XL p. 199.

3 Reminiscences p. 40.

4 Memorials p. 88.

independently to a fixed congregation, while preaching elsewhere frequently. "On Sundays and Mondays he preached in a hall (the Lyceum) which had been engaged for his use.... He also preached on week-days at Greenock, Paisley, and other towns; and for a time his health did not suffer from these constant exertions." <sup>1</sup> As always, Campbell insisted on a practical emphasis in all his preaching and visiting, and in a letter, he mentions this aspect of his work in particular. "One thing I am specially thankful for, as what I gather from all I have been learning of the fruit of my ministry of the Word here for twelve months, that the teaching has been exceedingly practical--more so much than it was at Row; and that those receiving it have in consequence learned much more what it is to be living epistles of the grace of God, commending Christ in the way of their filling the place which in the providence of God has been given them to occupy." <sup>2</sup> Although urged by the followers of Edward Irving, Campbell refused to consider forming or adhering to a separate sect, because he despised any schism as a deadly sin. "There remained only one way open to him; to minister in loneliness, unattached. And this course he resolved to take." <sup>3</sup> Yet, when Irving died on December 7, 1834, Campbell identified himself with a letter written by his friend, A.J.Scott, in which he said, "Dear, dear large-hearted, noble-minded Edward Irving has left us--has been taken, I doubt not, into a fatherly presence for his filial heart--into a living light in which all errors and darkness flee away. I should not, I am persuaded, have shed a tear in thinking

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1 Memorials p. 102.

2 Ibid p. 113.

3 Expository Times XL p. 200.

of him, as I did many, but for the feeling how cruel seemed the delusion under which, with the simplicity of a child, he had come away from London and remained here, counting, as it were, the time till strength should be restored to him, and he should be a mighty instrument in the hands of God for advancing his kingdom. And now it is as it is."<sup>1</sup>

Eventually, these years of incessant work began to tell upon Campbell's health. As early as the spring of 1836, he consulted an Edinburgh physician, Dr. Andrew Combe, who advised him to give up preaching for some months, and, as a result, he spent the summer of 1836 at Kilninver, where he rested and recovered his strength, after which he was able to continue his congregational duties for another year. On September 17, 1837, with Scott assisting him, Campbell opened a new Chapel which had been built for him in Blackfriars Street, Glasgow, but in December, he was obliged to discontinue his work until his health was properly restored, and for some months, he lived in Paris, keeping company with his friend, Thomas Erskine, and with Dr. Thomas Chalmers.<sup>2</sup>

On September 26, 1838, shortly after his return from Paris, Campbell married Mary, the daughter of the late John Campbell, Ardnahua, Kilninver, and in the years that followed, and especially in the writing of the Nature of the Atonement, Campbell owed much to the loving care and wise counsels of his good wife. Their first son was born on July 31, 1839, and they called him Thomas Erskine Campbell, but this time of great joy was turned to sorrow in the autumn of 1841 when the baby became seriously

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1 Memorials p. 126.

2 Ibid p. 150.

ill and died. To his father, Campbell wrote, "My Thomas Erskine has been removed from under my care; but not from under the care of his true Father, who, in the unseen world, and through the future eternity, will, in his own way, develop the capacities of this infant immortal, and cause him to 'glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.'<sup>1</sup> " Then, on January 17, 1843, Dr. Campbell died in his sleep at Kilninver. Only one who has studied the letters which passed between Campbell and his father will understand just how keenly this blow was felt, for no one could ever fill the place which his father's removal had left empty. In a letter, he wrote, "For no mere creature-gift of the 'better Father' have I been so indebted and so grateful to Him as for the earthly father, whose being what he was filled that name with so much meaning for me."<sup>2</sup>

During the next few years, Campbell travelled widely on the continent of Europe, in Italy, Germany and Belgium, and in England, where he particularly appreciated his visits and conversations with ministers of the Church of England, especially Mr. Edward Bickersteth, "at that time one of the best known clergymen of the Church of England,"<sup>3</sup> and Professor F. D. Maurice. On several occasions, Campbell was actually urged to enter the communion of the Church of England, but he declined<sup>4</sup> on doctrinal grounds, although in the later years of his life, he took an increasing interest in the theological questions which were agitating that church. In this period also, Campbell "had expressed a desire to come near to the spirits of his brother-men more widely than he felt he was doing in ministering to his congregation in Glasgow. As

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1 Memorials p. 162.

2 Reminiscences p. 41.

3 Memorials p. 167.

4 Ibid p. 192.

years went on this desire was fulfilled in a way which did not diminish that freedom of thought and teaching which had been the chief recommendation of his position of 'isolation.' During the later years of his life he was brought by his books into contact with the spirits of his brother-men; and he thankfully found that his thoughts and convictions were receiving a response from men of all churches. Meanwhile he was unconsciously preparing for his work as a writer. In 1847 he was 'venturing (he says) to teach his people on the subject of the Atonement;' and that with reference not to its extent but to its nature. With regard to the former subject the Calvinism of Scotland seemed to him to be fast breaking up: it was as to the nature of the Atonement that darkness still prevailed; and the 'word for that time' would be one which should shed light on that central object of Christian faith." In 1851, he published a small volume on the subject of the Eucharist, entitled 'Christ the Bread of Life,' and in 1856, there appeared his best-known work, 'The Nature of the Atonement.' Of this book, which we shall study in some detail at a later stage, Story wrote, "All books that contain what are called theories or doctrines of the Atonement, must at some point or other fail; for they deal with that 'mystery of godliness,' which was itself the outward expression of a divine love which 'passes all understanding;' but those who have, with the greatest reverence and keenest intelligence, studied the Christian doctrines that deal with the great question of man's reconciliation to God, through Jesus Christ, are the first to acknowledge that in Dr. Campbell's

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1 Memorials p. 167.

book on the Atonement--his chief book--they have met with the most coherent, the <sup>most</sup> comprehensive, and the most exalted of all expositions of the atoning work of our Lord. Nowhere else do you find a more perfect candour and charity in dealing with an opponent's theories, a more anxious searching into all the conditions of an argument, a more intuitive perception of the divine counsel, a more sustained flight of pure religious thought and feeling."

When Campbell's brother died very suddenly in London in 1858, due to both the shock and the subsequent journey to London, Campbell became seriously ill and was forced to remain there for some months. On his return in the spring, he continued his work in Glasgow, although he found himself scarcely strong enough to carry on. "For about a year he tried to go on, being very unwilling to believe that his preaching days were over. At last, however, this conclusion was forced upon him by the injurious effect which the Sunday's work had on his health." <sup>2</sup> At last, in April of 1859, Campbell said farewell to his people and gave up the congregational work which he had carried on for about twenty-six years. On the occasion of his departure, he received a presentation of a gift of money and a portrait of himself for Mrs. Campbell, and a representative of the congregation said, "We feel it right, in the present circumstances, to give expression of our sympathy in what we have witnessed of the great and prolonged effort you have made to minister to us, when your bodily strength was so unequal to it. And when you have now felt it right to

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1 Memorials p. 262.

2 Ibid p. 307.

give up the charge you took over us as a Pastor, it affords us great comfort to know that we yet possess in you a Brother sharing with us in the tribulation through which we must all pass in entering the Kingdom of God. When we consider with what unwearied interest you have so long devoted yourself in manifold ways for our benefit, we feel we are your debtors in the highest sense that human beings can stand in that relation to each other." <sup>1</sup> At Campbell's own urging, many of his congregation joined the Church of Scotland's Barony Church, of which Norman McLeod was the minister.

Perhaps the supreme token of the great change which had taken place in the religious mind of Scotland lay in the conferring upon Campbell of the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Glasgow in 1868. Campbell valued this degree, of his own Alma Mater, as a recognition of his theological views, and at the time, he wrote, "I have had our father, our brother, and Mr. Story most on my mind since I received the official communication from the University, and while I have been hearing so much that made it as satisfactory as it could be. You will understand that my thankfulness is on higher than personal grounds. God has taught me not to lay undue weight on any testimony of man. But in so far as this is an acknowledgement that may be received as some response to my teaching, I feel that I can be rightly thankful." <sup>2</sup> Many expressions of approval and congratulation came to him from various quarters. The Bishop of Argyll published a letter, in which he made the following testimony,

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1 Memorials p. 307.

2 Ibid ii p. 207.

"Few who have had any interest in the religious life of Scotland for the last forty years but will regard the event with deep emotion, significant as it is of the change in religious feeling which has taken place. If it has been Mr. Campbell's happiness to receive in this life that recognition which confessors too often but receive after their death, it is becoming on the part of those who rejoice in the recognition to testify their joy, and to return thanks to those by whom the recognition has been made." <sup>1</sup> Campbell's friend, Dr. Scott wrote to him, "The University of Glasgow have done what in them lies to reverse the sentence of the General Assembly of some forty years ago: a leisurely repentance of a hasty deed; but one which acquires all the greater value from the delay, inasmuch as it may be regarded as in so far giving an imprimatur to the maturest expression of your thoughts." <sup>2</sup> In a leading article, the editor of the Glasgow Herald concluded, "A title, even if it were a far higher one, could add little to a life so faithful to itself. Still, no one can but rejoice that this title has been given." <sup>3</sup>

The spring of 1870 brought deep sorrow to Campbell, in the death of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, of whom Campbell used to speak as 'my beloved Mr. Erskine,' and in a letter to a mutual friend, Campbell wrote, "As one of the two, my friendship with whom had its first commencement forty-three years ago, in the joy of seeing eye to eye in that light of the love of God to man which each of us had known before we met in it, and as with that other (our dear Scott) my original fellow-helper in

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1 Memorials ii p. 189.

2 Ibid p. 208.

3 Glasgow Herald, April 30, 1868.



the Gospel, my bond with him was very special, and, since one of us three was taken, exclusive. You, I know, will give me your sympathy, while you have mine, in that sense of loss which I know will deepen by and by." <sup>1</sup> Soon after this, with Mrs. Campbell, he moved back to the Gareloch, to Achmashie, the field of peace, near Rosneath, where, on his seventieth birthday, he wrote to his sister, "Since I came down here I have been so well and so able to meet many little demands on me in connection with our flitting and settling here, that my own feeling has seconded the thought that seventy is not so great an age as it used to look to me. But these are surface thoughts either way. 'We are dead and our lives are hid with Christ in God.' This, which so soon after my former coming here I was taught to know and believe, I thank my God I have, in these forty-five years, been learning to feel. ... This place is beautiful beyond my picturing of it." <sup>2</sup>

On the occasion of his leaving Glasgow, many friends wished to express their regard for Campbell and for his life's work, so a committee was formed, which included many eminent clergymen and laymen, in order to arrange a testimonial presentation. On April 13, 1871, the fortieth anniversary of the day on which he had stood at the bar of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, Campbell stood before a large company of friends at the home of Professor Edward Caird in order to receive an address and testimonial. The address was signed by representatives of the principal churches in Scotland and the University of Glasgow, and

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1 Reminiscences p. 44.

2 Ibid p. 45.

by several well-known citizens. Dr. Norman McLeod was appointed to present to Campbell, a silver gilt vase, which was inscribed: "Presented to the Rev. John McLeod Campbell, D.D., by a number of friends, in token of their affectionate respect for his character, and their high estimate of his labours as a theologian."<sup>1</sup> In addressing Dr. Campbell, Dr. McLeod said, "Although your name has been much associated with religious controversy, we believe that all would now recognize you as one who, in his fearless adherence to that which he held to be the truth of God, has never been tempted to forget the meekness and gentleness of Christ."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Campbell, in his gracious reply, expressed his gratitude to the gathering for their kindness, and especially for the testimony which was borne to his labours, "that they had not been in vain."<sup>3</sup> Further, he said that he was most grateful "that the being without and not within the Church of Scotland had never lessened his deep feeling towards the Church, his interest in her ministry, and his thankfulness for the good effected by her ministrations."<sup>4</sup> History had come to judge the judges, and Campbell had come to receive, in part, recompense for a lifetime of separation from the Church which God had called him to serve.

On Tuesday, February 20, 1872, at Achnashie, Campbell, apparently well and strong, was busily engaged in writing his Reminiscences and Reflections. During that night, he was taken ill for the last time, and after a brief period of much suffering, he died on February 27, 1872.

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1 Memorials ii p. 298.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid p. 299.

4 Ibid.

His last days were spent repeating words of the Scriptures, some of the great Scottish hymns and prayers, and especially that part of the Catechism which declares, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." He said, "I never saw so much meaning in these words before," and when Mrs. Campbell asked him if he could think of his absent sons, he replied, "All my thoughts are on God and on Christ."<sup>1</sup>

The loneliness of deposition had never embittered the mind and heart of this great follower of Christ, but, accepting the Church's decision, he preached and ministered where he was able, bore bravely the sorrows of life and fought valiantly against the frailty of health which finally put an end to his active ministrations. Accepting with humility the honours of a university and the gratitude of a congregation, he spent the evening of his life by his beloved Gareloch. "May he rest in peace until the Resurrection of the just, and may we have grace to be followers, even afar off, of such as he."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Reminiscences p. 46.

2 From a funeral sermon. Ibid p. 47.



## CHAPTER V

## Campbell's Teaching in 1831

In turning from Campbell's life to his thought and teaching, the most important factor to bear in mind is the necessary integration of these two aspects of our interest in him. The teaching ultimately stands on its own strength, but, especially in the early stages, Campbell's thought cannot be separated from the witness of his ministry at Row. Therefore, in this and succeeding chapters, we shall look at Campbell's thought in the light of what we now know of his life. Since the trial was based on the charges contained in the libel, this chapter will consider in detail, the doctrines of universal atonement, universal pardon, and the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith and necessary to salvation.

First, concerning the doctrine of universal atonement, Campbell said, "I hold and teach that Christ died for all men--that the propitiation which he made for sin was for all the sins of all mankind ... without exception and without distinction." In discussing this doctrine, Campbell defined the word 'atonement' in the limited sense of having specific reference to the work of Christ, by itself, as something completed, "the manifestation which God has made of himself in Christ Jesus." He did not include in this doctrine, the work of redemption or reconciliation, but referred specifically to God's

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 16.

2 Ibid ii p. 181.

saving work in Christ for mankind. For Campbell, this manifestation of God, in the life and death and resurrection of Christ, was expressive of the mind of God toward every human being.

Asserting that the Bible was the only valid basis of judgment in dealing with matters of doctrine, Campbell submitted many passages as proof of his position. Since the libel did not set down texts from Scripture as their case against him, Campbell said, "I would first distinctly deny that it is anywhere stated in the Scriptures, that the work of Christ was only for some men." He proceeded to quote several passages which were often used by those who opposed him. ... "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 19.

2 John 10, 10.

3 John 10, 15.

4 John 10, 27-29.

5 John 15, 13-14.

6 Titus 2, 14.

7 Ephesians 5, 2.

"Yet," said Campbell, "It is manifest that these passages only contain the assertion of a part of a wider truth, by which that which they state is comprehended. ... The principle on which they are all misapplied is the same, viz. understanding the statement of the love manifested to some, as amounting to a denial of the love manifested to the rest."<sup>1</sup>

He insisted that if these passages wholly represented the Biblical view of the extent of the work of Christ in the atonement, then it could be argued that there was some limitation of the work of Christ and the love of God. However, "it must be held utterly unwarrantable to use such an argument, to the contradiction of distinct and pointed statements of the Word of God. The Scriptures say that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' Nothing but a distinct statement that the world does not mean the world can limit this declaration as to the object of the work of Christ."<sup>2</sup> In more positive support of his position, he turned to the following passages.

"He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."<sup>3</sup> "Laid upon him the iniquity of us all."<sup>4</sup> "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."<sup>5</sup> "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."<sup>6</sup> "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world."<sup>7</sup> Here, Campbell

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 19.

2 Ibid p. 20.

3 I John 2, 2.

4 Isaiah 53, 6.

5 Romans 5, 18.

6 Luke 2, 10.

7 John 6, 32-33.

commented, "Thus does Christ announce himself as the bread of life given unto them in speaking to a mixed multitude, yea, in speaking to a multitude whom he immediately afterwards reproveth for their rejection of him." <sup>1</sup> He continued, "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." <sup>2</sup> Again, Campbell added, "Thus are we taught, that did this woman know the gift of God, she would have known that she had a share in it, and that the life which was in Christ was in him for her." <sup>3</sup> "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life." <sup>4</sup> "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you. For I delivered unto you first of all, that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the Scriptures." <sup>5</sup> Campbell explained, "Here we are taught what it was that the apostle had first announced to the Corinthians; when finding them in the condition of heathenism, he preached to them the gospel; and then he had told them, speaking of them and himself together as alike interested in the work of Christ, although at that time they knew not that interest, and he did, 'Christ died for our sins.' " <sup>6</sup> "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." <sup>7</sup> Campbell concluded this review of Scripture

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 21.

2 John 4, 10.

3 Lusk, Ibid p. 22.

4 I John 5, 11.

5 I Corinthians 15, 1. 3.

6 Lusk, Ibid p. 31.

7 Acts 2, 39.



passages by urging that there is not one word in the Bible which has pointedly or distinctly limited the extent of the atonement, although, "there are many expressions distinctly averring that the work of Christ has been for all men."<sup>1</sup>

While denying the right of the church to judge him by any other standard than the Bible, Campbell proceeded to examine his teaching in the light of the Westminster Confession and the Catechism. First, he referred to the following passage. "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."<sup>2</sup> Out of this statement, the first question arose with regard to the meaning of the word 'redemption,' and Campbell declared that if 'redemption' in this article of the Confession, meant the work of the atonement, then this was indeed an express limitation of it. However, if 'redemption' meant the actual deliverance of those who ultimately attained a state of salvation, as Campbell believed, then there was no reference at all to the extent of the atonement. He agreed that the Confession specifically stated a doctrine of limited redemption, but this was quite different

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 31.

2 Confession chapter III, section vi.

from a doctrine of limited atonement.

Further, Campbell read the following passage. "To all those for whom Christ purchased redemption he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them; and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation."<sup>1</sup> For Campbell, this statement proved that the word 'redemption' did not mean the work of the atonement, rather 'redemption' was that which had been purchased by the atonement, that is, ultimate deliverance and salvation. Turning to the Larger Catechism, Campbell asked, "Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ? Answer. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ has purchased it, who are, in time, enabled by the Holy Ghost to believe in Christ according to the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> For Campbell, this meant that 'redemption' was a personal deliverance from sin and the consequences of sin, and so equal to salvation. He said, "The examination of these three passages, and they are those quoted on the subject in the Act of Assembly 1720, surely justifies the conclusion, that it is a decided error to hold that our present Confession of Faith denies the doctrine of Universal Atonement."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Confession chapter VIII, section viii.

2 Catechism Question 59.

3 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 54.

With regard to the extent of the atonement, Campbell declared that the Confession of Faith was no more than silent, when he said, "I hesitate not to admit, that while in the Confessions down to the date of the Westminster Confession of Faith, I find distinct admissions of the universality of the atonement, I am not able to set before my brethren any such recognition in it--it only states what he has done for the elect--it does not state what has been done for others."<sup>1</sup> He supported this position by referring to the following article. "Christ by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf."<sup>2</sup> Campbell pointed out that here, where definite reference is made to the work of the atonement, there is no negative position stated. It is only with reference to 'redemption', that is, salvation, that the negative position is stated, as in chapter III, section vi of the Confession. Campbell concluded from this, that the Confession was silent regarding the extent of the atonement. In seeking to explain the reason for this silence, Campbell recalled that certain members of the Westminster Assembly were known to be of the opinion that the work of Christ was limited to the elect, while, on the other hand, some believed that Christ's work was effected for all mankind. However, according to Campbell, the former doctrine could not honestly have been incorporated into the Westminster Confession, because this would have contradicted the Thirty-Nine Articles of the

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii 211.

2 Confession chapter XL, section iii.

Church of England, and the Scots Confession of 1560, in reference to which documents, the Westminster Confession was received as "in nothing  
<sup>1</sup>  
 contrary thereto."

Campbell declared that the doctrine of universal atonement is pointedly stated in the Thirty-Nine Articles, and to verify this, he read, first, concerning Jesus Christ, "who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice,  
<sup>2</sup>  
 not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."

"The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original  
<sup>3</sup>  
 and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."

At the same time, Campbell said that the Church of England's doctrine of election and predestination was "precisely the same with that in the  
<sup>4</sup>  
 Westminster Confession of Faith," that is, "Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 55.

2 Article II.

3 Article XXXI.

4 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 56.

religiously in good works, and at length, By God's mercy, they attain<sup>1</sup> to everlasting felicity." Campbell concluded, "Were the Article on the extent of the Atonement not given, it would have appeared just as natural to infer that the compilers of the Article on Election, denied the Universality of the Atonement, as it has appeared to many that the Article on Election in our present Confession does."<sup>2</sup> "On the whole subject of the views entertained of the work of Christ, both in the churches of England and Scotland, up to the time, and at the time of the drawing up of our present Confession,--there is an important evidence of the fact, that there was in no quarter any limitation of the extent of the atonement, furnished to us in the readiness with which the members of the Church of England, who held its extent so explicitly, signed, along with their brethren of Scotland, the National Covenant, in which the existing doctrine of the Church of Scotland is so distinctly<sup>3</sup> recognised."

Campbell maintained that one of the chief difficulties in the way of understanding the doctrine of universal atonement lay in the word 'redemption.' He observed that it is used in the Bible again and again, "not with reference to the atonement, but with reference to certain subsequent results, in actual benefits enjoyed,"<sup>4</sup> whereas, for most people in Scotland at that time, the two phrases 'universal redemption' and 'universal atonement' were the same. A second objection to his

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1 Article XVII.

2 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 56.

3 Ibid p. 59.

4 Ibid iii p. 120.

view, he described, "It is the not realizing God's character as apart from God's power. It is one thing to be the Almighty--it is another to be love. God is the Almighty--God is love. ... There is no glory in power, simply as power. Power belongeth to God alone; but if we would praise the power, it is because of the character according to which that power acts. Therefore, as long as God is only seen as powerful, as long as he is only seen as the Almighty, God's character is unknown, and God is not glorified." <sup>1</sup> Campbell's compelling aim was that men might see that, in Jesus Christ, God came forth to man to reveal his character in its fulness, not merely as power, but also as fatherly care.

A further hindrance to the understanding of universal atonement, according to Campbell, was that most people attributed all the actions of all God's creatures, both good and evil, to God, in the same way. The effect of this was that, for such people, God was arbitrary in his dealings with men, and therefore could have no moral character whatever. Most refused to believe that God could love all mankind and yet some of them should perish, that Christ could have died for some whose souls were ultimately condemned. These people would say that there was no love in God for any but the elect, that all events, good and evil, were alike the fulfilling of God's powerful will, but, Campbell insisted, "If I am seeing the fact of one man being holy, and another man being unholy, as alike the fulfilment of the will of God, then it is quite

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 193.

clear that I dare not say, because of these things, that God is holy any more than that he is unholy, because if the one thing would prove him holy, the other would prove him unholy." <sup>1</sup> "Unless I can believe that things continually happen quite against the will of God, I can have no reason to believe that God is good or holy." <sup>2</sup>

Secondly, concerning the doctrine of universal pardon, Campbell said, "The circumstances of a man have undergone such a change, through the death of Christ for him, that, but for that change, I could not ask him to approach God with confidence, or bid him rejoice in God." <sup>3</sup> Much of the opposition to this doctrine seemed to hinge on the use of the word 'pardon,' so Campbell submitted a careful definition. Speaking first in general terms, 'pardon,' for Campbell, indicated the situation into which the work of Christ had placed the human race, and more particularly, he distinguished three possible meanings for the word, 'pardon,' namely, a security against all consequences of sin irrespective of moral character, an act of God in receiving back the repentant sinner into fellowship with Himself, and the removing of the judicial barrier which sin had set up between the sinner and God, so that the fact of being a sinner no longer prevented that sinner from approaching God. Campbell said that the first of these removed from the mind and will of God all righteous moral distinctions, and he added with emphasis, "In such a sense as this I do not hold the doctrine of

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 193.

2 Ibid p. 194.

3 Ibid iii p. 57.

universal pardon." <sup>1</sup> While, in the second sense, he said that the word 'pardon' is often found in the Bible, limited to those who have repented, it was in the third sense, that Campbell held and taught that the doctrine of pardon was universal.

"In Christ, God came forth to man, testifying to him the forgiveness of his sins as a thing already given to him--as a thing that he is now invited to realize as true, and in the realizing of which as true, he is to be emboldened to come to God." <sup>2</sup> Human sin has not utterly cut man off from God and his love, because, all sin has been forgiven through the atoning work of Christ. Campbell recalled that, in the Bible, there are two words which might be addressed by God to sinners, the one, 'Repent,' and the other, 'Depart.' When the righteous judgment of God acts alone, the only possible word from God to mankind is 'Depart.' However, when the grace of God interposes and mercy and forgiveness are extended to all, then the word of God to mankind is 'Repent.' Campbell concluded, "This then, I say, that God every where invites sinners to repent--that God every where invites sinners to come back to him, whereby it is taught that God has forgiven sinners their departing from him, and so he invites them to return." <sup>3</sup>

To illustrate his view, Campbell attempted to show in what respect the believer and the unbeliever were the same and in what respect they differed, concerning the doctrine of universal pardon. First, the believer and the unbeliever are the same in that they have the same

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 33.

2 Ibid ii p. 185.

3 Ibid p. 186.



right and title to approach God with confidence and to put their trust in him according to his will. They share the privilege of being able to repent of their sinfulness, and to believe the Gospel message of God's hatred of sin and love for the sinner. The repenting and believing, as such, have not earned the right to approach God, rather, repenting is the believer's accepting what God has antecedently done for him, and believing is receiving as true what God has said concerning that right. The repenting and believing are not creative, they have not made pardon possible for man, rather, they are the empirical result of God's pardon in the third and universal sense. Secondly, believers and unbelievers differ in that "believers are drinking of the fountain of life, of which pardon is the opening, while unbelievers are receiving no life whatever from it, but are as if it had been yet sealed." Campbell<sup>1</sup> concluded this illustration by declaring that, while for the believer, pardon is the opening up of the true life; for the unbeliever, the same pardon is to them a condemnation, so that, "if they abide in unbelief, they shall have their place assigned them in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."<sup>2</sup>

Turning again to the word of Scripture, Campbell supported his argument concerning pardon, by making these quotations. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 37.

2 Ibid p. 38.

up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." <sup>1</sup> By way of comment, Campbell added, "As an actual thing, sin hath not been put away; therefore, unless put away as a thing imputed, it hath been put away in no sense at all." <sup>2</sup> He proceeded, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortable to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." <sup>3</sup> "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." <sup>4</sup> "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." <sup>5</sup> "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." <sup>6</sup>

Especially, Campbell urged the attention of his brethren to the tenth chapter of Hebrews, where the question of sacrifice for sin and remission of sin was particularly dealt with. "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren,

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1 Daniel 9, 24.

2 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 39.

3 Isaiah 40, 1.2.

4 John 1, 29.

5 Hebrews 1, 3.

6 Hebrews 9, 24.

boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having ~~an~~ high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." <sup>1</sup> At this point, Campbell commented that this drawing near to God, this way of access to Him, is the 'pardon' which he claimed was universal. "For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to ~~make~~ in himself of twain one new man so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh; for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." <sup>2</sup> For Campbell, to 'preach peace' meant to proclaim this access to God, unto all people. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." <sup>3</sup> Campbell said that this word of reconciliation is the grace of God, and men will be judged finally, "according as they have, or have not received the grace of God in vain." <sup>4</sup> He concluded

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1 Hebrews 10, 18.

2 Ephesians 2, 14.

3 II Corinthians 5, 18.

4 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 43.

this study of Scriptural proof, "I might proceed to quote passages in which the Gospel is announced as glad tidings, and the effect of believing it set forth as being immediate peace and joy; to show, from the consideration of the circumstances in which that message finds men, that it could not have furnished a reasonable ground for such feelings, did it not reveal to them the remission of their sins."<sup>1</sup> He maintained that the doctrine of universal pardon was "embodied in the whole of God's revelation of himself to man."<sup>2</sup>

Considering one of the objections to this doctrine, Campbell asked, "If men's sins are forgiven, what occasion have they to repent?"<sup>3</sup> In reply, he asserted that the questioner did not understand the meaning of repentance, or the difference between good and evil. He obviously did not really regret having offended God, and he seemed to have no inducement to repent, except the hope of being pardoned. If we remove the desire and need for pardon from the questioner, we take away the only motive for repentance, and this implies a total misunderstanding of the concept of repentance. Campbell defined repentance as the state in which the whole man, heart and soul, turned from self to God, from self-centred independence to positive trust and hope in God. Repentance in this sense, according to Campbell, is not possible without first understanding that all sin has been forgiven, in and through Christ. Campbell believed that this pardon is universal, and is witnessed to,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 43.

2 Ibid p. 39.

3 Ibid ii p. 187.

not only in Christ and in the Bible, but in every good act of God. To advance all the sources of this doctrine, for Campbell, "would be to enumerate every act of kindness--every act of love--on the part of God, to rebellious sinners."<sup>1</sup> Campbell's doctrine of universal pardon declares what is the name and character of God Himself, and what it is that He would have us believe concerning Himself.

Thirdly, concerning the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith and necessary to salvation, Campbell said, "The person who believes what God has taught of himself, is enjoying an assurance of God's love towards him; and of such a love in God towards him as produces in him a trust--a confident and undoubting trust in God for all that is good."<sup>2</sup> Believing that much of the misconception with regard to his views about assurance had arisen out of the loose and inaccurate use of words, Campbell carefully defined his use of 'faith' and 'assurance of faith,' when he said, "Faith being the belief of God's testimony, assurance of faith should properly mean the confidence in its reality, with which the thing testified is contemplated."<sup>3</sup> That is, assurance of faith means that "in believing the gospel, there is necessarily present in the mind, the certainty that the person believing is the object of God's love manifested to him in the gift of Christ--the certainty that he has remission of his sins, the gift of the Spirit, and all things pertaining to life and to godliness, bestowed on him,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 188.

2 Ibid p. 189.

3 Ibid i p. 44.

by the free grace of God; so that he feels himself debtor to God for the gift of eternal life; and this I hold to be so of the essence of faith, that is to say, so necessarily implied in the existence of true faith, that no person can be regarded as in the belief of God's testimony who is not conscious of it." <sup>1</sup> It can easily be seen that Campbell would not tolerate the person who doubted the validity of his faith, because the only alternative to believing God was not to believe him, "through making God a liar." <sup>2</sup> For Campbell, there could be no middle course of security between belief and unbelief.

He made no direct references to passages of Scripture, regarding the question of assurance, for the following reason. "I feel more difficulty," he said, "in arguing this point from the Scriptures than either of the others, because the Scriptures everywhere assume that to believe God's expressed love, and to be assured of it, are the same thing." <sup>3</sup> However, he did support his teaching at this point, by referring to the Westminster Confession and the Catechism. From the Confession, Campbell read, "By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 45.

2 Ibid p. 47.

3 Ibid p. 46.

acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.<sup>1</sup> In explanation, he said, "It is manifest, that here, faith is the believing to be true whatever God hath spoken, with that assurance of its truth which corresponds with its authority, as spoken by God himself."<sup>2</sup> From the Larger Catechism, we learn that, "in justifying faith, there is not only an assent to the truth of the promise of the Gospel, but a receiving and resting upon Christ and his righteousness therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous, in the sight of God, for salvation."<sup>3</sup> For Campbell, to speak of 'receiving' and 'resting' upon Christ, as an essential part of faith, indicates that 'assurance' is essential in the same way. For additional support of his view at this point, Campbell referred to Calvin's Catechism, the Palatine Catechism, the Solemn League and Covenant, and other similar documents.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout his various trials, Campbell insisted that his opponents were confusing two doctrines, namely, assurance of faith, and assurance of salvation. He consistently declared that he did not teach, and had never taught, the doctrine of assurance of salvation, and he claimed that, in the libel, he was not charged with teaching it. However, by way of explanation, he carefully examined both doctrines. He defined assurance of faith as confidence in the testimony of God

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1 Confession XIV, ii.

2 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 62.

3 Catechism, Question 72.

4 Lusk, Proceedings i pp. 63.

which we have in Jesus Christ; that is, in Christ, God testified to all mankind that he loves every one, and that his mercy, forgiveness and salvation are available to all. To say that we have assurance of faith, for Campbell, is to say that we believe this testimony to be true. He insisted that, to say that assurance is of the essence of faith means "nothing more nor less than that the man who believes any thing that God speaks to him, in believing it is sure that God speaks truth."<sup>1</sup> "Therefore, to say that assurance of faith is necessary to salvation, is to say that, in order to be saved, we must trust in God."<sup>2</sup> By way of an explanatory contrast, Campbell defined assurance of salvation as "an assurance having reference to the distinction between believers and unbelievers--converted and unconverted--regenerate and unregenerate persons; and the object of which is the fact concerning the individual, that he himself belongs now to the class of saved ones."<sup>3</sup> The attainment of this fuller assurance, the assurance of salvation, comes by a careful consideration of one's personal life, by comparing the past with the present, and working out the contrast, "saying to oneself, whereas I was once blind, now I see--whereas I was dead, I now live--whereas I was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, I am now a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God."<sup>4</sup>

Campbell admitted that one might be in a state of assurance of faith and assurance of salvation at the same time. He said, "It is no doubt,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 58.

2 Ibid ii p. 190.

3 Ibid i p. 48.

4 Ibid.



when abounding in the assurance of faith, that, if the eye turns inwardly, and the thoughts are directed to our own state, we shall also enjoy the assurance of being in a state of salvation; but still the two assurances are distinct in themselves, and I at present feel it to be important to refer to the distinction, because, whilst I hold assurance to be of the essence of faith, I do not hold that the converted person is necessarily always in a condition of assurance as to his being in a state of salvation.<sup>1</sup> For Campbell, assurance of faith is absolutely essential to true faith, whereas assurance of salvation is that which emerges from the exercise of that faith. Moreover, he said that, to suggest that the word 'assurance,' as used in the libel, meant 'assurance of salvation,' made nonsense of the entire statement; it was like saying, "that no one can rest upon Christ for salvation, unless he has previously had the assurance of his own salvation."<sup>2</sup> In any case, since the word 'assurance' was not specifically defined in the libel, Campbell urged that it ought to be interpreted according to his own understanding of the word.

The urgent necessity of assurance of faith, Campbell entreated in these words. "The principle upon which God judges the world is this, that having revealed himself to men's hearts, and having invited their confidence to himself, in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will take account<sup>3</sup> of men, according as they have or have not trusted their God." Since

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 49.

2 Ibid ii p. 230.

3 Ibid p. 190.

God, in spite of the hatefulness of the sin of man against Him, showed Himself to be a loving Father, even to the extent of giving His Son for us, He will not be content with anything less than complete trust on the part of His children. Furthermore, Campbell added, "The person who is in the exercise of this assured faith in God, is, at the time when he is exercising it, under no doubt or uncertainty as to the fact about himself, individually, whether he be a child of God or not."<sup>1</sup> Yet, even after asserting this so strongly, Campbell agreed that it is possible for a converted person, at times, to be "so overcome of Satan, as to stand in doubt of that truth which is the anchor of his soul, and in this way lose the consciousness of security."<sup>2</sup> However, he maintained that this is a state of sinfulness, and not something to be fostered and encouraged as a mark of Christian humility. Rather, he declared, "The state of faith is the calling of a man--is the condition in which he should always be found."<sup>3</sup>

The principle source of opposition to the doctrine of assurance, according to Campbell, lay in the very personal nature of the doctrine. "I believe," he said, "that if we were to hold that Christ died for all, without holding in connexion with this, that the person who understands the meaning of the work of Christ has personal assurance towards God, then the doctrine of universal atonement would not be objected to by the mass of mankind."<sup>4</sup> Most people, Campbell held,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 59.

2 Ibid i p. 49.

3 Ibid iii p. 61.

4 Ibid ii p. 196.

were willing to accept the fact that Christ had died for all mankind in some general, impersonal way, but this doctrine of assurance brought the question pointedly to the individual to be decided. Each person faces a choice of two alternatives--either you have this assurance, or you are not a child of God. Campbell concluded, "Were it a thing that natural man could relish, there would be contained in that very fact an evidence that it was not the Gospel of the grace of God. But being a thing according to godliness, which leaves no room for indecision--which requires every man to know whose he is, and whom he serves--whether he is on the side of Christ or of the devil, therefore is it a thing the natural man cannot like."

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 196.

## CHAPTER VI

## The Church's Case against Campbell

In order that we might properly understand Campbell's thought and teaching at the time of his deposition, it is necessary to consider the Church's case against him as well as his own defence. According to the libel, Campbell was charged with teaching doctrines which were held to be contrary to Holy Scripture, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and condemned by the fifth Act of the General Assembly of 1720. Let us proceed now to re-examine these doctrines from the point of view of the Church's evidence against Campbell.

First, concerning the doctrine of universal atonement, the most complete yet concise statement available from those who opposed Campbell, was from Dr. Barr of Port-Glasgow, who said, "Mr. Campbell stands accused of having held and taught that Christ literally died for every human being; that, by his death, Christ actually took away the sins of every human being, which are not and cannot be imputed to him; and that this act of indemnity, passed through the death of Christ for him, is equally valid and effectual in his behalf, whether he believes it or  
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 continues in unbelief."

Another opponent, Dr. Graham, said that, according to Scripture, the atonement of Christ was not universally valid, but was extended to those only who were especially elected by God. In view of the

impressively long list of Biblical quotations which Campbell had submitted in his answers, Graham supported his position by turning to the Scriptures, prefixing his remarks with this apology. "The great part of the statements of Scripture on religious doctrine are interwoven with history; and it must be borne in mind, that the persons to whom the first intimations of the gospel were dictated, and by them published to the world, were labouring under a strong national prejudice, reluctant to admit the Gentiles into the bosom of the Church; and strong language was necessary to show the wide extent of the evangelical administration--<sup>1</sup> that it was a universal, and not a partial one." Then, he submitted the following passages. "And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."<sup>2</sup> "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."<sup>3</sup> "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."<sup>4</sup> "All which point out to us," added Graham, "the particular society for whom he gave his life, and which seem to give us reason to admit and assert the doctrine of particular redemption."<sup>5</sup> Dr. Hill also claimed to have the authority of Scripture, although he made no reference to any specific passage, when he referred to the suggestion that Jesus was the brother of all mankind, "He is given to be our brother, and we are his brethren by our being the children of

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 240.

2 Mark 14, 24.

3 Matthew 1, 21.

4 John 10, 11.

5 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 240.

God. This, Sir, I hold to be agreeable to Scripture; but it is unscriptural to call Jesus the brother of the ungodly."<sup>1</sup>

"At all events, supposing there might be some ambiguity as to what is the sense in which they were to be understood, our Church has not left us at liberty--she has decided the question; and to us, who have subscribed her Standards, her authority is law."<sup>2</sup> In these words, Dr. Graham turned his argument from Scripture to the Standards of the Church, and he recalled first, this brief passage, "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."<sup>3</sup> Then, he said, "The word 'redemption' here refers to the work of Christ; and the meaning of the language is, that none are interested in the atonement but the elect only."<sup>4</sup> Further, in support of this meaning of the word 'redemption,' Graham quoted from the Thirty-Nine Articles, in order to determine "in what sense the term was used at the time our Confession of Faith was drawn up."<sup>5</sup> "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."<sup>6</sup> In this article, according to Graham, 'redemption' is used synonymously with 'propitiation.' Again, from the Catechism of the Church of England, he read, "What dost thou

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 268.

2 Ibid p. 240.

3 Confession III vi.

4 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 241.

5 Ibid.

6 Article XXXI.

chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief? Answer: "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God."<sup>1</sup> According to Graham, the word 'redeem' must refer to the work of Christ in the atonement, and he concluded, "This is the great difference between the Churches of England and Scotland, that the Church of England holds universal redemption, while our Church holds particular redemption."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Fleming also urged the absolute necessity of judging Campbell's teaching by the Standards of the Church, when he said, "Now it is plain that in arguing such a case, all fair and conclusive arguments must be drawn, not so much from the Scriptures at large, as from the Scriptures as these Scriptures have been received and interpreted by the church, and as that interpretation has been recognised and ratified by the state, as the interpretation of our National Establishment."<sup>3</sup> Fleming suggested that if Campbell were permitted to deviate from the Standards of the Church, then "the state might withdraw its protection, and the people their adherence," which could only lead to "endless embarrassment and inextricable confusion."<sup>4</sup> He concluded by expressing his hope that, "in this cause, we shall rally, as one man, round the violated Standards of our Church--Standards which we are bound, by more than military oath,

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1 Question 297.

2 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 242.

3 Ibid iii p. 85.

4 Ibid p. 86.

to uphold and rescue--Standards which have waved over bands of nobler and more devoted spirits than ever mustered under imperial banner--Standards which I hope will continue, without rent or stain, to wave, in full and unsullied protection, over the heads of many a faithful and obedient generation of our countrymen." Similarly, Dr. Hill concluded his argument on this subject, by saying, "I cannot read the Confession without the deepest conviction that by it the atonement of Christ is limited to the elect. That is unquestionably the impression which it conveys from beginning to end."

Dr. Barr, referring again to the statement, 'Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, ...,' said, "Now to make this language utter the doctrine which he approves, Mr. Campbell has taken it upon him to decide that the word 'redeemed' should be understood to express not the deliverance wrought out for mankind by the atonement of Christ, but the deliverance effected by the Spirit, in the sanctification of them that believe." "Mr. Campbell," he continued, "is at liberty to prefer either horn of the dilemma to which he has thus reduced himself, either by maintaining, on the one hand, that Christ purchased redemption only for the elect, thus extinguishing his doctrine of universal atonement by nullifying its importance, or by admitting, as he must of necessity otherwise admit, that Christ purchased redemption for those whom he calls the non-elect, an admission which, according

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 87.

2 Ibid ii p. 261.

3 Ibid iii p. 109.



to his view of redemption, would infer the doctrine not of universal atonement, but of universal salvation.<sup>1</sup> An argument of similar purport was advanced by Professor Alexander, when he urged that, if by universal atonement, Campbell meant to describe the infinite merit and fulness of the work of Christ, that the sufferings of Christ were sufficient to cover all the sins of all mankind, then he was willing to agree that this had Scriptural foundation. However, he claimed that Campbell went farther, and taught that the atonement of Christ had actually removed the sins of all mankind, "so that, whereas formerly they were all condemned in Adam, they are now, in Christ, all justified, and stand acquitted in the sight and at the tribunal of God's justice. Sir," Professor Alexander addressed the Moderator, "to affirm this is to affirm the doctrine of universal redemption; and I need not say that for this doctrine there is no warrant whatever in the Standards of our Church, nor yet in the word of God."<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, concerning the doctrine of universal pardon, Dr. Graham described Campbell's teaching, "He has not merely speculated on the extent of Christ's death, but on the effect of it. He says that all sins of all men, collectively, without exception, or distinction, are pardoned; and that although this is founded in the death of Christ, yet, de facto, it was pronounced so far back as the days of Adam. What is the language of Scripture in reference to this? There is nothing in

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 110.

2 Ibid p. 129.

Scripture that can be brought forward in support of such a view. We are told, on the contrary, that pardon is a future act of the Almighty--<sup>1</sup> that it is the consequence of faith." He went on to quote the following passages in support of this contention. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."<sup>2</sup> "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."<sup>3</sup> Finally, Graham turned to the Westminster Confession, "God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them."<sup>4</sup> In explanation, he said, "The language of the Bible, as well as of our Standards, amount to this, that the effect of the death of Christ is not that unbelievers are in a pardoned state, but in a pardonable one--that pardon is suspended upon our performing the essential condition of faith; and whenever a person truly believes, and comes, in the name of Christ, soliciting pardon, we are assured that pardon will be bestowed."<sup>5</sup> Finally, Graham referred to the discussion of the meaning of the word 'pardon,' and said, "Mr. Campbell says that pardon may be understood in three senses; but I would say,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 242.

2 Isaiah 55, 7.

3 Acts 3, 19.

4 Confession XI iv.

5 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 243.

that there is only one sense in which it can be understood, and that pardon means neither more nor less than the remission of the consequences of sin: and this is something like the view he gives of pardon in the first sense of it, but that is a sense in which, he says, pardon cannot be conceived by any human being in this world. Whether Mr. Campbell chooses to affix a different meaning or not, this is the common sense use of the term."<sup>1</sup>

Further on this point, Dr. Hill agreed to accept the meaning of 'pardon' which Campbell had assumed, "and look on pardon as the removal of a barrier, to a sinner's returning to the light of God's love and favour."<sup>2</sup> In his discussion, he deplored the suggestion that the sacrifice of Christ had merely removed a barrier. "It does not merely remove a barrier," he said, "but it produces a reconciliation on both sides."<sup>3</sup> According to Hill, the consequence of pardon for man, is the communication of every spiritual blessing; whereas the insufficiency of the definition submitted by Campbell was derogatory to the character of Christ. Furthermore, Hill charged Campbell with disregarding the doctrine of the impotency of the human will. If man is really "indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil,"<sup>4</sup> then something more is needed than the mere removal of a barrier. Hill concluded, "Now, there is a sad confusion in his ideas; for he must suppose our Standards to be altogether wrong,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 81.

2 Ibid ii p. 258.

3 Ibid.

4 Confession VI iv.

or he must admit that the pardon, of which he speaks, includes more in it than the removal of the barrier, and is in effect also the communication of spiritual blessings. It is the doctrine of our Church that all spiritual blessings are conferred on the people of God, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ; and that this sacrifice was offered only for the elect." <sup>1</sup> Again, Professor Alexander entertained the same view, when he said, "When the Rev. Appellant defines the pardon of sin 'as the removing of the judicial barrier which guilt interposes between the sinner and God; so making the fact of being a sinner no hindrance to his coming to God now, as to a reconciled Father,' I say, when he thus defines the pardon of sin, he uses a phraseology which is not drawn from the lively oracles; and, what is worse, he gives a low and disparaging notion of the grace of the everlasting gospel. For undoubtedly, Sir, and beyond all controversy, the remission of sin conveyed to sinners, through the peace-speaking blood of the atonement, is a full and a free remission; restoring the sinner not merely to a sense of God's love, but to God's love in reality; and securing to him all the blessings and privileges of the new covenant in Christ. And when I look to the language of the Westminster Confession, and, above all, to the clear and explicit declarations of the word of God, I dare not affirm that the blessedness of him whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, belongs to any man on earth, but to believers only." <sup>2</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 260.

2 Ibid iii p. 134.

Dr. Hill was particularly concerned regarding Campbell's observation, that the Westminster Confession was silent on the subject of the doctrine of universal pardon. He said, "Why, Sir, if silent, and if the doctrine has all the importance which the appellant attaches to it, when he says that it would amount to little short of solemn apostasy were it denounced, our Church would be most unfaithful in keeping it in the background, and all our most distinguished men would be unfaithful stewards of the mysteries of God: for what voice, for more than a century, has been lifted to proclaim that doctrine as the doctrine of our Church?"<sup>1</sup> Further, he charged Campbell with being inconsistent in his own use of the word 'pardon,' sometimes using it to mean pardon in the fullest sense, and he concluded by asking, "And, Sir, will his nice distinctions always be attended to, in the mixed audiences which, as a minister, he is called to address-- and by the people whom he prays, with almost apostolical fervour, to adopt his views?"<sup>2</sup> He suggested that many people would be willing to press Campbell's views to an extreme, and then to glory in the far worse heresy of universal reconciliation and salvation.

After referring to the doctrine of universal pardon as "that silly heresy,"<sup>3</sup> Dr. Dewar said, "There is a great deal of most important truth connected with that pernicious error. The freeness of the gospel salvation is the glory of the gospel of Christ; and Mr. Story said

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 115.

2 Ibid p. 117.

3 Ibid ii p. 275.

well and wisely, that he would give up the Church of Scotland sooner than give it up. He would not be solitary in that--he would get many others to join him--but the day will never come when a minister will have to leave the church simply for holding to the freeness and fulness of the salvation of the gospel."<sup>1</sup> Dewar distinguished two senses in which a barrier may be asserted to have been removed; the death of Christ had laid a foundation for the proclamation of mercy to sinners without discrimination, or, by the death of Christ, the condemnation of the law is removed. He added further, "If the first is the meaning in which Mr. Campbell uses the word, then I say he is highly reprehensible on the ground of his using words altogether away from their common acceptation. But I believe he means more than this, and that he holds that the pardon is conveyed, in some way or other, to persons while they yet remain without an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> Finally, Dr. Forbes insisted that the terms 'universal atonement' and 'universal pardon' definitely imply, to the mind of the common man, the doctrines of 'universal redemption' and 'universal salvation.' He concluded, "The gentleman has denied all this, but that is neither to the purpose one way nor another--all language is conventional--every person must consider what will be the meaning put on these words by a common country congregation: and believing they are totally inconsistent with our Standards, I second the motion."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 275.

2 Ibid p. 276.

3 i.e. the deposition, Ibid iii p. 144.

Thirdly, concerning the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith and necessary to salvation, Dr. Barr again summed up by saying that Campbell held that, "in believing the gospel as a message of forgiveness to him, every man necessarily imbibes the assurance of his being in a state of favour and acceptance with God, a child of adoption, and an heir of glory; and that faith cannot exist without such an assurance."<sup>1</sup>

In his address before the Synod, Dr. Hamilton made a fairly comprehensive study of this doctrine and indicated clearly the attitude of Campbell's opponents, when he began, "I have got, Moderator, a very easy share of the business--viz. to speak to that part of the libel which relates to 'assurance.' It has been questioned, what is the meaning of assurance in the libel; and it has been affirmed, that it means assurance of faith. It is evident from the libel itself, that this is not the case. We found the libel relevant, because the language it contained is the language of our own Church, and has become the theological language of Scotland."<sup>2</sup> Turning first to the General Assembly Act of 1720, Hamilton made several references to the Marrow of Modern Divinity, and quoted the contradicting passages from the Bible and the Standards, "all which passages show, that Assurance is not of the Essence of Faith."<sup>3</sup> He continued, "This decides the thing; for assurance can have no other meaning than the

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 101.

2 Ibid ii p. 244.

3 See Appendix B.

assurance of salvation; but if any doubt remained on the subject, it is cleared up by the meaning attached to the terms (of the libel) by the prosecutors; for they say that Mr. Campbell taught, 'that no man is a Christian unless he is positively assured of his own salvation.' This, I think, satisfactorily shews the meaning we are to attach to the term 'assurance' in this libel. This is the charge brought against Mr. Campbell, and all we had to do, was to see whether or not this doctrine which he was charged with teaching, was the doctrine of our own standards."

In proving the latter question, Hamilton made these quotations from the Standards of the Church. "The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. This faith is



different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith." <sup>1</sup> "The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel." <sup>2</sup> "These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them, believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, ..." <sup>3</sup> "The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation." <sup>4</sup> "Although hypocrites, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves

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1 Confession XIV.

2 Ibid III viii.

3 Ibid XVI ii.

4 Catechism, Question 32.

with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness."

Dr Hamilton continued, "Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation." <sup>1</sup> "Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair." <sup>2</sup> "One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity, in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened." <sup>3</sup> Finally, Hamilton

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1 Catechism, Question 80.

2 Ibid 81.

3 Ibid 172.

quoted the Directory of Public Worship, where the minister, after warning those who might eat and drink unworthily, is enjoined "in an especial manner to invite and encourage all that labour under the sense of the burden of their sins, and fear of wrath, and desire to reach out unto a greater progress in grace than yet they can attain unto, to come to the Lord's table; assuring them, in the same name, of ease, refreshing, and strength to their weak and wearied souls."<sup>1</sup> He concluded, "This language, which we find in our Standards, and if we attach any meaning to words, surely this is directly opposite to all that we have heard, on this subject, in the answers, and to all that has been argued at the bar. The question is, whether the parties who have addressed you from the bar are right or wrong? Are we to take our own Standards as the authority by which we are to try them?<sup>2</sup> Either they or our Standards--the one or the other must be wrong."

Giving evidence before the General Assembly, Dr. Graham observed, "On the subject of Assurance, it is too late now for him to say that assurance of faith and assurance of salvation are different; for he has made them to be quite the same. The Standards of the Church, on the contrary, represent assurance of personal salvation as being quite distinct from faith--as being a blessing and a privilege of high importance--as being attainable, not at the commencement, but at<sup>3</sup> the close of the life of an exemplary Christian." He concluded, "We

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1 Directory p. 153.

2 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 248.

3 Ibid iii p. 81.

must take the language of the libel in its common use, not in any sense which Mr. Campbell chooses to affix to it." <sup>1</sup> Dr. Hill was similarly outspoken, when he said, "The two--assurance of faith and of salvation--respecting which, I hold, he makes idle distinction, are identically the same." <sup>2</sup> Then, referring to those who were apprehensive concerning the extent of their reliance upon Christ, Hill continued, "Here, I felt it to be my duty not to add, sir, to their alarm, as if, by their want of assurance, they were without hope, and without God in the world, but to comfort their hearts by recurring again and again, to the magnitude of the atonement which the Saviour offered, and to the grace promised to all who come to him. And, Sir, will this assembly pronounce my conduct, in this case, to have been wrong?" <sup>3</sup> Professor Alexander concurred, "Sir, as to the distinction which the Rev. Appellant takes between assurance of faith, individually and personally applied, and assurance of one's personal salvation, it is, in my mind, a distinction without a difference. For what imaginable difference can the mind perceive between a sure and unfaltering belief that God is my God, and has actually conferred upon me all the privileges of the new covenant; and a like unreserved assurance that my personal salvation is made good and secured to me in Christ? Why there is not a shade of difference, beyond that of mere verbal expression, between these two several statements." <sup>4</sup>

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 82.

2 Ibid p. 118.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid p. 139.

Considering the evidence against Campbell as a whole, the emphasis of the majority of the speakers dealt with the Standards of the Church and particularly the Westminster Confession. Even Mr. Robertson, advocate for the libellers, read a number of passages from various chapters of the Confession, and concluded, "I should deem it presumption in me to address this Assembly, to explain, or attempt to explain what is so plainly written in the record of their belief."<sup>1</sup> He disparaged any distinction made in the meanings of words, and simply declared that Campbell's doctrines were the same as had been condemned by the Act of 1720, because they were described by the same names. Regarding the authority of the Standards, Robertson urged that, if Campbell and his followers were not positively condemned, then, "there would be an end to the authority, nay, to the existence of this, and of every established Church. These Standards would become waste paper--the bond of union, by which all the members of this Church are united, would be at once dissolved, and every member would stand in precisely the same relation to all denominations of professing Christians."<sup>2</sup> In which case, he concluded, "you may lay aside your Standards of Faith altogether, as documents of no use whatever, and such as need never again be mentioned in this Assembly."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Fleming declared that all references to older confessions and catechisms of other churches were out of order in defending this case,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 78.

2 Ibid p. 72.

3 Ibid p. 73.

that the authorized Standards of the Church consisted in, The Scots Confession of 1560, The Second Book of Discipline, The National Covenant of 1560, The Solemn League and Covenant, and the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, and he urged that no evidence should be admitted from any other document.<sup>1</sup> Dr. McFarlane also rested the entire case upon the Standards, when he said, "In judging of the relevance of any libel, you are to look to the Standards--to those Standards which the ministers of the Church have sworn to--to those, upon declaring his adherence to which, he takes his place as a minister of the Church of Scotland. Now, upon that ground, I say, as to the libel, that it stands or falls by the Westminster Confession of Faith."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, McFarlane ridiculed Campbell for suggesting that he ought not to be tried by the Confession. "We may rejoice," he said, "and be thankful that all the doctrines of the gospel are embodied in the articles of the Confession of Faith. Therefore, it will not do for him to tell us that we must not judge him by that Confession."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Barr similarly concluded, "No man is compelled to sign the Confession of Faith, or to continue his adherence to it one hour after he has ceased to believe it. But the minister who has subscribed it as the Confession of his Faith, who has come under a voluntary engagement to maintain and preach it, and who, in virtue

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 252.

2 Ibid p. 272.

3 Ibid p. 274.

of that engagement, acquires a title to certain temporal emoluments, is bound by the principle of common integrity to fulfil his engagement. He virtually renews his subscription to that Confession, and his declaration of adherence to it, by every act of office he performs, and every penny of stipend he receives as a minister of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in moving the sentence of deposition, Dr. Cook summed up the attitude of the Court when he said, "Our business is to uphold the doctrines of the Standards of our national Church."<sup>2</sup>

1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 114.

2 Ibid p. 170.



## CHAPTER VII

## Comments on the Teaching of 1831

In 1831, Campbell's doctrinal position was in an embryonic state, far removed from that which it became twenty-five years later. His chief concern was two-fold, to shatter the limitations of Calvinism, and to emphasize the necessity of assurance of faith. To accomplish the former, Campbell declared that the atoning work of Christ was of universal significance, and for the latter, he urged that faith without assurance was not faith at all. Following the outline of the three doctrines charged in the libel, these comments are made upon Campbell's early teaching, according to his own evidence and that of his accusers.

Concerning the doctrine of universal atonement, Campbell said, "I hold and teach that Christ died for all men,"<sup>1</sup> and this he said without discussing the nature of the atonement or the results which follow from it. He meant that whatever had been done in the atonement of Christ, for any human being, had been done for all, without exception or distinction, whether or not they knew it or believed it, because, for Campbell, the extent of the atonement was not dependent upon the will of man, but upon the will of God. When the love of God, in the Cross at Calvary, was dealing with sin, the sin of all mankind was dealt with in exactly the same manner and measure. On the other

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<sup>1</sup> Lusk, Proceedings 1 p. 16.

hand, Campbell's opponents expressed their position briefly and distinctly, "None are interested in the atonement but the elect only."<sup>1</sup>

In the light of Scripture, the evidence of Campbell and his opponents is not very helpful, for on the basis of the same passages and texts, they have arrived at opposite conclusions. Dr. Graham claimed that Christ's interest was limited to 'his people' and 'the sheep,' whereas Campbell insisted that a love manifested and declared to some, is not necessarily a denial of that love to others. Graham himself seemed to recognize the weakness of his proof when he concluded his remarks by asserting that the whole question was finally decided by the subscription of all ministers to the Westminster Confession. Campbell rested his case upon the universality of the interest of Jesus in his work on earth, and upon the belief of his followers that the atoning work of Christ extended to all mankind. In every act of Jesus in his dealings with men, and especially in the atoning work of Christ, Campbell urged that the mind of God is being expressed.

Considering this doctrine in the light of the Confession, Campbell's opponents quoted many passages which declared that all mankind is divided into two classes, the elect and the non-elect, and from this point, the argument seemed to turn upon the meaning of the word 'redemption.' Campbell agreed that, if 'redemption' referred to what Christ had accomplished in the atonement, as his opponents<sup>2</sup> believed, then the Westminster Confession expressly limited the

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 241.

2 Chapter III, Section vi.

extent of the atonement. He insisted, rather, that 'redemption' meant the actual deliverance of people from a state of sinfulness into a state of salvation; that is, the Confession teaches a limited redemption, or a limited salvation, but not a limited atonement.

Campbell urged that the Confession was literally silent concerning the universal nature of the atonement, that this matter was purposely stated in ambiguous terms because members of the Westminster Assembly were not entirely agreed about the doctrine of double predestination. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that, in the Westminster Assembly, a small group of the Divines, including Calamy, Arrowsmith, Vines, Seaman, Marshall and Harris, were anxious that the atonement be described as having absolute intention for the elect and conditional intention for the reprobate, in case they should believe. <sup>1</sup> During the debates at Westminster, Dr. Mitchell tells us that, the proposition that Christ had redeemed the elect only, was actually exchanged for another, namely, that Christ intended to redeem the elect only. This view was reversed in the language that was finally adopted, but <sup>2</sup> Mitchell added, "It is just possible that the language of this section may have been so arranged, that they (Calamy, Arrowsmith, etc.) felt warranted in accepting it as not positively condemning them. Those who in modern times have pronounced most confidently that the more restricted view is exclusively intended, seem to me to have unconsciously construed or interpreted the words, 'neither are any

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1 Mitchell, A.F. and Struthers, J. 'Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines' Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1874. p. lv.

2 Confession III vi.

other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only,' as if they had run, 'neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, or justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.'

But these two statements do not necessarily bear the same meaning.

Calamy, Arrowsmith, and the others who agreed with them, may have felt justified in accepting the former, though they might have scrupled to accept the latter.<sup>1</sup> Evidently, in his editorial labours, Dr. Mitchell recognized a small but important core of resistance to the school of thought which would assert, not only a doctrine of election, but also one of reprobation.

It would seem that we have arrived at the first essential point of conflict between Campbell and his Church, namely, the concept of election and reprobation. On this point, the reasoning of the Westminster Confession seems to be of this nature. Man has fallen from "original righteousness and communion with God,"<sup>2</sup> and has become "dead in sin,<sup>3</sup> and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."<sup>4</sup> As a result, all mankind has been "bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal."<sup>5</sup>

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1 Mitchell and Struthers p. lvii.

2 Confession VII ii.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid VI iv.

5 Ibid VI vi.

However, in his great mercy, God has provided an escape from this destiny of punishment and death, through the Lord Jesus, who "hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." <sup>1</sup> From this, we might infer that the pardon of God, and the reconciliation, are free and automatic to all mankind, which would mean that man is allowed to continue in sin, with no danger of consequence from an indulgent Heavenly Father. Denying this, we might conclude that salvation is conditioned by the will of man, that is, by his faith, thus giving way to the temptation of looking upon our salvation as a work of man, a human accomplishment rather than a gift of God. Rather are we brought forcefully to see that, if a man has faith, he has it through no merit of his own, but by the grace and mercy of God, and this brings us to the crux of the matter. It is obvious that all men do not have this gift of faith, and therefore, to be true to the Sovereign Will of God, the Confession declares that, to those who have not saving faith, God has denied it. "All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and <sup>2</sup> salvation by Jesus Christ." "Others not elected, although they may be

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1 Confession VIII v.

2 Ibid X i.

called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ,<sup>1</sup> and therefore cannot be saved."

Though we accept the fact that certain members of the Westminster Assembly were opposed to a rigid doctrine of election and reprobation, it must be admitted that the spirit of the Confession of Faith is antithetical to Campbell's doctrine of universal atonement. As Dr. Warfield concluded, "It would seem quite obvious that the Assembly<sup>2</sup> intended to state in this clause, with adequate clearness, their reasoned and deliberate conviction that the decree of election lies behind the decree of the gift of Christ for redemption, and that the latter is to be classed as one of the means for the execution of the decree of election."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it is equally evident that there was present in the Westminster Assembly "an influential and able, but apparently small, body of men whose convictions lay in the direction of the modified Calvinism which had been lately promulgated by Cameron and Amyraut, for the express purpose of finding a place for a universal redemption in the Calvinistic system."<sup>4</sup> While emphatically denying universal redemption, in the sense of universal salvation, Campbell would undoubtedly have been in some agreement with the motives and objectives of the latter group.

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1 Confession X iv.

2 Ibid III vi.

3 Warfield, B.B. 'The Westminster Assembly and its Work'  
New York: Oxford, 1931. p. 144.

4 Ibid p. 142.

Concerning the doctrine of universal pardon, Campbell said, "In Christ, God came forth to man, testifying to him the forgiveness of his sins as a thing already given to him." <sup>1</sup> For Campbell, the words 'pardon' and 'forgiveness' were synonymous terms, meaning the removal of the judicial barrier which was erected between the sinner and God by the fact of man's sin. By the atoning work of Christ, this removal was effective for all mankind, whether or not any individual knew it or accepted it. The fact of human sin had not cut man off permanently from God and the enjoyment of his blessings and fellowship, and the first step in the restoration of these, was to believe this wondrous truth. On the other hand, Campbell's opponents declared that pardon was dependent upon true faith in the person to be pardoned, and it included, as part of the pardoning, the communication of every spiritual blessing.

Again, Campbell supported his doctrine with an impressively long list of quotations from the Bible, including the book of Daniel, the prophecy of Isaiah and the Gospel of John, although, the reference which he considered most important, and which summarized his view of Pardon, was the passage beginning at Hebrews 10, 18, "Now where remission of these (sins) is, there is no more offering for sin." Campbell explained the passage, "The apostle there argues, that the sacrifices offered year by year continually, could not make perfect as pertaining to the conscience; that it could not relieve from the sense of judicial

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 185.

condemnation; that this they could not do, because it was impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin: and therefore that in token of their inability to accomplish this, and of their being but the shadow of a good thing which was to come, they were repeated from year to year; but that what the shadow could not accomplish the substance did; that sin was put away by the one offering of Christ; and that, because there was remission of sins, therefore there was no more sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> To this, Campbell added the words of Paul, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."<sup>2</sup> On behalf of those who opposed Campbell, Dr. Graham brought forward two references to Scripture, and, of course, he might have given many other passages from the New Testament, in support of his position, such as, "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men,"<sup>3</sup> "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,"<sup>4</sup> "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."<sup>5</sup>

From the foregoing paragraph, it seems obvious that, following the literal word of Scripture, it is possible to support both positions put forward by Campbell and his opponents. It might be instructive, therefore, at this point, to cite some significant definitions of 'pardon,' in order to assess Campbell's position more helpfully. In

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1 Lusk, Proceedigs i p. 41.

2 II Corinthians 5, 19.

3 Mark 3, 28.

4 Acts 2, 38.

5 I John 1, 9.



the late nineteenth century, Albrecht Ritschl defined 'pardon' as "an act of will by which there is cancelled that aspect of an injury received which interrupts intercourse between the injured person and the offender."<sup>1</sup> In his chapter entitled, 'What Forgiveness Is,' H. R. Mackintosh explains, "To be saved, for a Christian man, is to have trustful communion with God as His child and with men as a brother among brethren; and the position taken in these pages is that the fundamental and creative act whereby salvation in this sense is made and kept real, is the forgiveness of sins."<sup>2</sup> Vincent Taylor agrees with these when he concludes an intensive study of the New Testament teaching about forgiveness by saying, "Nothing ... can shake the conclusion that in the New Testament, forgiveness is the cancelling or removal of barriers to reconciliation."<sup>3</sup> It will be clearly seen that this agrees with what Campbell submitted as his definition of forgiveness. However, there is a serious difference of opinion with regard to the conditions according to which forgiveness takes place. Principal Taylor points out that, in the Acts and the Epistles, repentance is the sole condition of forgiveness; while, in the sayings of Jesus himself, there are two conditions, repentance, and the presence of a forgiving spirit in the person being forgiven.<sup>4</sup> These lend support to the position of 'conditional forgiveness' maintained by the Church, in opposition to that of Campbell's

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1 Ritschl, A. 'Justification and Reconciliation' Edinburgh: Clark, 1900. p.61.  
 2 Mackintosh, H.R. 'The Christian Experience of Forgiveness' London: Nisbet, 1927. p. 23.  
 3 Taylor, V. 'Forgiveness and Reconciliation' London: Macmillan, 1941.  
 4 Mark 11, 25. p. 23.

'unconditional forgiveness.'

On this question of forgiveness, Campbell made no appeal to the Westminster Confession for support, although his opponents made special reference to the article on Justification. "God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them." According to Graham, this passage asserts that the pardon which men seek does not become effective in them until the Holy Spirit 'apply Christ,' that is, pardon is dependent upon faith in the person to be pardoned. An immediate criticism of this appeal to the Westminster Confession lies in the fact that Graham implied that pardon is synonymous with justification, with which assertion, Campbell would seriously disagree. Furthermore, when Graham says that pardon is dependent upon faith, he means that faith "whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls,"<sup>2</sup> and this brings us again into conflict over the doctrine of election. Ultimately, this question can only be resolved by getting away from the radical criticism of the concept of election which regards it merely as predestination, from all eternity, of all events that will ever take place in the course of time. Instead, we must think of election as God's continual choosing of us and acting

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1 Confession XI iv.

2 Ibid XIV i.

upon us at every moment, in which case alone, we can properly talk about a universal pardon, or a universal atonement, that is, God bearing the sins of the whole world, in making a costly reconciliation.

Finally, let us consider certain of the charges levelled against Campbell by his opponents on this point, beginning with Dr. Graham, who declared, "The language of the Bible, as well as of our Standards, amount to this, that the effect of the death of Christ is not that unbelievers are in a pardoned state, but in a pardonable one--that pardon is suspended upon our performing the essential condition of faith; and whenever a person truly believes, and comes, in the name of Christ, soliciting pardon, we are assured that pardon will be bestowed." <sup>1</sup>

If we accept this as an explanation of 'pardon,' it means that there is yet another condition to be met before the unbeliever is pardoned, and if this added condition is an action performed by man, then it is difficult to avoid the danger of Arminianism; whereas, if it is an act of God, we face again the problem of the doctrine of election. At this point, Graham was charging Campbell with going too far in the meaning of the atoning work of Christ, instead of which, he insisted that the work of Christ made pardon a possibility.

At the opposite extreme, Dr. Hill began by assuming Campbell's definition of pardon, that is, the removal of the barrier which sin had erected between man and God, and he went on, "Sir, I have been

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<sup>1</sup> Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 243.

always accustomed to think that if there be any one point upon which the Scriptures and the Standards are more pointed than another, it is the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. It is perfectly complete and available for the purpose for which it was offered. It does not effect that purpose only in part. It takes away sin, and it takes it away altogether. It does not merely remove a barrier, but it produces a reconciliation on both sides. Its fruit is not merely pardon of sin, but the communication of every spiritual blessing which is essential to the present peace or everlasting welfare of man. ... If the sacrifice of Christ is deficient in any respect--if it only removes a barrier without bringing us into the favour of God--if it only produces a favourable disposition towards man on the part of God, without enabling man himself to return to God, what benefit is that to him? He remains in the same state in which he was. It is not sufficient for his wants."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Dr. Hill charged Campbell with not going far enough in the meaning he attached to the atoning work of Christ. Since these two charges were levelled against Campbell in the same meeting on the same day, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that one or both of these men did not properly understand Campbell's position.

Dr. Forbes, who seconded the motion for deposition in the General Assembly, gave as his reason, the fact that common church-folk

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 259.

understood these terms 'universal atonement' and 'universal pardon' as synonymous with 'universal redemption' and 'universal salvation.'

"All language is conventional," said Dr. Forbes, and in this, he represented the feeling of many of his colleagues in the court of the General Assembly. Thus, Dr. Graham:- "Whether Mr. Campbell chooses to affix a different meaning or not, this is the common sense use of the term."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Fleming:- "No explanation can take this language out of the reach of penalty."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hill:- "Will his nice distinctions always be attended to, in the mixed audiences which, as a minister, he is called to address?"<sup>4</sup> and Professor Alexander:- "I am constrained to say that on this subject he has erred grievously from the form of sound words."<sup>5</sup> Such statements as these indicate that Campbell was deposed, at least in some degree, because of the etymological expression of his doctrine, which is, to say the very least, an inadequate ground for so serious an action.

In conclusion, on the subject of 'pardon,' for Campbell to teach a doctrine which extended forgiveness to all, without repentance, was not true to New Testament teaching, and on this point, he stands rebuked for using these words, 'forgiveness' and 'pardon.' However, the spirit of what Campbell taught, even at this early stage, in his doctrine of universal pardon, is of great significance, so let us

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1 Lusk, Proceedings iii p. 144.

2 Ibid p. 81.

3 Ibid p. 94.

4 Ibid p. 117.

5 Ibid p. 135.

make some attempt here to restate his position.

When a man sins, when his life becomes self-centred, a barrier is set up between that man and God, which cuts off communication and fellowship between them, and the man, by his very nature as a sinner, is undisturbed by the barrier and may even be unaware of its existence, as he adds to it continually. In this situation, the reason for the impossibility of fellowship is two-fold, first, because the barrier of his sin has cut man off from God, and secondly, because he is not inclined to fellowship with God, while enjoying his selfish indulgences. Now, against this background, God has made an atonement for sin, through Christ, and it seems to be utterly inadequate to say that this atonement has merely made something possible, has set the stage for some future act. Rather, at Calvary, Christ dealt with the sins of mankind in some positive way, call it what you will, but, as a result of the sacrifice of Christ, the past sins of man no longer stand before him in a formidable array, as something which must be dealt with before he can approach God or seek fellowship with him. That barrier has been removed. The sins of all mankind have been dealt with, finished, positively and finally. However, after having stated this so boldly and bluntly, there is still the second condition to consider, that man is still concerned with his own selfish pleasures and sinful existence. Before fellowship between God and man can be restored, some step must be taken by man himself, by the action of his own will, 'repent,' 'be converted,' 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,'

however you care to express it, it is necessary that man recognize his past sinfulness and take up a positive position with regard to bringing his will into line with the will of God. The fulfilling of these two conditions is, evidently, the background thought in Campbell's doctrine of universal pardon, and is surely of supreme importance in any description of the process of human salvation.

Ultimately, on the subject of pardon, the Church rested her case on the doctrine of election. Into those who were elect, the Holy Spirit instilled faith and promoted its growth, and on the basis of that faith, God pardoned the sins of the elect and raised them to the required standards of conduct. On the other hand, Campbell believed that all the sins of all mankind had already been forgiven in and through the work of Christ, that such was the love of God and such was the power of the Cross, that the sin of man as a barrier between God and man had been crushed; and that this was effected through no power or merit or belief or knowledge or repentance or, indeed, any state of mind on the part of man. He believed that it was a totally inadequate view of the sin of man, and of the love of God, which declared that man repented while looking upon the barrier of his sinfulness. Rather, in his view, there was all the more reason for sincere repentance when man could look upon the love and mercy of God which had crushed the barrier of his sinfulness, 'while we were yet sinners.' Campbell's emphasis at this point, is worthy of our careful consideration.

Concerning the doctrine of assurance, Campbell said, "The person who believes what God has taught of himself, is enjoying an assurance of God's love towards him; and of such a love in God towards him as produces in him a trust--a confident and undoubting trust in God for all that is good." In defining the terms of this doctrine, Campbell insisted that he was concerned only with 'assurance of faith,' that is, 'faith' being the 'belief of God's testimony,' 'assurance of faith' was concerned with the confidence of the believer in what was believed. For Campbell, 'faith' and 'assurance of faith' were synonymous terms, because 'faith' included all that God had revealed in the Bible concerning salvation, namely, the love of God extended to all creatures and the forgiveness of sins. Resting upon these beliefs and having confidence in them was what Campbell understood by 'assurance of faith,' and we might add that, he is in considerable agreement here with Calvin's views on faith and assurance, when he wrote in the Institutes, "We now see, therefore, that faith is the knowledge of the divine will in regard to us, as ascertained from his word." "Our faith is not true unless it enables us to appear calmly in the presence of God. Such boldness springs only from confidence in the divine favour and salvation. So true is this, that the term faith is often used as equivalent to confidence."

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 189.

2 'Institutes of the Christian Religion' trans. by Henry Beveridge. London: James Clarke, 1953. vol.I. Bk.III.Sec.II. p. 474.

3 Ibid p. 483.



As formerly, Campbell's opponents refused to recognize any differentiation in the meanings of words, in the libelled doctrine, because, in every instance, they assumed that 'assurance' meant 'assurance of salvation,' although Campbell consistently denied this as his use of the word. At great length, he explained the difference between assurance of faith and assurance of salvation as he understood them. To have an assurance of salvation, involved a personal assessment, a comparison of one's present status with one's past status, and an arrival at the conclusion that, in some sense, one had become a partaker of God's gift of salvation, whereas formerly, one had stood outside the household of God, a stranger and an onlooker. On the other hand, an assurance of faith, being a more fundamental concept, was the first step in the process of salvation, the confident belief in the saving, caring, love of God. Campbell criticized those who opposed him when he pointed out how senseless the meaning of the libel would have become if 'assurance' were taken to mean 'assurance of salvation.' The libel would then have declared that Campbell had been guilty of teaching that one must be assured of being in a state of salvation as a prerequisite to attaining that state. Although his opponents in the Church refused to yield on this point, Campbell was deserving of a more generous hearing with regard to the meaning of his doctrine of assurance.

Turning to the Westminster Confession, Campbell referred to the

chapter 'Of Saving Faith,'<sup>1</sup> and concluded that "faith is the believing to be true whatever God hath spoken, with the assurance of its truth which corresponds with its authority, as spoken by God himself."<sup>2</sup> Turning also to the Catechism, he pointed out where faith was described as 'receiving and resting upon Christ,' which indicated to Campbell that assurance was absolutely essential to faith. His opponents quoted only from the chapter 'Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation,'<sup>3</sup> which stated very definitely that assurance of salvation was not of the essence of faith. Therefore, regarding assurance, as long as Campbell and his opponents were knowingly discussing different subjects, it would seem that there is little to gain from trying to assess either the evidence or the decision.

As a further example of the intolerance with which Campbell was met in the courts of the Church, there is the evidence of Dr. Hamilton concerning the doctrine of assurance. After openly declaring that he had been given "a very easy share of the business,"<sup>4</sup> Hamilton set out to ascertain the meaning of the word 'assurance,' by quoting from 'The Marrow of Modern Divinity' and from the Act of Assembly of 1720, which condemned certain portions of that book, including the doctrine of assurance of salvation, and he concluded, "Assurance here can have no other meaning than the assurance of salvation."<sup>5</sup>

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1 Confession, Chapter XIV.  
 2 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 52.  
 3 Confession, Chapter XVIII.  
 4 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 244.  
 5 Ibid.

... his defence before the court of the Church ...  
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## CHAPTER VIII

## The Development of Campbell's Thought

In his defence before the courts of the Church in 1830 and 1831, Campbell maintained most emphatically that this teaching was not in any way contrary to the Westminster Confession and the other accepted Standards of the Church, although as time went on, he came to change his position in the matter. When his good friend, A. J. Scott, was deprived of his licence to preach, by the same General Assembly on May 27, 1831, the two friends walked home together, and Scott recorded the following conversation, "After that dreary night in the Assembly, the dawn breaking upon us as we returned at length, alike condemned, to our lodging in the New Town of Edinburgh, I turned round and looked upon my companion's face under the pale light, and asked him, Could you sign the Confession now? His answer was No. The Assembly was right: our doctrine and the Confession are incompatible."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, "retreat from the conclusion that the work of Christ was universal in extent was for him impossible. He must go on to consider what that doctrine implied regarding the Redeemer's work, what it really was in its intrinsic character and how it attained its end. In short, he had to ask himself what the Saviour<sup>2</sup> really did and how it was done." This is precisely what Campbell

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1 Hanna, W. 'Letters of Thomas Erskine' vol. i, p. 140.

2 Leckie, J. H., The Expository Times, vol. XL, p. 201.  
 Edited by Hastings. Edinburgh: Clark, 1929.

set out to do during the ensuing twenty years before gathering his developed teaching together in his book, 'The Nature of the Atonement.'

Early in the introductory chapter of this book, as, indeed, it must have been early in his thinking upon this subject, Campbell states his mind with regard to the incarnation, and the relative significance of the incarnation and atonement. "The great question," wrote Campbell, "which has divided men as to these fundamental doctrines of the Faith has been the relation in which they stand to each other-- which was to be regarded as primary, which secondary?--was an atonement the great necessity in reference to man's salvation, out of which the necessity for the incarnation arose, because a divine Saviour alone could make an adequate atonement for sin?--or, is the incarnation to be regarded as the primary and the highest fact in the history of God's relation to man, in the light of which God's interest in man and purpose for man can alone be truly seen?--and is the atonement to be contemplated as taking place in order to the fulfilment of the divine purpose for man which the incarnation reveals?"<sup>1</sup> In reply, he says, "My attempt to understand and illustrate the nature of the atonement has been made in the way of taking the subject to the light of the incarnation. Assuming the incarnation, I have sought to realise the divine mind in Christ as perfect Sonship towards God and perfect Brotherhood towards men, and, doing so, the incarnation has appeared developing itself naturally and necessarily as the atonement.

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1 Campbell, 'The Nature of the Atonement' p. xiii.

... The faith of the atonement presupposes the faith of the  
 incarnation."<sup>1</sup> "If the atonement is rightly conceived of as a  
 development of the incarnation, the relation of the atonement to  
 the incarnation is indissoluble; and in a clear apprehension of the  
 incarnation must be felt to be so."<sup>2</sup>

With this view of the relation between atonement and incarnation,  
 Campbell reflected upon a passage which he had read in one of the  
 works of President Johnathan Edwards, and the following describes  
 Campbell's line of thought. "In contending 'that sin must be  
 punished with an infinite punishment,' President Edwards says, that  
 'God could not be just to Himself without this vindication, unless  
 there could be such a thing as a repentance, humiliation and sorrow  
 for this (viz. sin), proportionable to the greatness of the majesty  
 despised,'--for that there must needs be, 'either an equivalent  
 punishment or an equivalent sorrow and repentance'--'so,' he proceeds,  
 'sin must be punished with an infinite punishment,' thus assuming that  
 the alternative of 'an equivalent sorrow and repentance' was out of  
 the question. But, upon the assumption of that identification of  
 Himself with those whom He came to save, on the part of the Saviour,  
 which is the foundation of Edwards' whole system, it may at the least  
 be said, that the Mediator had the two alternatives open to His choice,  
 --either to endure for sinners an equivalent punishment, or to experience

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. xiii.

2 Ibid p. xv.

in reference to their sin, and present to God on their behalf, an adequate sorrow and repentance.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Edwards had believed that if only it had been possible for man to have offered a perfect confession and repentance, it would have been a sufficient atonement for his sin, but since this was beyond man's accomplishment, the sacrifice of Christ was required. Pondering these thoughts, Campbell admitted this much, that a perfect confession and repentance on man's part would have wrought a complete reconciliation, "since penitence, the sacrifice of the broken and contrite heart, certainly availed with God,"<sup>2</sup> yet, at the same time, Campbell knew that such an adequate repentance and confession was made impossible by the very fact that men were sinners. So, man's position appeared to be utterly hopeless, since God could not accept an imperfect confession, and man could not offer a perfect one.

However, Campbell went on to decide that what man could not do for himself, had been done for him by Christ. "But what if Christ had done for us that which was beyond our accomplishment? What if the absolute ideal manhood, eternally hidden in God, had taken flesh and lived our mortal life, had encountered all our temptations, had understood all our sin with a completeness such as was only possible to one who was Himself guiltless and who saw the moral situation with undimmed eyes, with the piercing vision of stainless purity and love?

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 137.

2 Leckie, Expository Times XL p. 201.

Suppose such a one had so identified Himself with His brethren that He felt their sin as His own and their guilt as though it was His. Suppose, finally, that He as man's representative had presented to the Father a confession and repentance wholly commensurate with human obligation, satisfying to the utmost the demands of the infinite Purity and Love. If all this had taken place, would not an atonement have been effected, the cloud of Divine wrath rolled away, and the gates of the heavenly Kingdom thrown wide open?"<sup>1</sup> And Campbell came to the conclusion that all this had been accomplished by Christ. "In Him dwelt the pure essence of humanity, the same humanity which existed in the eternal Son who, before time was, gazed with undimmed eyes upon the glory of God. This eternal Manhood, dwelling in some degree in every man, but in a state confused, blinded, bewildered by sense and sin, dwelt in Christ completely at one with God, and yet so identified in sympathy and love and in true kinship with the entire race that He was able to act with availing power as its representative and head. Hence, He could and did present to the Father a complete obedience, repentance, and confession, and so accomplished a true, final, and universal reconciliation. It remained for the individual man only to accept this reconciliation and make it his own by faith and love. The all-sufficing prayer had been offered by the Saviour and made perfect by His suffering and death. The soul had but to

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1 Leckie, Expository Times XL p. 201.



utter its Amen in order to receive for itself the answer of peace."<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that this was the path by which Campbell developed his teaching, from a hurried defence against a charge of heresy in 1831, to the elaborately detailed work of his book, the Nature of the Atonement, which he published in 1856, and by this path of searching and suffering, labour and loneliness, Campbell came to write a "book which stands alone in theological literature for its combination of speculative daring, searching analysis, and mystical vision with profound religious feeling."<sup>2</sup> In this way also, a deposed heretic<sup>3</sup> came to be recognized as "that true saint and great master," the Church of Scotland's<sup>4</sup> "greatest theologian."

The principle tenets of Campbell's thought on the atonement are set down under two headings, the retrospective and the prospective aspects of the atonement, and each is examined under two further headings, first, Christ dealing with men on the part of God, and secondly, Christ dealing with God on behalf of men. This chapter will seek to examine these various aspects of Campbell's theology, pointing to the salient features as they emerged and developed. In proceeding to this survey, let us recall the words of an unnamed admirer of Campbell, who said, "It must be remarked that any condensation of his treatise, even though presented as nearly as possible in the author's own words, can only give a very imperfect conception of its

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1 Leckie, Expository Times XL p. 201.

2 Ibid p. 202.

3 Ibid.

4 Graham, J. M., Expository Times XLVIII p. 414.

peculiar character. Not but that the style is susceptible of improvement, at least, certainly, of increased clearness; but it gives, even in its occasional obscurity, an impression of piety, devout meditation, and profound spiritual experience more strongly than any modern theological treatise which we remember."<sup>1</sup>

Considering the retrospective aspect of the atonement, Campbell discusses this first in relation to Christ dealing with men on the part of God. Out of the life of Christ, a life of love for the Father and love for all mankind, it arose naturally that he should be the one to vindicate the Father's name, and to bear witness to the excellence of God's will and the trustworthiness of God's heart. Such a witness-bearing was accomplished in "the personal perfection that was in Christ, His manifested perfection in humanity, that is to say, the perfection of His own following of the Father as a dear child, and the perfection of His brotherly love in His walk with men."<sup>2</sup> This was what Christ had in mind when he said, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' and it formed also an integral part of his ultimate self-sacrifice. "His honouring of the Father caused men to dishonour Him,--His manifestation of brotherly love was repaid with hatred,--His perfect walk in the sight of men failed to commend either His Father or Himself,--His professed trust in the Father was cast up to Him, not being believed."<sup>3</sup> The elements of this

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1 The North British Review, 1867. vol. XCII. p. 343.

2 Campbell, The Nature p. 129.

3 Ibid p. 130.

witnessing included peace and joy, "of which our Lord speaks as what the disciples had witnessed in Him,"<sup>1</sup> as well as sorrow, "the natural outward expression of Christ's inward sorrow from the constant pressure of our sin and misery on His spirit--a pressure under which, as God in our nature, with the mind of God in suffering flesh He could not but be."<sup>2</sup>

In discussing the witnessing of Christ before men, Campbell is most anxious that his reader understand the way in which this witness-bearing was perfected, for when we consider Christ's suffering in the atonement as the perfecting of his witness, there are two possibilities in the manner of our understanding. We may think of pénal suffering which is endured at the demand of divine justice, or of suffering which is itself "the expression of the divine mind regarding our sins, and a manifestation by the Son of what our sins are to the Father's heart."<sup>3</sup> People habitually prefer to think of suffering for their sins as the former rather than the latter, and Campbell complains, "We are accustomed to hear it said, that the law which men had violated must be honoured, and the sincerity and consistency of the lawgiver must be vindicated. But what a vindicating of the divine name, and of the character of the lawgiver, are the sufferings now contemplated, considered as themselves the manifestation in humanity of what our sins are to God, compared to

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 131.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid p. 133.

that to which they are reduced if conceived of as a punishment inflicted by God." <sup>1</sup> We may recognize some value in a love which is willing to suffer our penalty. "But," says Campbell, "however precious the thought of love willing so to suffer, the full revelation of God is not that divine love has been contented thus to suffer, but that the suffering is the suffering of divine love suffering from our sins according to its own nature; a suffering, therefore, in relation to which the sufferer could say, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' " <sup>2</sup>

Turning now to Christ's dealing with God on behalf of men, it is at this point that Christ has come to grips with the wrath of God against the sin of man, whereas many people assume that he has borne the punishment of sin. Campbell emphatically asserts, "The wrath of God against sin is a reality, however men have erred in their thoughts as to how that wrath was to be appeased. Nor is the idea that satisfaction was due to divine justice a delusion, however far men have wandered from the true conception of what would meet its righteous demand. And if so, then Christ, in dealing with God on behalf of men, must be conceived of as dealing with the righteous wrath of God against sin, and as according to it that which was due: and this <sup>3</sup> would necessarily precede His intercession for us."

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 133.

2 Ibid p. 134.

3 Ibid p. 135.

Thus has Campbell developed the thought which he took over from President Edwards concerning a perfect confession of man's sin, when he said, "That oneness of mind with the Father, which towards man took the form of condemnation of sin, would in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins, take the form of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession, as to its own nature, must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man. Such an Amen was due in the truth of things. He who was the Truth could not be in humanity and not utter it,--and it was necessarily a first step in dealing with the Father on our behalf. He who would intercede for us must begin with confessing our sins." Christ, in uttering this Amen from the depths of humanity, has given a perfect response to God's wrath against sin, "and in that perfect response He absorbs it. For that response has all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man,--a perfect sorrow--a perfect contrition--all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection, all--excepting the personal consciousness of sin;--and by that perfect response in Amen to the mind of God in relation to sin is the wrath of God rightly met, and that is accorded to divine justice which is its due, and could alone satisfy it."

Again, Campbell attempts to answer those who maintain that the

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 136.

2 Ibid.

sufferings of Christ were penal, that otherwise there is no explaining the sufferings of one who was without sin. "Do we not see suffering that we must explain on some other principle than this? Surely the tears of holy sorrow shed over the sins of others--the tears, for example, of a godly parent over a prodigal child, are not penal, nor, if shed before God in prayer, and acknowledged in the merciful answer of prayer in God's dealing with that prodigal, are they therefore to be conceived of as having been penal. But the fact is, that the truth that God grieves over our sins, is not so soon received into the heart as that God punishes sin,--and yet, the faith that He so grieves is infinitely more important, as having power to work holiness in us, than the faith that He so punishes, however important. But there is much less spiritual apprehension necessary to the faith that God punishes sin, than to the faith that our sins do truly grieve God. Therefore, men more easily believe that Christ's sufferings shew how God can punish sin, than that these sufferings are the divine feelings in relation to sin, made visible to us by being present in suffering flesh. Yet, however the former may terrify, the latter alone can purify, because the latter alone perfectly reveals, and in revealing vindicates the name and character of God, condemning us in our own eyes, and laying us prostrate in the dust because we have sinned against such a God." That is to say, "the answer that it was penal,

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 140.

is precluded by the nature of the suffering itself."<sup>1</sup> "We are now able to realise that the suffering we contemplate is divine, while it is human; and that God is revealed in it and not merely in connexion with it; God's righteousness and condemnation of sin, being in the suffering, and not merely what demands it,--God's love also being in the suffering, and not merely what submits to it."<sup>2</sup>

Summing up on this point, Christ's retrospective dealing with God on behalf of men, Campbell said, "The divine righteousness in Christ appearing on the part of man, and in humanity, met the divine righteousness in God condemning man's sin, by the true and righteous confession of its sinfulness uttered in humanity, and righteousness as in God was satisfied, and demanded no more than righteousness as in Christ thus presented."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, "the feelings of the divine mind as to sin, being present in humanity and uttering themselves to God as a living voice from humanity, were the true atonement for the sin of humanity,--the 'equivalent sorrow and repentance' of which the idea was in the mind of Edwards, though the fact of its realisation in Christ he did not see."<sup>4</sup> In illustration of this view of equivalent repentance and sorrow for sin, Campbell supposed that all the sin of humanity had been committed by one human spirit, upon whom had accumulated all the guilt of humanity. Then, he supposed that this

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 141.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid p. 143.

4 Ibid.

spirit were to pass out of sin into holiness, "becoming perfectly righteous with God's own righteousness,--such a change, were such a change possible, would imply in the spirit so changed, a perfect condemnation of the past of its own existence, and an absolute and perfect repentance, a confession of its sin commensurate with its evil." <sup>1</sup> Would divine justice still demand an adequate punishment for the past sin? Without answering his question, Campbell goes on, "We feel that such a repentance as we are supposing would, in such a case, be the true and proper satisfaction to offended justice, and that there would be more atoning worth in one tear of the true and perfect sorrow which the memory of the past would awaken in this now holy spirit, than in endless ages of penal woe." <sup>2</sup> Except for the difference in personal identity, this illustration describes what has been done by God in Christ. Without imputing guilt to the sufferer, "He has taken the nature, and become the brother of those whose sin He confesses before the Father, and He feels concerning their sins what, as the holy one of God, and as perfectly loving God and man, He must feel." <sup>3</sup>

"In truth, we cannot realise the life of Christ as He moved on this earth in the sight of men, and contemplate His witness-bearing against sin, and His forgiveness towards sinners, and hear the Father say of Him, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,'

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 145.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid p. 146.



and yet doubt that that mind towards sin and sinners which he thus manifested, and the Father thus acknowledged, would be altogether acceptable, and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour, in its atoning confession of sin and intercession for sinners.<sup>1</sup>"

Secondly, Campbell insists that the adequacy of the atonement cannot be seen in its retrospective reference apart from its prospective reference. "The atonement," he says, "is to be regarded as that by which God has bridged over the gulf which separated between what sin had made us, and what it was the desire of the divine love that we should become. Therefore its character must have been determined as much by the latter consideration as by the former; and, on this ground, I have complained of the extent to which the former consideration, rather than the latter, has been taken into account in men's recognition of a need be for an atonement."<sup>2</sup> "Such an atonement as that which the Son of God has actually made, cannot be contemplated but as in its very nature pointing forward to the divine end in view."<sup>3</sup> That is to say, it was an atonement, "not merely as a light condemning our darkness, but as the intended light of life for us."<sup>4</sup> "The acceptableness (of the atonement) in connexion with the remission of sins, is only to be truly and fully seen in its relation to the result which it has contemplated, viz. our

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 149.

2 Ibid p. 151.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid p. 152.

participation in eternal life."<sup>1</sup> "The atonement having been accomplished by the natural working of the life of love in Christ, and having been the result of His doing the Father's will, and declaring the Father's name in humanity, we are prepared, as to the prospective aspect of the atonement, to find that the perfect righteousness of the Son of God in humanity is itself the gift of God to us in Christ--to be ours as Christ is ours,--to be partaken in as He is partaken in,--to be our life as He is our life: instead of its being, as has been held, ours by imputation."<sup>2</sup>

In his witness-bearing for the Father, in revealing God to men, Jesus consistently maintained the urgency of this prospective reference. "In studying the manner of Christ's witnessing for the Father, we have the conviction continually impressed upon us, that this revealing of the Father by the presentation to us of the life of sonship has as its object our participation in that life of sonship, and so our participation in that knowledge and enjoyment of the Father, and that inheriting of the Father as the Father, which fellowship in the life of sonship can alone bring."<sup>3</sup> Christ knew that the light of the Father's presence, in which he lived, would eventually overcome and replace the darkness in which men were struggling. "His own consciousness in humanity witnessed within Him that humanity was capable of being filled with the life of love.

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 153.

2 Ibid p. 154.

3 Ibid p. 162.

The more perfectly He realised that these were His brethren whose hatred was coming forth against Him, the more did He realise also that hatred was not of the essence of their being,--that there was hope in giving Himself for them to redeem them from iniquity,-- that there was hope in suffering for them the just for the unjust-- hope that He would bring them to God." In seeking man's forgiveness,<sup>1</sup> 'for they know not what they do,' Christ was asserting that men still lived in the darkness of ignorance, darkness which could be swept away by the light of God's love and truth. "Had the full power of light been expended on them, and without result, there would have been no room to pray for them, because there would have been no possibility of answering the prayer. But, let us thankfully hear Him who knew what is in man, thus praying; and let us mark how to the close He was sustained in making His soul an offering for sin, by the consciousness in His own humanity of a knowledge of the Father which, being partaken in, had power to redeem humanity."<sup>2</sup> "The sad sorrowful work of being a light condemning the darkness was therefore cheered by the consciousness of not only being light in Himself, but 'the light of the world,' that is, a light for men, a light which His own human consciousness ever testified to be a light for men."<sup>3</sup>

As well as revealing God the Father to man, Christ reveals man to himself. "Apart from Christ we know not our God, and apart from

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 162.

2 Ibid p. 163.

3 Ibid p. 164.

Christ we know not ourselves: as, indeed, it is also true, that we are as slow to apprehend and to welcome the one revelation as the other,<sup>1</sup>--as slow to see man in Christ, as to see God in Christ."

At this point, Campbell would assure the reader that this is not a simple concept to understand, for "the difficulty of believing the revelation of man that is in Christ, and the difficulty of believing the revelation of God that is in Christ, is one difficulty. To believe that God is love, as this is revealed by His manifestation of love to us, is to believe that love, as ascribed to God in relation to man, means that desire for man which is fulfilled in the humanity of Christ, and can in that alone be satisfied."<sup>2</sup> "Let us not think of Christ, therefore, simply as revealing how kind and compassionate God is, and how forgiving to our sins, as those who have broken His righteous law. Let us think of Christ as the Son who reveals the Father, that we may know the Father's heart against which we have sinned, that we may see how sin, in making us godless, has made us as orphans, and understand that the grace of God, which is at once the remission of past sin, and the gift of eternal life, restores to our orphan spirits their Father and to the Father of spirits His lost children."<sup>3</sup> "I feel it necessary," says Campbell, "thus to insist upon the faith of the sonship in humanity, which is revealed

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 167.

2 Ibid p. 170.

3 Ibid p. 171.

in Christ, as the necessary supplement and complement of the faith  
of the fatherliness, revealed to be in God." <sup>1</sup> "In the beloved Son is  
the Father seen to be well pleased, and in our being through Him  
to the Father dear children will it come to pass that the Father  
will be well pleased in us." <sup>2</sup>

Turning to Christ's dealing with God on behalf of men, it must  
be said that we cannot fully understand Christ's pleading with the  
Father without proceeding to this in its prospective reference. His  
confession of man's sin and his intercession for sinners must be  
viewed not only with respect to that state from which God would have  
man to be saved, but also with respect to that state to which God  
would have man to be saved. "We more easily believe in the Father's  
acceptance of Christ's expiatory confession of our sins when we see  
that confession as contemplating our yet living to God--our  
partaking in eternal life; and we more easily believe in the gift  
of eternal life to those who have sinned, when we see it in connexion  
with that due and perfect expiation for their past sin." <sup>3</sup> The full  
light of the atonement can only shine out to us when we see Christ  
dealing with the Father in this two-fold way, namely, "bearing us  
and our sins and miseries on His heart before the Father," and asking  
that we might share in "His following the Father as a dear child

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 171.

2 Ibid p. 174.

3 Ibid p. 175.

walking in love."<sup>1</sup> Again, Campbell is most anxious for us to understand "that what is thus offered on our behalf is so offered by the Son and so accepted by the Father, entirely with the prospective purpose that it is to be reproduced in us."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from this aspect of Christ dealing with the Father, there is no way by which man can be reconciled with God, for it is only by entering into the confession of Christ in the atonement, that this end can be achieved. "The consciousness of having sinned can coexist with the experience of communion with God ... only in the fellowship of the Son's confidence in the Father's fatherly forgiveness, being quickened in us by the faith of that fatherly forgiveness, as uttered in God's acceptance of Christ's confession and intercession on our behalf."<sup>3</sup> Regarding the relationship between God and man, Campbell believes that we represent this relationship in filial terms rather than in legal terms. "The divine purpose was that we should receive the adoption as sons."<sup>4</sup> "Christ's confession of our sin was not only the expiation due to the righteous law of God, but also the expiation due to the fatherly heart of God."<sup>5</sup> That is not to say that the way of fatherliness in God suggests an easy, or morally weak way, but on the contrary, "the Father's heart did demand an atoning sacrifice."<sup>6</sup> "The Father's heart did demand the shedding of blood in order to the

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1 Campbell, *The Nature* p. 176.

2 *Ibid* p. 177.

3 *Ibid* p. 182.

4 *Ibid* p. 183.

5 *Ibid*.

6 *Ibid*. p. 185.

remission of sins, because it demanded blood in which justice would be rendered to the fatherliness which had been sinned against, and which, therefore, would have virtue in it to purge our spirits from their unfilial state, and to purify us in respect of the pollution that attaches to us as rebellious children." <sup>1</sup> "We might, indeed, say that the Father's heart asked for an atonement for our sin, simply on the ground that it desired us back to itself, and therefore, desired a living way of return for us, and one related in its nature to the nature of our departure, in order that our return might be a real return." <sup>2</sup>

As part of this prospective reference, Campbell insists that believers are united with Christ in such a way that the elements of the atonement in him are reproduced in them. The life which he lived is reproduced in his followers, so that they are, in actual consciousness, 'crucified with Him,' entering into his confession of their sins, and clinging to the fatherliness in God, to which he clung. Not that his righteousness is imputed to them and their sins to him, but rather, that his righteousness, that is, his perfect sonship, is actually implanted in them, so that they have access to the Father through him. In order to illustrate this, Campbell turns to the words of Christ, 'I am the vine and ye are the branches.' "Each slender branch," says Campbell, "each leafy twig of the tree, with its fruit-blossom or ripened fruit, may recall the plant in its first form as a single stem, yet with all its proper nature and

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 185.

2 Ibid.

beauty already visible in it, with that richness of leaf, and blossom, and fruit which belongs to the first development of the life of plants; but these reproductions of the original plant in its branches are not individual, independent, self-reliant plants. It drew, as it draws, its life from the ground; they draw their life from it: Christ is the vine; we are the branches. As it is no depreciating of the life seen in the plant while yet a single stem, to say that that same life is the contemplated life of its future branches; so neither is it a depreciation of the atonement to say that that eternal life, which glorified God and wrought redemption for man, in the personal work of Christ on earth, is the same that is to be seen bearing fruit to the glory of God in us in our participation in redemption. Such conceptions neither depreciate the atonement nor affect the absoluteness of our dependence on Christ; on the contrary, the relation of the branch to the vine alone represents that dependence adequately.<sup>1</sup>"

In conclusion, Campbell says, "The necessity for the atonement which we are contemplating, was moral and spiritual, arising out of our being under the law. In truth, its existence as a legal necessity arose out of its existence as a moral and spiritual necessity; therefore, the legal difficulty is to be contemplated as what could be, and has been, removed only in connexion with, and because of,

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, The Nature p. 330.



the removal of the spiritual difficulty. In other words, we have remission of our sins in the blood of Christ, only because that blood has consecrated for us a way into the holiest, and in this relation, and in this alone, can remission of sins be understood.<sup>1</sup> "The Father, as the Father, can only receive His offspring to Himself as coming to Him in the spirit of sonship;--neither otherwise than as coming in the spirit of sonship can they in spirit and in truth draw near to him."<sup>2</sup> For Campbell, the object of the atonement is to deliver us from sin and to bring us the reward of righteousness, "that blessedness which is essentially inherent in righteousness, and in that glorifying and enjoying of God of which righteousness alone is the capacity, and which no name, nor title, nor arbitrary arrangement can confer."<sup>3</sup>

By way of summarizing Campbell's developed thought on the doctrine of the atonement, let us consider some aspects of this subject which he specifically rejected, and some which he emphatically demanded as integral to his theology. First of all, Campbell rejected the Calvinistic doctrine of election. It was quite impossible for him to conceive of divine justice, by a necessity of its own nature, inflicting eternal misery upon some sinners, and granting eternal blessedness to others. That God should arbitrarily care more for some than for others, that Christ's love should be toward some and not toward all, Campbell could find

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1 Campbell, *The Nature* p. 187.

2 *Ibid* p. 190.

3 *Ibid* p. 191.

no warrant in Scripture or in experience. Furthermore, he rejected the penal conception of the atonement, because, since the atonement was what was justly required in order that sinning mankind might be reconciled with the righteousness of God, it must have been of such a nature as to change the lives of men. Punishment would not do this, but witnessing for the Father and confessing and interceding for the sinner would. Finally, Campbell rejected the view that the atonement was a legal transaction, since for him, mankind had not sinned against a law as much as against a Father's heart, not against truth as much as against love.

More positively, Campbell affirmed the importance of the incarnation, as "the primary and the highest fact in the history of God's relation to man."<sup>1</sup> Thus, assuming the incarnation, assuming that God had sent His Son, assuming the perfect relationship between Father and Son, and recognizing the sinful situation of the world, Campbell found the incarnation developing naturally and necessarily into the atonement. Secondly, in the more than thirty years since his deposition, he had not been shaken in his belief in the universal nature of the atonement. Whatever had been done for any, had been done for all; whatever Christ had suffered for the elect, he had suffered equally for the non-elect. Thirdly, Campbell insisted upon holding the subjective and the objective aspects of the atonement together. In all his words and works, Christ was dealing with men

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, The Nature p. xiii.

on the part of God, in that he was the perfect witness to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and all the sufferings of Christ were the perfecting of that witness. At the same time, Christ was dealing with God on behalf of men, from within humanity, so that the righteous wrath of God against sin was recognized in all its seriousness, and Christ offered on behalf of mankind that which mankind could not offer for itself, namely, a perfect sorrow and repentance, a perfect confession and intercession. Finally, Campbell insisted that this work of atonement must have reference, not only to what man has been, but to what he may become, that is, he held that the atonement must have reference retrospectively and prospectively. The work of Christ must be, not merely negative, not merely saving us from sins of the past, but it must be as well, a positive strength for the future; it must work in us the father and son relationship which Christ knew, that we too might receive the adoption of sons.

## CHAPTER IX

## A Comparison of the Earlier and the Later Teaching.

In his notable work of 1856, Campbell stated, in much detail, his thinking upon the nature of the doctrine of atonement, and thus far, we have traced, historically and theologically, the beginning and development of this work. Let us now review the whole of Campbell's teaching, by making a detailed comparison of the earlier with the later thought.

Regarding the extent of the atonement, Campbell's teaching remained consistent from the time of his early ministry at Row, when he said, "I hold and teach that Christ died for all men--that the propitiation which he made for sin, was for all the sins of all mankind--that those for whom he gave himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweet smelling savour, were the children of men without exception and without distinction. And this the Scriptures teach." <sup>1</sup> "In whatever more favourable situation any sinner is placed, by the fact that his sins have been atoned for, that more favourable situation is enjoyed by every child of Adam,--and that the change produced in any man's condition by the fact of Christ's dying for him, is a change produced in the condition of all, inasmuch <sup>2</sup> as Christ has died for all." In the Nature of the Atonement,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings 1 p. 16.

2 Ibid iii p. 50.

Campbell wrote, "The extent of the reference of the atonement, it is no part of my immediate purpose to discuss. I believe that the atonement has been an atonement for sin, having reference to all mankind; I believe this to be distinctly revealed; I believe it to be also implied in what the atonement is in itself." <sup>1</sup> With this, Campbell said no more directly about the universality of the atonement.

However, let us compare briefly two of the issues which arose out of this doctrine. The first was referred to in Campbell's defence before the Synod, and concerned the arbitrary nature of a limited doctrine of atonement. He said, "If all the actions of his creatures are to be alike referred to God, then God can have no moral character at all. If the condition of the wicked in eternal burnings, and the condition of the righteous in the kingdom of righteousness, are to be referred to God in the same way, then there is no character ascribed to God at all. If I am seeing the fact of one man being holy, and another man being unholy, as alike the fulfilment of the will of God, then it is quite clear that I dare not say, because of these things, that God is holy any more than that he is unholy, because if the one thing would prove him holy, the other would prove him unholy." <sup>2</sup> Similarly, in 1856, he wrote, "However little the thought may have received the consideration which its importance

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 2.

2 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 193.

deserves, nothing can be clearer to me than that an arbitrary act cannot reveal character. We may be reconciled to an act of which we see not the reasons, by what we know otherwise of the character of him whose act it is: but an act which is strictly arbitrary, or at least so far as we are informed arbitrary,--an act of which he that performs it gives us no other account than that he wills it because he wills it,--can never, by any light in it, make the character of him whose act it is known to us. Now the doctrine that the work of Christ has had reference only to the elect, and that the grace which it embodies was only grace to them, and that they were elected, and the non-elect passed over arbitrarily, or at the least on no principle of choice that can be made known to us, or at all events, that is made known to us,--this doctrine makes the work of Christ as presented to the faith of human beings strictly an arbitrary act. To say that God does not authorise us to expect an explanation of the reasons of His acting--that He gives not account of His matters,--is not to the point. Be it so. But if it be so, it does not the less follow, that what He has done has left us ignorant of Himself--that so far as the acting of which He gives us no account is concerned, He is to us the unknown God."

Secondly, Campbell urged that the doctrine of universal atonement did not teach that Christ came to change the mind of God, but rather to reveal it to men. "The secret of God's character is revealed in

the work of redemption. Christ came not to change his Father, but to declare his Father's name: and when we see the work of God in Christ, and the love of God in Christ, we are not seeing some love in God, some mercy and tenderness, which had come forth in consequence of the work of Christ, but we are seeing a work springing from what was in the heart of our Creator who has become our Redeemer, and, in becoming our Redeemer, has declared unto us what our Creator is."<sup>1</sup>

With somewhat more prolixity, Campbell expressed the same view in 1856, while discussing the intercessory nature of the work of Christ. He said, "In the light of that true knowledge of the heart of the Father in which the Son responded to the Father's condemnation of our sins, the nature of that condemnation was so understood that His love was at liberty, and was encouraged to accompany confession by intercession:--not an intercession which contemplated effecting a change in the heart of the Father, but a confession which combined with acknowledgment of the righteousness of the divine wrath against sin, hope for man from that love in God which is deeper than that wrath,--in truth originating it--determining also its nature, and justifying the confidence that, its righteousness being responded to, and the mind which it expresses shared in, that wrath must be appeased."<sup>2</sup>

In commendation of his view of the nature of the atonement, Campbell reasserted this point, when he said, "Though, in a true sense and one

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 185.

2 Campbell, The Nature p. 147.

which it is most important that we should apprehend, remission of sins, and the gift of eternal life, are presented to our faith as resting on the atonement, and as the redemption which Christ has accomplished for us; yet is the ultimate ground of these, and of the atonement itself in its relation to these, to be seen in God, who is to be conceived of, not as moved to give us remission of sins and eternal life by the atonement, but as self-moved to give us remission of sins and eternal life, and as giving them through the atonement as what secures that what is given shall be received, on the ground of that in God which moves Him to this grace, and in harmony with His mind in bestowing it. So that to stop at the atonement, and rest in the fact of the atonement, instead of ascending through it to that in God from which it has proceeded, and which demanded it for its due expression, is to misapprehend the atonement as to its nature,<sup>1</sup> and place, and end."

On the doctrine of universal pardon, Campbell began his defence of 1830 by setting down his definition of the word 'pardon,' saying, "The pardon of sin may be understood to mean either an act of indemnity to the sinner, giving him security from all consequences of having sinned against God, irrespective of any condition as to moral character; or as the act of God in receiving back to the bosom of his love the returning sinner; or thirdly, as the removing the judicial barrier

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 353.



which guilt interposes between the sinner and God; so making the fact of being a sinner no hindrance to his coming to God, now, as to a reconciled Father."<sup>1</sup> While rejecting the first of these senses as being unscriptural and immoral, and while accepting the second of these as being true for those who "have repented and returned to the Lord,"<sup>2</sup> Campbell insisted that his teaching was that pardon was universal in the third sense; that is, pardon was the removal of the barrier which guilt had erected between the sinner and God. Before proceeding to compare this with a definition of forgiveness written in 1856, let us consider the relation between the forgiveness of God and the atoning work of Christ.

Although his meaning at this point is not always explicit, it would certainly seem that, in 1830, Campbell considered the forgiveness of man's sin as being the result of the atoning work of Christ. He said, "One talent--his forgiving love, flowing through the atonement of Christ as a goodness leading men to repentance, is that for which God holds all men responsible, and according as it hath or has not led them to repentance, shall they be judged,"<sup>3</sup> and with reference to Arminianism, he said, "After a man is supposed to have repented and believed, on that system, he is only then in that condition of right to come to God with confidence, in which, according to the true doctrine of the Scriptures, he was placed by the sacrifice of Christ,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 32.

2 Ibid p. 34.

3 Ibid p. 28.

as a propitiation for his sins." <sup>1</sup> Again, referring to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he said, "He is obviously proceeding upon the same principle of present pardon to all through the death of Christ, and future judgment with reference to that pardon, which has been held above," <sup>2</sup> and in his pleadings at the bar of the General Assembly, he maintained, "I know, and am aware, that in saying that God has pardoned all men through the shedding of the blood of Christ, I am using a form of expression which has been often objected to by those who do teach and hold the very doctrine which I so express." <sup>3</sup> He referred to his "teaching that Christ died for all--that the atonement was made for all men--that thus the barrier between every man and God was removed," <sup>4</sup> and in seeking to put forward a clear definition of the terms which he used, he declared, "Moderator, I mean by pardon, that the circumstances of a man have undergone such a change, through the death of Christ for him, that, but for that change, I could not ask him to approach God with confidence, or bid him rejoice in God." <sup>5</sup> In each of these instances, Campbell inferred that forgiveness is a fact for all men, because of Christ's atoning work.

However, at one point at least, Campbell rejected this view, as when he said, "When we see the work of God in Christ, and the love

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 36.

2 Ibid p. 41.

3 Ibid iii p. 53.

4 Ibid p. 55.

5 Ibid p. 57.

of God in Christ, we are not seeing some love in God, some mercy and tenderness, which had come forth in consequence of the work of Christ, but we are seeing a work springing from what was in the heart of our Creator."<sup>1</sup> This thought is further developed in the Nature of the Atonement, concerning which, Campbell says, in discussing faith in God's forgiveness, "This is a faith which, in the order of things, must precede the faith of an atonement. If we could ourselves make an atonement for our sins, as by sacrifice the heathen attempted to do, and as, in their self-righteous endeavours to make their peace with God, men are, in fact, daily attempting, then such an atonement might be thought of as preceding forgiveness, and the cause of it. But if God provides the atonement, then forgiveness must precede atonement; and the atonement must be the form of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, not its cause."<sup>2</sup> "An atonement to make God gracious, to move him to compassion, to turn his heart toward those from whom sin had alienated his love, it would, indeed, be difficult to believe in; for, if it were needed it would be impossible. To awaken to the sense of the need of such an atonement, would certainly be to awaken to utter and absolute despair. But the Scriptures do not speak of such an atonement; for they do not represent the love of God to man as the effect, and the atonement of Christ as the cause, but,--just the contrary--they represent the love of God as the cause,

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 185.

2 Campbell, The Nature p. 18.

and the atonement as the effect."<sup>1</sup> Thus, in some measure in 1830, and more specifically in 1856, Campbell taught that God had forgiven all mankind, using the word 'forgive' in his own sense, from all eternity, and that the atoning work of Christ was the expression in history of this eternal forgiveness.

In Campbell's definition of forgiveness in 1856, we notice a development of thought which is parallel to that noted above, for he wrote, "The first demand which the gospel makes upon us in relation to the atonement is, that we believe that there is forgiveness with God. Forgiveness—that is, love to an enemy surviving his enmity, and which, notwithstanding his enmity, can act towards him for his good; this we must be able to believe to be in God towards us, in order that we may be able to believe in the atonement."<sup>2</sup> More than simply the removal of barriers to fellowship, the love of God is here expressed as acting positively toward sinning mankind, striving to restore the bond of fellowship which had been broken. As we have seen, this view was implicit in all that Campbell taught in 1830, and was more explicitly stated in his later writing.

A further point of comparison emerges concerning forgiveness, in that Campbell taught that forgiveness must precede repentance, and that a true repentance required that the repentant experience the forgiveness of his sin. He described a true repentance as the taking

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 20.

2 Ibid p. 18.

advantage of a right which was conferred by God in his having forgiven.

"My title to return to God," he said, "is not in the fact that I do return, but my returning is my availing myself of a title to return antecedently conferred by God, in the exercise of his free love."<sup>1</sup>

"This, then, I say, that God everywhere invites sinners to repent-- that God everywhere invites sinners to come back to him, whereby it is taught that God has forgiven sinners their departing from him, and so he invites them to return."<sup>2</sup> Campbell went on to ask, "But what is repentance? Is it not the heart turning to God, and putting trust in God, and glorifying God as God? Is it not coming from the condition of being as gods to ourselves, into the condition of having God reigning in our hearts? And can any man repent--can any man turn to God--can any man receive God to reign in his heart, so long as he does not know that God has forgiven him? Can any man rejoice in God as God, who does not see in that God his own friend, his own Redeemer, his own forgiving and loving Father?"<sup>3</sup> For Campbell, forgiveness preceded repentance; God's action toward man preceded any action on the part of man toward God.

In his later work, Campbell discussed this relationship between the atoning work of Christ and the forgiveness of God, as he asked, "Seeing that there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared, and that his love not only survives men's transgressions, but can confer

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 37.

2 Ibid ii p. 186.

3 Ibid p. 187.

new gifts on those who have transgressed, why should not this love be manifested without an atonement? Why should not the pardon of sin as an act of Divine Clemency be simply intimated: Why should not this new and great gift of eternal life be simply bestowed, and presented to men as the rich bounty of God?"<sup>1</sup> In reply, he referred to the difficulty which a thoroughly awakened sinner would feel in believing that God would pardon all his sinfulness and grant him the gift of eternal life, and he continued, "Nor is the distress experienced connected with the forgiveness of past sin alone. That grace for the time to come--the gift of eternal life--which appears to the objector to the atonement what may easily be believed in is not found to be so. It may be so far conceived of by the awakened sinner, and may so commend itself to him, that he can say, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' and yet, to believe that the good he apprehends is freely granted to him, may prove so far from an easy act of faith in God's goodness, that the ideal which has dawned upon him, is felt to be the ideal of a hopeless good."<sup>2</sup> So, just as we saw that forgiveness preceded repentance without replacing the need for repentance, forgiveness precedes the atoning work of Christ without detracting from its necessity or significance.

Finally, both in his earlier and later teaching, Campbell insisted that one great danger for any Christian, was in thinking and speaking

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 21.

2 Ibid p. 22.

about forgiveness, in vague and general terms. He demanded of his listeners that they be honest with themselves, applying his teachings personally, with a full understanding of their consequences. Before the Synod, he pleaded, "I believe that many have held, and do hold, that Christ died for all, in whose case there is no objection taken to their so holding. I believe that it is when it takes a personal shape that it becomes a doctrine of offence to flesh and blood."<sup>1</sup>

In the Nature of the Atonement, Campbell refers to the seriousness of sin, personally contemplated, when he, says, "Men, indeed, readily enough confess that they are sinners, and that they need forgiveness; but this does not at all imply that they understand the charge of guilt which the Scriptures contain, far less respond to it; or that they have any conception of the forgiveness which they need while they speak about it so easily. How far it is otherwise becomes very manifest when the reality of sin is steadily contemplated, and the charge of guilt is weighed, and the testimony of conscience in reference to that charge is calmly listened to, and its solemn import is considered. All the experience that now ensues, shows how much the fact of sin is a discovery to the awakened sinner. Seeing what it amounts to, he now shrinks from the admission which he had previously made so easily;--though he may not now dare to recall it;--while, as to forgiveness, in proportion as he comes to understand that he really needs it, he finds it difficult to believe that he himself,

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<sup>1</sup> Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 196.

and his own sins, can be the subject of it. As long as to confess that I am a sinner is felt to be nothing more than to confess that my moral state is an imperfect one, that it presents a mixture of good and evil,--that much in me needs forgiveness,--I cannot say how much; while I trust that there is also good in me which God accepts, and which may so far counterbalance the evil, I can easily say 'I know I am a sinner; but I trust in God's mercy.'<sup>1</sup> " From the writings of Martin Luther, Campbell added, "Generally and without the pronoun, (referring to the pronoun 'our') it is an easy matter to magnify and amplify the benefit of Christ, viz. that Christ was given for sins, but for other men's sins which are worthy. But when it cometh to the putting to of this pronoun our, there our weak nature and reason starteth back, and dare not come nigh unto God, nor promise to herself that so great a treasure shall be freely given unto her."<sup>2</sup> The personal application of his teaching was of fundamental importance to Campbell, and his attitude in this respect was summed up in his farewell sermon to the people of Row, when he said, "I hold that this is what you ought all to recognise, and what God holds you responsible for recognising, that it is impossible that any one can come near to God, and trust him with perfect confidence, unless he knows that God has forgiven his sins. ... You are called to immediate repentance unto life; therefore, the first among the things pertaining to life and to

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 10.

2 Ibid p. 46.



godliness, the first part of the provision for your enjoying God, and giving him glory, is the free forgiveness of all your sins--not the hope that they may yet be forgiven--not the hope that, through time, you may get pardon--not the hope that, perhaps, in the day of judgment God may passover your transgressions, but the information that, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, you have the pardon of your sins--the assurance that an atonement has been made for your sins; and that at this moment God is not imputing sin to you, but is inviting you to himself, as if you had not sinned at all."<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the doctrine of assurance, Campbell began, "On this subject, much misconception has arisen, from the loose and inaccurate use of terms--Faith being the belief of God's testimony, assurance of faith should properly mean the confidence in its reality, with which the thing testified is contemplated; and this is the Scripture use of the word."<sup>2</sup> Thus, Campbell defined 'faith' as absolute belief and trust in God for the truth and validity of what God has said in his Word, and in somewhat more elaborate terminology, he expresses the same thought in his later work. "This gracious mind of God in relation to us it is that our faith accepts and responds to; for our faith is, in truth, the Amen of our individual spirits to that deep, multiform, all-embracing, harmonious Amen of humanity, in the person of the Son of God, to the mind and heart of the Father in relation to man,--the

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1 Campbell, Sermons ii p. 256.

2 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 44.

divine wrath and the divine mercy, which is the atonement." "Faith<sup>1</sup> is an almighty thing; and the power thereof is infinite and inestimable; for it giveth glory to God, which is the highest service that can be given unto Him. Now to give glory unto God, is to believe in Him, to count Him true, wise, righteous, merciful, almighty; briefly, to acknowledge Him to be the author and giver<sup>2</sup> of all goodness."

At this stage as well, Campbell was concerned that his hearers should contemplate his doctrine as applying to themselves personally. For Campbell, assurance meant utter trust and confidence, acknowledging no element of doubt. "The doctrine of the death of Christ," he said, "may be contemplated by many as an abstract thing, (although, in truth, it cannot be far from any one of us,) but the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith, and necessary to salvation, comes to be a doctrine touching every man nearly; because it comes to every man in this shape, that it gives him two alternatives, either you have this assurance, or you are not a child of God--saying either this is your habitual state, or you are not a child of God;--and giving, as it does, no place for indecision--no place for living in a mist, not knowing whether you serve God or Baal--it is therefore a doctrine<sup>3</sup> against which the heart of man rebels." In the Nature of the Atonement, Campbell again agrees with Luther, when he says, "One other point

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 225.

2 Ibid p. 39.

3 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 196.

remains to be noticed that we may have distinctly before us Luther's teaching on the subject of the atonement,--I mean the weight which he lays on the personal appropriation of the atonement as of the very essence of faith. Of course, teaching as the result of the victory of Christ over all our spiritual enemies, that Christ was made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, and setting forth this as a constitution of things established by God in his love to man, and revealed to be known and received by faith, he could not teach merely that men might appropriate Christ and His work,--that they were at liberty so to do, and invited so to do, and that Christ was freely offered to them, and would become theirs by such appropriation. He must needs teach that such appropriation was of the very essence of faith; being implied in the most simple reception of that which was revealed." <sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Campbell maintained, "Now I am enlightened concerning the name of my God in contemplating the work of the Lord Jesus Christ--the name of him from whom I have deeply revolted. Now I see that he indeed loves me, and tenderly cares for me--that even my miseries have been no proof of want of love in him--they have only declared his condemnation of my sin. Now I see the justice of the condemnation--now I see the righteousness of it--now, therefore, I shall no longer depart from the Lord my God; but henceforth put my perfect trust in God, and commit myself to him, and look to him for

that which is good." <sup>1</sup> Referring to a man who was not assured in his faith, Campbell said, "He may say, 'I hope I do not disbelieve my Bible--far be it from me to refuse what God has said--it is true I cannot enter into your joys, but it is not that I doubt God's word, but I doubt my own acceptance of Christ.' This is mere evasion. God says, there is eternal life for him in Christ; and why is he not enjoying it but because of his unbelief? He is not an humble man, but a proud, haughty, heaven-daring rebel, who will not take God's word for a thing, who will receive the witness of man, but not the witness of God, which is greater." <sup>2</sup> In recollecting the meaning of true faith, Campbell wrote, "The Amen of the individual human spirit to the Amen of the Son to the mind of the Father in relation to man, is saving faith--true righteousness; being the living action, and true and right movement of the spirit of the individual man in the light of eternal life. And the certainty that God has accepted that perfect and divine Amen as uttered by Christ in humanity is necessarily accompanied by the peaceful assurance that in uttering, in whatever feebleness, a true Amen to that high Amen, the individual who is yielding himself to the spirit of Christ to have it uttered in him is accepted of God." <sup>3</sup>

Finally, concerning assurance, Campbell considered the problem of temptation to self-righteousness, of which evil, he held no fear

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 189.  
 2 Campbell, Sermons i p. 21.  
 3 Campbell, The Nature p. 226.

for the person who adhered to this doctrine as he presented it. In the Presbytery trial, he referred to the danger of accepting part of his teaching while rejecting other parts of it, when he said, "So long as men holding a limited atonement, held also that assurance was of the essence of faith, and so required that the love of God in Christ should be felt as personal love, in the mind's apprehension of it, though not held to be personal in the record--and so long as faith was thus made to embrace more than the word reveals, there was a risk of very serious error, and a door opened for a very insidious form of self-righteousness, under the name of what was called the appropriating act of faith--but when it is understood that faith needs not to change anything, but may, taking things as they are, say, my Lord and my God--so long as it is understood, that the spirit of adoption is the spirit of faith in a revealed fatherly love, then there is no evil in associating the word faith with those feelings of personal delight in the Lord, and confidence towards God, which are inseparable from it." In his later writing, Campbell also maintained, "The fear about self-righteousness arises entirely from not seeing, that the true protection from self-righteousness is found in the very nature of faith. The true faith precludes self-righteousness, because that which it apprehends is the Father revealed by the Son. He who beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is saved from self-righteousness by the native power on his spirit of the glory

which he beholds. He is in the presence of the true God, truly known, and 'no flesh shall glory in His presence.' " "I have sought<sup>1</sup> for justification by faith, this self-evidencing character, not fearing by this to open the door for a self-righteous and presumptuous confidence, --believing that the true confidence alone can preclude the false in all its measures and forms. The Amen of faith,--the being reconciled to God,--peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,--these, in meekness and lowliness, are known in the light of the atonement. For that light of eternal life harmonises us with itself and so with God; and in it it is impossible to trust in self,--impossible not to trust in God,--impossible to doubt that this trust in God is true righteousness, --impossible to doubt that God is just in being the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

Let us now compare Campbell's thought in 1830 and 1856 concerning his understanding of God. Before the Synod, he testified, "I would ask your indulgence while I direct your attention to what I believe is the real source of difficulty in receiving the truth of God, which I have now set forth. It is the not realizing God's character as apart from God's power. It is one thing to be the Almighty--it is another to be love. God is the Almighty--God is love. God has taken much pains to teach us to separate between the two, and has tenderly considered our condition in the way he has taken to do so, and has

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 100.

2 Ibid p. 227.

left us without excuse, if we do not know the difference--for God has come forth in Christ, as a servant, to show his character, as apart from his power. There is no glory in power, simply as power. Power belongeth to God alone; but if we would praise the power, it is because of the character according to which that power acts. Therefore, as long as God is only seen as powerful, as long as he is only seen as the Almighty, God's character is unknown, and God is not glorified." In this, Campbell condemned those who were tempted to divide the character of God, by believing in his power apart from other aspects of his character; that is, he condemned those who looked upon God as mere loveless power, instead of powerful because loving. Furthermore, we find this thought expressed and emphasized many times in his later writing, as when he says, "While in reference to the not uncommon way of regarding this subject which represents righteousness and holiness as opposed to the sinner's salvation, and mercy and love as on his side, I freely concede that all the divine attributes were, in one view, against the sinner in that they called for the due expression of God's wrath against sin in the history of redemption; I believe, on the other hand, that the justice, the righteousness, the holiness of God have an aspect according to which they, as well as his mercy, appear as intercessors for man, and crave his salvation. Justice may be contemplated as according to sin its due; and there is in righteousness, as we are conscious to it, what

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 193.

testifies that sin should be miserable. But justice looking at the sinner, not simply as the fit subject of punishment, but as existing in a moral condition of unrighteousness, and so its own opposite, must desire that the sinner should cease to be in that condition; should cease to be unrighteous,--should become righteous: righteousness in God craving for righteousness in man, with a craving which the realisation of righteousness in man alone can satisfy. So also of holiness. In one view, it repels the sinner, and would banish him to outer darkness, because of its repugnance to sin. In another, it is pained by the continued existence of sin and unholiness, and must desire that the sinner should cease to be sinful." "And when<sup>1</sup> gathering consolation from the meditation of the name of the Lord that consolation will be not only, 'Surely the divine mercy desires to see me happy rather than miserable'--but also, 'Surely the divine righteousness desires to see me righteous--the divine holiness desires to see me holy--my continuing unrighteous and unholy is as grieving to God's righteousness and holiness as my misery through sin is to His pity and love.' 'Good and righteous is the Lord; therefore will He teach sinners the way which they should choose.' 'A just God and a Saviour;' not as the harmony of a seeming opposition, but<sup>2</sup> 'a Saviour,' because 'a just God.' "

Similarly, Campbell rejected the opinion of the person who

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 29.

2 Ibid p. 31.



considered God as merely loving and merely indulgent, because Campbell maintained that the character of God cannot be divided. If it seems that one aspect of God's character is favourable to, or opposed to, certain human actions, then all other aspects of his character must be similarly favourable or opposed to them. Concerning those who would remember the love and forget the judgment of God, Campbell said, "But this associating of moral weakness, and, as it were, easiness, with the idea of the fatherliness that is in God, is altogether an error; neither should any place be given to it. 'If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' The father's heart did demand an atoning sacrifice. Is not this clear, if the worship in relation to which the victim's blood was shed is, indeed, sonship? The Father's heart did demand the shedding of blood in order to the remission of sins, because it demanded blood in which justice would be rendered to the fatherliness which had been sinned against, and which, therefore, would have virtue in it to purge our spirits from their unfilial state, and to purify us in respect of the pollution that attaches to us as rebellious children."

Another difficulty for many people, Campbell described in these terms, "Now, I know and feel that the great difficulty to be contended with in teaching men the truth as to the name of God, is that they will

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 185.

not recognise a will in God which the wicked oppose, disappoint, and frustrate--they will not realize that God may be grieved--that God may be vexed--that things may be taking place daily and hourly against the will of God. O this shows itself when men say, if God so loves all --if Christ died for all--if so much has been done to deliver all from misery, how should any be miserable? Is not God Almighty, and how should any thing happen against the will of God? But unless I can believe that things continually happen quite against the will of God, I can have no reason to believe that God is good or holy." For Campbell, the omnipotence of God was not such as could not be frustrated by sinning mankind, nor was the heart of God such as was not hurt deeply by such frustration. In the opening chapter of his book, Campbell mentions this, with reference to a certain objector, who found that "the addition of the doctrine of the atonement introduces other, and to him, mysterious elements into the question, complicating what should be a simple matter, and, in fact, representing the love of God as not at liberty freely to express itself, but, having difficulties and hindrances to encounter,--the removal and overcoming of which involved such mysteries as the incarnation, and the self-sacrifice of the Son of God." Campbell adds, "It is even so: and this, doubtless, is the difficulty,--the great and ultimate difficulty; and let its amount be distinctly recognised. That God should do anything

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 193.

2 Campbell, The Nature p. 25.

that is loving and gracious--which implies only an act of will-- putting forth power guided by wisdom, this seems easy of faith. But, either that any object should appear desirable to God's love, which infinite power, guided by infinite wisdom, cannot accomplish by a simple act of the divine will, or that, if there be an object not to be thus attained, God will proceed to seek that object by a process which implies a great cost to God, and self-sacrifice,-- either of these positions is difficult of faith. But the doctrine of the atonement involves them both: and this we must realize, and bear in mind, if we would deal wisely, nay justly, with objectors."<sup>1</sup>

Another part of Campbell's teaching, which was of primary importance to him, concerned the filial relationship between God the Father and God the Son, and between God the Father and mankind the children. This teaching was central to his theology in 1831 as well as in 1856, and may be seen by comparing the following passages. "The doctrine I hold is, that the Son came to reveal the Father--that he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father--that he that knoweth the Son knoweth the Father that hath sent him--that no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son revealeth him. That therefore it is in Christ that we see God--that in Christ we see God<sup>2</sup> in our nature." "In everything I am entitled to go from the Son to the Father, and so to form my conception of the Father by the Son--

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 24.

2 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 181.

otherwise the incarnation is no revelation of God to me at all, and the actings of Christ do not discover to me the Father, and the seeing or hearing Christ may be without my hearing or seeing the Father."<sup>1</sup> "This, then, is the thing taught as to the character of God, as revealed by the work of Christ, that the work is a work whereby God is unveiled as loving all men; and that when the sinful children of men are invited to return back again to that God from whom they had gone astray, they are told to look at him in Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> In the Nature of the Atonement, with reference to the prospective aspect of the atonement, Campbell said, "Let us not think of Christ, therefore, simply as revealing how kind and compassionate God is, and how forgiving to our sins, as those who have broken His righteous law. Let us think of Christ as the Son who reveals the Father, that we may know the Father's heart against which we have sinned, that we may see how sin, in making us godless, has made us as orphans, and understand that the grace of God, which is at once the remission of past sin, and the gift of eternal life, restores to our orphan spirits their Father and to the Father of spirits His lost children."<sup>3</sup> "The words 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' are explained by the words, 'I am the way and the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' We see the Father when we see the Son, not merely because of identity of will and character in

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 182.

2 Ibid p. 184.

3 Campbell, The Nature p. 171.

the Father and the Son, but because a father as such is known only  
 in relation to a son.<sup>1</sup>

The fatherly relationship between God and mankind was also  
 continuously assumed in Campbell's pleading before the courts of the  
 Church, as when he used these phrases, "the spirit of adoption,"<sup>2</sup>  
 "a revealed fatherly love,"<sup>3</sup> "believing God, and rejoicing in his love,  
 as that of a reconciled Father in Christ,"<sup>4</sup> "Can any man rejoice  
 in God as God, who does not see in that God his own friend, his own  
 Redeemer, his own forgiving and loving Father?"<sup>5</sup> This sense of a  
 fatherly love in God toward all his children was integral to  
 Campbell's teaching in 1830, as also it was in 1856, when, in  
 discussing the righteousness of Christ, he wrote, "Christ was declared  
 to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. The  
 righteousness then acknowledged was none other than what the Father  
 had previously borne testimony to when He said, 'This is my beloved  
 Son, in whom I am well pleased;'--on the sonship, the life of sonship  
 that was in Christ, was attention thus fixed, and not on the legal  
 perfection of the righteousness which it fulfilled. How then can we  
 think of the Father's testimony to the Son as other than a commending  
 of sonship to us, or think of the Father's delight in the Son otherwise  
 than as what justifies His imparting the life of sonship to us?"<sup>6</sup>

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. xl.  
 2 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 45.  
 3 Ibid.  
 4 Ibid p. 47.  
 5 Ibid ii p. 187.  
 6 Campbell, The Nature p. 173.

With reference to Christ offering himself to the Father, Campbell says, "We see further that what is thus offered on our behalf is so offered by the Son and so accepted by the Father, entirely with the prospective purpose that it is to be reproduced in us." "To speak<sup>1</sup> of an atonement as due to the fatherly heart of God is foreign to our habits of mind on the subject of atonement. Yet I believe that in proportion as we see the expiation that is in Christ's confession of man's sin to be that which has truly met the demand of the divine righteousness, we must see that the filial spirit that was in that confession, and which necessarily took into account what our being rebellious children was to the Father's heart, constituted the perfection of the expiation. This is no uncalled for refinement of thought. The pardon which we need is the pardon of the Father of our spirits,--the way into the holiest which we need is the way into our Father's heart; and therefore, the blood of Christ which hath consecrated such a way for us, must have power to cleanse our spirits from that spiritual pollution which defiles rebellious children, that is to say, must contain the new mind in which it pertains to rebellious children to return to the Father."<sup>2</sup> Campbell's thought on this point is summarized in the following paragraph.

"The great and root-distinction of the view of the atonement presented in these pages is the relation in which our redemption is

1 Campbell, The Nature p. 177.

2 Ibid p. 184.

regarded as standing to the fatherliness of God. In that fatherliness has the atonement been now represented as originating. By that fatherliness has its end been represented to have been determined. To that fatherliness has the demand for the elements of expiation found in it been traced. But the distinction is broad and unmistakable between simple mercy proposing to save from evils and bestow blessings, and finding it necessary to deal with justice as presenting obstacles to the realisation of its gracious designs,—which conception is that on which the other view of the atonement proceeds; and this of the love of the Father of our spirits going forth after us, His alienated children, lost to Him, dead to Him through sin, and desiring to be able to say of each one of us, 'My son was dead and is <sup>1</sup> alive again, he was lost and is found.' "

It must be said of everything that Campbell taught and spoke and wrote, that he did so from the point of view of his pastoral experience. Assuredly, his later work has been carefully developed and expanded, but the basis of it all is his contact with people, and his constant concern, to the utter exclusion of all else, is that he should teach people as God gave him strength and direction. Campbell introduced his written answers to the Presbytery by saying that he had avoided submitting voluntarily to judicial enquiry because of his congregational responsibilities. "I say this much with reference to the past," he declared, "because I know it has been thought that I ought to have

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 338.

courted investigation, when the charge of heresy had become associated with my name. I have felt that I had something else to do, than defend myself;--and, as to the interests of the truth, I have felt that it was not in the form of an exculpation of myself that I was to preach Christ crucified,--yet God may use what may be so regarded (but what I desire to see with a feeling in no respect personal) for his own glory in the Gospel; and therefore have I occupied a moment in explaining the principle of my past conduct, desiring thereby to remove any prejudice which any misapprehension of it might awaken in considering my present defence." His self-effacing humility in the light of the work of his parish, was again expressed in an impassioned plea before the Synod, "And O may God grant unto you all that in the Spirit of Him who is to come and reveal the righteous judgment of God--in the Spirit of Christ the judge, by the power of his Spirit, you may now judge righteous judgment, and give a decision which may go to settle the troubled waters of men's minds in this district of the Church, and more especially in the parish of Row; and give a judgment to strengthen the hands of a servant of Christ, that his heart faint not; because of the opposition of ungodly and ignorant men, that he may be strengthened to confess the truth, through your acknowledging the truth of what he preaches." This kind of concern is again expressed in the method of his writing the answers to the libel, which

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1 Lusk, Proceedings i p. 11.

2 Ibid ii p. 232.



is described in a letter to his father. He wrote, "It was not until I went to Edinburgh that I found that I would have to give in written answers. On finding this I immediately returned home. The Lord gave me abundance of scribes to act the part of amanuenses, and it was a great saving of fatigue; and in little more than Friday and Monday--for I went to meet Roy and Penney to Glasgow on Saturday--I was enabled to give in answers amounting to one hundred and eighty-one pages." <sup>1</sup> In a second letter, on the same day, he wrote, "You will conceive how accurately I was enabled to dictate when I tell you that, excepting a few sheets copied at first, it was the first copy that I gave in. Indeed, I never almost altered a word even; and although these one hundred and eighty-one large pages were dictated in the little time which I mentioned to you, I do not know that there is one sentence in them which I could wish to alter. Truly the Lord is a very present help in time of trouble." <sup>2</sup> Campbell's young mind was so filled with the problems which concerned his people, and how he was attempting to answer them, that little pondering was required in the dictating of such a document as the answers.

In his volume of Reminiscences and Reflections, Campbell described the steps by which he came to teach as he did, and in each instance, we find that he was reacting to the needs of his congregation. Disturbed by the hypocritical attitude of his people, in prayer and

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1 Memorials p. 72.

2 Ibid p. 73.

in the working out of Christian principles in their lives, Campbell set out to raise their standard of belief and worship, but he discovered that this only led them more deeply into selfish thinking, striving to appear to attain the high standard which he demanded. Campbell wrote, "Meditating with prayer on this painful ministerial experience, I was gradually taught to see that so long as the individual is uncertain of being the subject of love to his God, and is still without any sure hold of his personal safety in the prospect of eternity, it is in vain to attempt to induce him to serve God under the power of any purer motive than the desire to win God's love for himself, and so to secure his own happiness; consequently, however high the standard, correspondence with it may be sought under the influence of mingled selfishness, making every apparent success only a deeper deception. And thus I was gradually led to entertain the doctrine commonly expressed by the words 'Assurance of Faith,' having first seen that the want of it precluded singleness of heart and eye in the service of God, and then having found in studying the Epistles to the first Christian Churches, that its existence, in those addressed, was in them taken for granted, and in every practical exhortation was presupposed. I accordingly began to urge on my own people, that in order to their being in a condition to act purely, under the influence of love to Him, and delight in what He is, their first step in religion would require to be, resting assured of his love in Christ to them as individuals, and of their individually having

eternal life given to them in Christ."<sup>1</sup> Campbell's compelling criterion in this, was that his people should learn to know and to perform the will of God. Where before, they had been willing to deceive themselves, they began to face the question of their relationship with God squarely, and to strive honestly to answer it.

In the first chapter of his book, Campbell referred to his empirical emphasis, when he wrote, "I believe that the atonement, related as it must needs be, retrospectively to the condition of evil from which it is the purpose of God to save us, and prospectively to the condition of good to which it is his purpose to raise us, will commend itself to our faith by the inherent light of its divine adaptation to accomplish all which it has been intended to accomplish."<sup>2</sup> Again, Campbell speaks of "an inability to believe in God's forgiveness as meeting man's need, when presented simply as clemency and mercy;-- but, presented in the form of the atonement, it is believed in. Not surely because less credit for love and mercy is given to God now;-- for on the contrary the conception of love simply forgiving, and of love forgiving at such a cost to itself, differ just in this, that in the latter, the love is infinitely enhanced."<sup>3</sup> With reference to man's attitude to repentance for sin, Campbell says, "That due repentance for sin, could such repentance indeed be, would expiate guilt, there is a strong testimony in the human heart, and so the first

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1 Reminiscences p. 18.

2 Campbell, The Nature p. 5.

3 Ibid p. 23.

attempt at peace with God, is an attempt at repentance,--which attempt, indeed, becomes less and less hopeful, the longer, and the more earnestly and honestly it is persevered in,--but this, not because it comes to be felt that a true repentance would be rejected even if attained, but because its attainment is despaired of,--all attempts at it being found, when taken to the divine light, and honestly judged in the sight of God, to be mere selfish attempts at something that promises safety,--not evil, indeed, in so far as they are instinctive efforts at self-preservation, but having nothing in them of the nature of a true repentance or a godly sorrow for sin or pure condemnation of it because of its own evil; nothing, in short, that is a judging sin and a confessing it in true sympathy with the divine judgment upon it. So that the words of Whitefield come to be deeply sympathised in, 'our repentance needeth to be repented of, and our very tears to be washed in the blood of Christ.' "

"One cause of the practical difficulty that is experienced in keeping our habitual thoughts and feelings in harmony with the perceptions of our most far-seeing moments, is this, that the world in which we are is actually a mixture of good and evil; that it presents neither the unmixed evil of which the Scriptures speak, and to which conscience testifies as man's sinful state, nor the unmixed good, which the Scriptures reveal, and which, in the light of conscience, we recognise as eternal life. We are not in a world yet unvisited by the grace of

God; on the contrary, we are encompassed by fruits of that very atonement in which we are called to believe.<sup>1</sup> Once more, Campbell approaches the question of relevance and empiricism, and in seeking to explain the retrospective aspect of the atonement, he supposes that one man had committed all the sin of mankind. "That we may fully realise what manner of an equivalent to the dishonour done to the law and name of God by sin, an adequate repentance and sorrow for sin must be, and how far more truly than any penal infliction such repentance and confession must satisfy divine justice, let us suppose that all the sin of humanity has been committed by one human spirit, on whom is accumulated this immeasurable amount of guilt, and let us suppose this spirit, loaded with all this guilt, to pass out of sin into holiness, and to become filled with the light of God, becoming perfectly righteous with God's own righteousness,--such a change, were such a change possible, would imply in the spirit so changed, a perfect condemnation of the past of its own existence, and an absolute and perfect repentance, a confession of its sin commensurate with its evil. If the sense of personal identity remained, it must be so."<sup>2</sup>

Such a question as, 'How do we know we are justified?' is implied, when Campbell says, "Our knowledge that we are justified should be of the same spiritual nature with the true knowledge that we are sinners, and be sought in that way of inference from the fact that we believe

1 Campbell, The Nature p. 17.

2 Ibid p. 145.

combined with the doctrine that those that believe are justified, to which men have had recourse and on which, indeed, they have necessarily been thrown when artificial conceptions of justification by faith have been adopted." <sup>1</sup> With reference to the matter of intercessional prayer, he says, "When we consider Christ's hope for man as taking the form of intercession, and see that His knowledge of the Father's will is so far from suggesting an inactive waiting in the expectation that all will necessarily be as the Father wills, that on the contrary, that knowledge only moves to earnest pleading and entreaty,--the hope cherished seeking to realise itself by laying hold in a way of prayerful trust on that in the heart of the Father by which it is encouraged,-- then the difficulty that always haunts us as to the ordinance of prayer-- the difficulty, I mean, of the idea of God's interposing prayer between His own loving desire for us and the fulfilment of that desire instead of fulfilling that desire without waiting to be entreated--this difficulty is felt to be present with our minds in this highest region in which the Son is represented as by prayer, and intense and earnest and agonising prayer, obtaining for us from the Father what the Father has infinitely desired to give--what He has given in giving Him to us as our Redeemer to whose intercession it is yielded. Here we have the divine love in Christ pleading with the divine love in the Father, and thus obtaining for us that eternal life, which yet in giving the Son to be our Saviour, the Father is truly said to have given." <sup>2</sup>

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 223.

2 Ibid p. 232.

Finally, Campbell particularly censured the thought that belief in God's Eternal Decrees meant that the work of Christ was a mere playing out of a preconceived and prearranged course of events, which rendered meaningless man's personal experience of the love and care of Christ. "We are," he says, "so much in the way of looking on the work of Christ as the acting out of a pre-arranged plan, that its character as a natural progress and development, in which one thing arises out of another, and is really caused by that other, is with difficulty realised. Yet we must get deliverance from this temptation,--the painful temptation to think of Christ's work as almost a scenic representation,--otherwise we never can have the consciousness of getting the true knowledge of eternal realities from the atonement. All light of life for us disappears from the life of Christ unless that life be to us a life indeed, and not the mere acting of an assigned part. Unless we realise that in very truth Christ loved us as He did Himself, we cannot understand how near an approach to a personal feeling there has been in His feeling of our sins, and of our misery as sinners." "It is the tendency to deal with God as a fate and with the accomplishment of the high designs of His grace for man simply as the coming to pass of predetermined events which is the real source of our difficulty in regard to prayer as a law and power in the kingdom of God; whether we think of it contemplating its place in the history of our redemption as the intercession of Christ,

or as an element in our own life of sonship through Christ. In consequence of that tendency, 'asking things according to the will of God' comes to sound like asking God to do what He intended to do,—a manner of prayer for which we have no light,—as it is a manner of prayer, indeed, which would be felt to be superseded by that very light as to the future which would make it possible. But God is not revealed to our faith as a fate, neither is His will set down before us as a decree of destiny. God is revealed to us as the living God, and His will as the desire and choice of a living heart, which presents to us not the image or picture of a predetermined course of events to the predestined flow of which our prayer is to be an Amen, but a moral and spiritual choice in relation to us His offspring to which our prayer is to respond in what will be in us the cry of a moral and spiritual choice.<sup>1</sup>"

Our comparison of Campbell's early teaching and its development may serve to show something of the depth and complexity of these two stages in his life. The early teaching emerges out of a charge of heresy and his sustained attempt to defend himself against the deposition which resulted, despite these zealous efforts. The developed teaching, on the other hand, represents an attempt to view the essential nature of the atonement in all its aspects, considering in great detail, the views which Campbell felt were inadequate, and propounding his own teaching with particular care.

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1 Campbell, The Nature. p. 238.



We have found that, in general, Campbell has not moved far from his original position, during the quarter century between our two studies. Demanding still the universal nature of Christ's work, as he does the assurance of one's faith, Campbell latterly presents his doctrine of universal pardon in terms of an objective aspect of the atonement. His insistence upon seeing the relationship between Christ and God as filial rather than legal, and upon seeing our own relationship with God in the same light, remains as firm as the consistent application of his theology to an empirical situation.

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### CONCLUSION

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... especially expressed by Dr. J. B. ...  
 ... Lectures of 1873, where he ...  
 ... theory, shows only ...  
 ... the ...

## CHAPTER X

## The Principle Features of Campbell's Thought

Principal John Dickie succinctly summarises the relationship of criticism to Campbell's theology when he writes, "The outstanding merits of Dr. Campbell's treatise were recognised by the discerning from the very first. But naturally enough it was some considerable time before its influence began to permeate the theological public generally."<sup>1</sup> Some ministers and theologians of the church readily saw in Campbell's life and work, and especially in the Nature of the Atonement, a greatness which was both intellectual and spiritual while others were prepared to go far towards denying this. For example, a representative of the Free Church, while admitting that there was "a surface attractiveness about McLeod Campbell, both personally and religiously," came to the conclusion that "the undivided Scottish Church was on the whole wisely guided in 1831, when it rid itself of John McLeod Campbell and his 'spurious evangelic<sup>alism</sup>,'"<sup>2</sup> by deposing him from the ministry." A similar judgment is emphatically expressed by Dr. A. B. Bruce, in the Cunningham Lectures of 1875, where he described Campbell's doctrine as an 'eccentric theory,' whose only value was that "it asserts, with even extravagant emphasis, the subjective self-imputation of sin to Himself by Christ, as a thing inevitable to one minded as He was."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Dickie, J. 'The Organism of Christian Truth' London: Clarke, 1930.

2 Ibid p. 259. p. 258.

3 Bruce, A.B. 'The Humiliation of Christ' Edinburgh: Clark, 1876. p.356.

"The theory has been treated by critics of all schools as the eccentricity of a devout author, who, dissatisfied with the traditional theory, has substituted in its place another, involving not only greater difficulty, but even something very like absurdity."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, such radical and extreme criticisms are more than outweighed by the comments and opinions of those who, in the fuller perspective of time, were able to assess not only Campbell's work but also the reaction of the church towards it. Indeed, H. F. Henderson insists, concerning the 1831 deposition, that "the Church of Scotland was heartily ashamed."<sup>2</sup> Writing in 1925, Principal Cairns testifies in these words regarding the Nature of the Atonement, "If there is one book in Scottish theology that probably more than any other has come to its own in the forty intervening years, it is precisely this volume. All types of theology, evangelical and sacerdotal alike, have recognised this, and this strange, obscure, but profoundly spiritual book has probably had a deeper and more widespread influence on later thinking<sup>3</sup> in Scotland on its great theme than any other book in the language." In almost every serious work on the doctrine of the atonement during the past one hundred years, due credit has been given to Campbell and to the particular teaching which has made his name famous, especially in Britain, but also on the continent of Europe and in America. In 1890, in Germany, Otto Pfleiderer considered Campbell's theology "the

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1 Bruce, The Humiliation p. 355.

2 Henderson, H.F. 'The Religious Controversies of Scotland' Edinburgh: Clark, 1905. p. 198.

3 Cairns, D.S. 'Life & Times of A.R. Macewen' London: H. & S., 1925. p. 81.

best contribution to dogmatics which British theology has produced in the present century. That the Scottish Church rejected and thrust out from its midst, in the person of Campbell, this line of theological thought, was the heaviest blow that it could inflict upon itself; thereby it arrested its healthy development for more than half a century.<sup>1</sup> Professor Denney regarded Campbell's work as an original contribution to doctrinal theology, and in concluding his appreciation of it, he wrote, "Of all the books that have ever been written on the atonement, as God's way of reconciling man to Himself, McLeod Campbell's is probably that which is most completely inspired by the spirit of the truth with which it deals. There is a reconciling power of Christ in it to which no tormented conscience can be insensible. The originality of it is spiritual as well as intellectual, and no one who has ever felt its power will cease to put it in a class by itself. In speculative power he cannot be compared to Schleiermacher, nor in historical learning to Ritschl, and sometimes he writes as badly as either; but he walks in the light all the time, and everything he touches lives."<sup>2</sup> Professor A. B. Macaulay maintains, "A nobler book on the Death of Christ than the Nature of the Atonement has, in my judgment, never been written in any age or language."<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter, it is not the intention of the present writer to come to the defence of Campbell and his theological position. During

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1 Pfleiderer, O. 'The Development of Theology' London: Sonnenschein, 1890. p.378.  
 2 Denney, J. 'The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation' London: H&S, 1917. 120.  
 3 Macaulay, A.B. 'The Death of Jesus' London: H&S, 1938. p. vii.

the century since the publication of his masterly treatise, many have praised and criticized him; scholars of greater and lesser note have attacked and defended him and it is not the purpose of this work either to repeat or to summarize these arguments. The man whose teaching has here been studied and discussed stands in a class by himself. His theology sprang from the very centre of his being; out of his own experience as pastor, and from his study of the Scriptures, he preached and taught and wrote, and in the forty years following his deposition he remained peculiarly close to his mother church, the Church of Scotland. He bore no malice toward her, but only a certain sadness and loneliness at the separation, for as Dr. Leckie concluded, "In order to think of Campbell worthily, we must think of him as a man whom disappointment could not embitter or loneliness dismay; who owed little to the world or to the Church that rejected him, yet repaid contumely and ostracism by the bestowal of a great religious treasure; who, though an intellectual and spiritual aristocrat, conscious of a lofty calling, yet accepted an obscure task and pursued it to the end with a certain proud humility."<sup>1</sup>

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At the end of his chapter on the teaching of Luther, Campbell refers to a serious charge which had been levelled against Luther, into which Campbell himself could not help but enter. This charge concerned the relation between Christ and the sins of mankind, and Campbell concludes, "What the truth of the case has been ... Luther's words,

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1 Expository Times XL p. 203.

2 Campbell, The Nature p. 32.

as he has written, do not make us to know; ... for interpreted according to their plain grammatical meaning, the words by which he expresses Christ's relation to our sins cannot be true. His use of them is, therefore, not to be defended. Yet shall we suffer loss if we allow ourselves to suppose that as used by a man of so much spiritual insight as Luther they had not a meaning at once true and important.<sup>1</sup> It is with this attitude of mind that the present writer has approached this concluding chapter. It may be true that Campbell's teaching is open to criticisms of obscurity and over-elaboration, (Campbell's father once complained, 'Man, you have a queer way of putting things.'<sup>2</sup>) but our aim is to assess positively the value of Campbell's life and thought.

In pursuit of this aim it is perhaps helpful to look finally, in this chapter, at a broad threefold division. First, in Campbell's theology, four principle features are selected and these will be stated and summarized. Secondly, these features will be reviewed by tracing them in the teaching of other theologians and in particular two outstanding Scottish theologians of the present century, James Denney and Donald Baillie. Thirdly, these features will be considered against the background of the present situation in the world, keeping firmly in mind that our study is of Campbell, for we will look at the present only in terms of the continuing relevance of Campbell's thought and of our continuing debt to him.

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 48.

2 Expository Times XL p. 202.

## I

Let us turn first to a summary of the four principle features of Campbell's theology.

The first and most important feature in Campbell's life and thought is his emphasis upon the fatherhood of God. The careful reader of his work cannot but feel himself drawn into the presence of God the Father for Campbell pointed always to the perfect father and son relationship which existed between Jesus and His Father and he consistently maintained that the whole purpose of the work of Christ was that all mankind might join this heavenly family as sons of God. "Let us think," says Campbell, "of Christ as the Son who reveals the Father, that we may know the Father's heart against which we have sinned, ... and understand that the grace of God ... restores to our orphan spirits their Father and to the Father of spirits His lost children." Campbell was most emphatic in stating that this fatherhood in God was not a result or development of the atoning work of Christ; rather, the atonement originated in that fatherhood. Far from seeing Christ as dealing with an angry God, Campbell sees in the cross, "the love of the Father of our spirits going forth after us, His alienated children, lost to Him, dead to Him through sin, and desiring to be able to say of each one of us, 'My son was dead and is alive again, He was lost and is found.' "

At the same time, Campbell has not allowed his thinking about the

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 171.

2 Ibid p. 338.



fatherly love of God to become a mere indulgence for mankind. Fatherliness does not mean easiness or moral weakness, but rather Campbell insists that since the fatherliness in God had been sinned against, "the Father's heart did demand the shedding of blood in order to the remission of sins."<sup>1</sup> The atonement which God the Father demanded is the very antithesis of easiness and weakness, and indicates rather the seriousness of the Father's judgment against sin. Coupled with his rejection of moral weakness in God is Campbell's rejection of the divine impassibility. For Campbell, the atonement means to show that God is a suffering Father, suffering because by His nature He cannot be indulgent of man's sin. Consistency is one of the essential terms in Campbell's thinking of God, that is, all attributes of God must be compatible one with another, just and merciful, righteous and loving, "a just God and a Saviour; not as the harmony of a seeming opposition, but 'a Saviour,' because 'a just God.'<sup>2</sup> "

The second main feature in Campbell's thought is his replacing the doctrine of the incarnation at the core of man's salvation. The church of Campbell's day laid the greater emphasis upon the atonement, leaving the incarnation to be but a necessary preliminary to the atoning death. Evidently the church followed the teaching of Calvin at this point, which said that pardon was grounded in "the whole life of Christ," but salvation is ascribed "peculiarly and specially to the death of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 185.

2 Ibid p. 31.

3 Calvin, J. 'Institutes of the Christian Religion' trans. by Henry Beveridge. London: Clarke, 1953. vol. I p. 437.

Reacting strongly against this, Campbell maintains that the incarnation is "the primary and highest fact in the history of God's relation to man, in the light of which God's interest in man and purpose for man can alone be truly seen."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Campbell goes on to say that, assuming the incarnation and seeing Christ in perfect Sonship to God and perfect brotherhood to man, "the incarnation has appeared developing itself naturally and necessarily as the atonement."<sup>2</sup> This emphasis upon the incarnation is amply illustrated in Campbell's life and thought by looking at the empirical framework in which he always worked. Whatever he preached or wrote was done with a view to its becoming incarnate in the lives of those who heard or read. "I believe," says Campbell meaningfully, "that Christianity has its highest and ultimate evidence in what it is."<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, an important feature in Campbell's life and thought concerns his attack upon the use of the Westminster Confession of Faith as alone the proof of orthodoxy and heresy. During the trials of 1830 and 1831, Campbell maintained zealously that the Church ought not to try him by the Confession, rather, he insisted that the charges and evidence must be taken to the Scriptures alone for proof as truth or untruth. In explaining his teaching to the courts, Campbell supported every point with a number of passages taken from the Bible, while he refused to defend himself against the charge of holding views contrary

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. xiii.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid p. xii.

to the Confession, "inasmuch as I hold that no man is entitled to call another a heretic except upon the ground that what he teaches is distinctly opposed to the word of God." <sup>1</sup> Especially, Campbell attacked the Confessional doctrine of election as it was generally understood to mean that before the creation of the world, some were set apart for salvation and others for damnation. Consistent with his beliefs about God, Campbell refused to accept the view that God acted toward some people differently from others for arbitrary reasons. He admitted that God might perform any act without man's knowledge or understanding but, if God did perform such an act, man could not know anything about God's character thereby. If the work of the atonement is a manifestation of the character of God, as Campbell believed it was, then it cannot at the same time be an arbitrary action like that implied in the doctrine of election. In 1856, Campbell reaffirmed his doctrine of the universality of the atonement, although he refrained from any further direct attack upon the Confession of Faith.

The fourth and final feature in Campbell's theology concerns the nature of the atonement as objective and subjective. Campbell maintained repeatedly that in the atonement something was done for all mankind, something which was independent of the will or desire or knowledge or consent of man. That is, God acted in history in a way which was valid for all, whether or not they knew it or appreciated it. This objective nature of the atonement was particularly expressed during the trials

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1 Lusk, Proceedings ii p. 198.

on the question of pardon or forgiveness, where Campbell insisted that every man had been forgiven. Using the word 'forgive' to mean that there was no barrier between man and God which prevented inter-communion, Campbell asserted that whatever barrier had been built up by man in his selfish sinfulness, had been crushed by God in the atoning work of Christ. Man's greatest need, for Campbell, was to realize this fact and to accept the consequences of it, but nevertheless, the objective act had been accomplished. In his book, Campbell discusses the objective nature of the universal act of atonement under the sub-heading of Christ dealing with God on behalf of man, which he describes as Christ repenting and confessing for mankind. From within humanity, Christ responded to the wrath of God against sin, by offering a perfect sorrow and repentance and confession and intercession; and these alone can satisfy the divine justice which has been sinned against. Perhaps the most important aspect of this objective nature of the universal act of atonement concerns Campbell's insistence upon the fact that God Himself made the atonement rather than that He was moved by it. "An atonement to make God gracious, to move him to compassion, to turn his heart toward those from whom sin had alienated his love, it would, indeed, be difficult to believe in; for, if it were needed it would be impossible ... But the Scriptures do not speak of such an atonement; for they do not represent the love of God to man as the effect, and the atonement of Christ as the cause, but,--just the contrary--they represent the love of God as the cause, and the atonement as the effect."

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 1 Campbell, The Nature p. 20.

Furthermore, although Campbell insisted that the reality of the atonement did not depend upon any belief or action in man, he insisted equally that the purpose of the atonement was frustrated for any individual if he failed to accept it as applying to him and if he failed to commit himself to a specific way of life as a result of it. The whole purpose of God's act of atonement, the purpose of Christ's sacrificial work, was that the elements of atonement which were in Christ should be reproduced in mankind. The perfect sorrow, repentance, confession and intercession of the Saviour were to be reproduced in the world he came to save, that is, Christ's atonement was "not merely as a light condemning our darkness, but as the intended light of life <sup>1</sup> for us." Thus Campbell declares that God's gift to us in Christ is "that the perfect righteousness of the Son of God in humanity is itself the gift of God to us in Christ--to be ours as Christ is ours,--to be partaken in as He is partaken in,--to be our life as He is our <sup>2</sup> life." In his definition of faith, Campbell again urges this point when he says, "The Amen of the individual human spirit to the Amen of the Son to the mind of the Father in relation to man, is saving faith--true righteousness; being the living action, and true and right movement of the spirit of the individual man in the light of eternal <sup>3</sup> life."

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1 Campbell, The Nature p. 152.

2 Ibid p. 154.

3 Ibid p. 226.

## II

Let us now review these four principle features in Campbell's theology by comparing them with, and tracing them in, the work of more recent theologians and, in particular, Denney and Baillie.

Concerning the fatherhood of God, Principal D. S. Cairns makes this telling statement, "We know with security that something absolutely new emerges here in history in this man of Nazareth. 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son.' That is a unique saying. He does not say 'No man knoweth God save the Son.' That would be to deny the truth of the Old Testament revelation. What He does say is that He alone has a deeper secret, the essential Fatherhood of the Sovereign Power."<sup>1</sup>

Baillie declares that forgiveness "comes from the heart of a love that has borne our sins, and because the love is infinite, the passion is infinite too."... "There is an atonement, an expiation, in the heart of God Himself, and out of this comes the forgiveness of our sins."<sup>2</sup>

Again, Professor J. M. Shaw uses words which might have come from the very lips of Campbell, "Love, Father-love, the outgoing self-imparting, self-communicating affection--the going out of the Divine Father-heart after those made in His own image as His children, seeking to impart or communicate Himself and all good to them, and seeking in turn to possess them for His own in filial fellowship and service--such is the central essential attribute of God as Jesus has revealed Him to us."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Cairns, D.S. 'The Riddle of the World' London: S.C.M., 1937. p. 321.

2 Baillie, D.M. 'God was in Christ' London: Faber, 1948. p. 174.

3 Shaw J.M. 'Christian Doctrine' London: Lutterworth, 1953. p. 30.

Supporting Campbell's rejection of moral weakness and impassibility in God, Baillie says, "There is some truth in the widespread modern tendency to modify the impassibility doctrine. Perhaps we can conserve both sides of the truth by saying, paradoxically, that while there is suffering (for human sin) in the life of God, it is eternally swallowed up in victory and blessedness, and that is how God 'expiates' our sins, as only God could do."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, both Denney and Baillie support Campbell in his demand for consistency in our understanding of God. Denney writes, "God must act in consistency with His whole character."<sup>2</sup> "There is not in Christian experience any antagonism between justice and mercy; they are in active and immutable harmony with each other, and God always--not merely in forgiving sins--acts in unison with both. Mercy and justice do not need to be reconciled, for they are never at war. The true opposite of justice is not mercy, but injustice, with which God can have nothing to do either in reconciliation or in any other of his works."<sup>3</sup> Baillie asserts, "Throughout the whole of this New Testament material there is no trace of any contrast between the wrath of God and the love of Christ, or of the idea that God's attitude to sinners had to be changed by the sacrifice of Christ from wrath and injustice to love and mercy."<sup>4</sup>

Turning to the question of incarnation and atonement, we find that Denney and Baillie differ from one another in their understanding of it.

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1 Baillie, God was in Christ p. 199.

2 Denney, J. 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind' London:H&S,1903.p.82.

3 Denney, The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation' p. 22.

4 Baillie, God was in Christ p. 186.

Denney, in spite of his profound respect for Campbell and his theology, opposes him in this matter because for Denney the redemption of mankind lies in the atoning death of Christ. "Christ did not come into the world to be a good man: it was not for this that a body was prepared for Him. He came to be a great High Priest, and the body was prepared for Him that by the offering of it He might put sinful men for ever into the perfect religious relation to God." "It is the Atonement which explains the Incarnation: the Incarnation takes place in order that the sin of the world may be put away by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Denney concludes, "It is the more necessary to insist on this point of view because there is in some quarters a strong tendency to put the Atonement out of its place, and to concentrate attention on the Incarnation as something which can be appreciated in entire independence of it." Undoubtedly it was this latter tendency which brought Denney to emphasize the atonement and to reject Campbell's emphasis upon the work of incarnation. On the other hand, Baillie follows Campbell precisely by holding the two doctrines to be of equal importance and to be equally necessary one to the other, as he explains, "The men who shaped the tradition and wrote the story down in the four Gospels devoted an altogether disproportionate amount of their space to the passion and death of their Master, because to them and their fellow-Christians this was of supreme importance. But they

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1 Denney, J. 'The Death of Christ' London: H.&S., 1902. p. 234.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid p. 320.



also took a great deal of trouble to prepare for that climax by giving vivid and elaborate reminiscences of the words and deeds of Jesus throughout His public career, as these had been preserved in the tradition, because the meaning of the Cross could not be understood without some knowledge and understanding of the person who died on it.<sup>1</sup> Baillie concludes by pressing the importance of the incarnation, and adding that "more than the Incarnation was needed to awaken in us sinful men and women the sense of that paradox of grace. It is because the religion of the Incarnation became also the religion of Atonement that it has been able to do this."<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the Westminster Confession of Faith, it would be difficult to find a modern theologian who would go so far as to regard the Confession as a proof of heresy and orthodoxy. During the century since Campbell's time, the Confession itself has remained virtually unchanged in content though there has been much change in the Church's interpretation of it. This development has been summed up in these words. "In Scotland, the adoptive home of the Confession, the forces of religious conservatism have combined with an intelligent appreciation of its solid worth and Scriptural foundation to retain it well-nigh inviolate as the symbol of every branch of the divided Church. By varying formulae of subscription in the National Church, and by declaratory acts or statements in the Free Churches, a modicum of relief

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1 Baillie, God was in Christ p. 180.

2 Ibid p. 202.

has been sought for tender consciences. In the Church of Scotland the earlier formulae of 1694 and 1711, which declared the signatory's belief in the whole doctrine of the Confession, and that of 1889, which omitted the word 'whole,' were mitigated by a declaration appointed in 1903 to be read publicly before subscription, to the effect that the Confession 'is to be regarded as an infallible rule of faith and worship only in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit,' replaced in 1910 by a formula framed with the concurrent authority of Parliament: 'I hereby subscribe the Confession of Faith, declaring that I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained therein.' <sup>1</sup> "

Moreover, this attitude of freedom of interpretation can be traced in some references to the Westminster Confession which we find in the work of modern theologians. Denney, for example, suggests that the Confession "evades" the disturbing problem of conciliating "the love of God---this absolutely free grace---with the doctrine that Christ merited for us forgiveness of sins." <sup>2</sup> Also he does not seem to hesitate to accuse the Westminster Divines, in the doctrine of human depravity, of coming "at least perilously near" to excluding the very possibility of redemption. <sup>3</sup> Again, Denney is critical of the Confessional doctrine of election when he suggests that the salvation

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1 Curtis, W.A. 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics' edited by James Hastings. Edinburgh: Clark, 1910. vol. III p. 878.

2 Denney, The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation p. 101.

3 Ibid p. 199.

of infants is "a blank mystery to the Westminster Assembly."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, we find that A. B. Macaulay opposes the doctrines of the Confession on at least two points. Implicit in his remarks concerning the doctrine of election is his own rejection of the literal interpretation of it,<sup>2</sup> while more explicitly he points out the error in the Confessional Christology.<sup>3</sup> Dr. J. K. Mozley suggests that "the rigid doctrine of election and reprobation, which the Westminster Confession inherited from Calvin and shared with other confessions of faith ... was increasingly felt to be at variance with the New Testament Gospel of the love of God manifested in the incarnation and cross of His Son."<sup>4</sup> Finally, Mozley quoted Professor Curtis, who said that, in detail, the doctrine of the Westminster Confession "can no longer be claimed to represent the spontaneous beliefs of the great majority of our teachers and preachers."<sup>5</sup> These illustrations support our contention that modern theologians do not hold the Westminster Confession to be an inviolable document in the same sense as that held by the Church of Campbell's day.

In reviewing the question of objectivity and subjectivity in Denney and Baillie, we find again that Denney tends to oppose Campbell while Baillie supports the paradoxical doctrine which Campbell has put forward. For Denney, the atonement was a work performed by God, not

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1 Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* p. 217.

2 Macaulay, *The Death of Jesus* p. 23.

3 *Ibid* p. 52.

4 Mozley, J.K. 'Some Tendencies in British Theology' London:SPCK, 1951.

5 *Ibid* p. 146.

p. 103.

a continuing work but a finished one, as when he says, "The work of reconciling is one in which the initiative is taken by God, and the cost borne by Him; men are reconciled in the passive, or allow themselves to be reconciled, or receive the reconciliation. We never read that God has been reconciled. God does the work of reconciliation in or through Christ, and especially through His death."<sup>1</sup>

"Reconciliation is not something which is doing; it is something which is done. No doubt there is a work of Christ which is in process, but it has as its basis a finished work of Christ; it is in virtue of something already consummated on His cross that Christ is able to make the appeal to us which He does, and to win the response in which we receive the reconciliation."<sup>2</sup> "It is not in something Christ would fain do that we see His love, it is in something He has already done; nay, it is only through what He has already done that we can form any idea, or come to any conviction, of what He would fain do."<sup>3</sup> For Denney, the atonement is "a finished work of Christ, a work finished in His death, something done in regard to sin once for all, whether any given soul responds to it or not."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, although Denney has been put forward by some as a representative of the Anselmian penal-substitutionary school of thought on the atonement,<sup>5</sup> there is some support in Denney's work for the subjective aspect of

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1 Denney, The Death of Christ p. 143.

2 Ibid p. 146.

3 Ibid p. 147.

4 Ibid p. 225.

5 vide Mozley, J.K. 'The Doctrine of the Atonement' London: Duckworth, 1915. p. 180.

the atonement which Campbell sought to emphasize, as for example, Denney wrote, "If the atonement were not, to begin with, outside us-- if it were not in that sense objective, a finished work in which God in Christ makes a final revelation of Himself in relation to sinners and sin--in other words, if Christ could not be conceived in it as our substitute, given by God to do in our place what we could not do for ourselves, there would be no way of recognising or preaching or receiving it as a motive; while, on the other hand, if it did not operate as a motive, if it did not appeal to sinful men in such a way as to draw them into a moral fellowship with Christ--in other words, if Christ did not under it become representative of us, our surety to God that we should yet be even as He in relation to God and to sin, we could only say that it had all been in vain." <sup>1</sup> Although Denney's first emphasis is upon the objective nature of the atonement, this passage clearly shows that, for Denney, the atonement must be subjectively conceived and received if it is to be valid in any person's life.

Looking at Baillie's work, we find that, consistent with his paradoxical theology, he insists that the objective nature of the atonement can only be properly considered along with its subjective nature, for he says, "It is wholesome to be reminded that God is an objective reality. Yet we cannot know God by studying Him as an object of which we can speak in the third person, in an 'I-It' relationship, from a spectator-attitude. He eludes all our words and categories.

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1 Denney, The Atonement and the Modern Mind p. 101.

We cannot objectify or conceptualize Him. When we try, we fall immediately into contradiction ... The answer is ... a theology of paradox.<sup>1</sup> "What, then," asks Baillie, "is the divine Atonement, which is thus both historical and eternal? Is it an 'objective' reality, something done by Christ, something ordained and accepted by God, in 'expiation' of human sin, quite apart from our knowledge of it and its effect upon us? Or is it a 'subjective' process, a reconciling of us to God through a persuasion in our hearts that there is no obstacle, a realizing of His eternal love? Surely these two aspects cannot be separated at all, though the attempt has often been made to classify atonement-theories in that way. In theological argument on this subject we are apt to forget that we are dealing with a realm of personal relationships and nothing else."<sup>2</sup> "The love of God dealing with the sin of the world and overcoming it as only love can do ... is the 'objective' work of atonement. But since it is neither a 'material' nor a 'legal' victory, neither a battle conducted outside human life altogether nor a transaction completed as it were behind our backs or before we were born, but a spiritual process in the realm of personal relationships, the objective work cannot be separated from its subjective aspect by which it becomes a reality in the hearts and lives of men."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Baillie, God was in Christ p. 108,

2 Ibid p. 197.

3 Ibid p. 200.

## III

Finally, let us consider these important features of Campbell's theology in the light of the present situation seeking to establish the true value of Campbell's life and thought for our own day.

Concerning the fatherhood of God, we live to-day in a radically different age from that of John McLeod Campbell, for when Campbell wrote and preached, it was against a background of rigid Calvinism and a defiant adherence to the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith. For most churchmen of that day, God was above all to be feared, to be looked upon as a logically consistent judge whose every judgment was honesty and truth. If we were able to ask them specifically concerning the fatherhood of God, we would undoubtedly be assured that such an aspect of God's character did exist, although it was dangerously like Arminianism to say so. Thus, Campbell's theology at this point was considered to be an extremely dangerous one, which led him eventually into heretical beliefs. To-day, the majority of churchmen, recognizing the truth and significance of the emphasis which Campbell sought to introduce, make God's fatherhood the chief concern of their thoughts about Him, while His justice and judgment hold a derivative place in their thinking. At the same time, we must agree with Campbell in insisting that this latter side of God's nature is only neglected at our peril.

So much has this climate of opinion changed in the past one hundred years, that most of the world is now taken up with a parallel thought,

namely, the brotherhood of men. Particularly in this country and on the North American continent, people have begun to take seriously a concern for the well-being of others. One obvious illustration of this concern is the increasing number of what are called 'service' clubs which are coming into existence, that is, groups of men and women, some inside the churches but many more outside, who recognize that all men are, in some sense, brothers, and whose objective is service to handicapped and poverty-stricken peoples. While it may be true to say that many of them lack any corporate understanding of God and of His fatherhood, for which Campbell so earnestly fought, we have here an indication of the change in the world's thinking. Even at the most secular level, brotherhood implies some kind of fatherhood, and this implication is virtually accepted by all in this and many other countries.

In fact, this change in emphasis in our understanding of God is so complete, that one cannot avoid speculating on what Campbell's reactions would be, were he alive to-day. All his work in the early nineteenth century stemmed from a deep concern that people should understand his emphasis upon the justice and judgment of God as being integral to His fatherhood. Campbell's purpose was to preach the whole message of God's will for mankind, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Thus, it may well be that, with the emphasis of certain present-day opinions



tending toward a gratuitous universalism, Campbell might now change his emphasis and become again the prophet of the Lord condemning, not the severity of belief in God as a legal judge, but the easiness of belief in an indulgent fatherliness in God.

Concerning the relative significance of the doctrines of incarnation and atonement, we are again contending with a different climate of opinion in the church to-day. Campbell was struggling against a church which dwelt much upon the death of Christ, in which the tendency was to see the whole of Jesus' life as a mere prologue to the real work which He came to do, namely to die. Some insisted that, from the beginning of his life's work, Jesus knew that he would have to die, and purposely acted in such a way as would lead him to the cross, so that the death upon Calvary was looked upon almost as an end in itself, bringing about the salvation of mankind. The incarnation and atonement were considered to be separate actions, the former of which was only a necessary preliminary, a setting of the stage, for the latter.

To-day, this opinion in the church is also largely reversed; not that the atonement has lost its significance but that the atonement is seen as part of the total revelation of God which we normally call the incarnation. To attempt to speak of an atonement apart from the incarnation would be just as inadequate as to refer to an incarnation while neglecting the significant work of God which we describe as the atonement. The church has on the whole come to hold Campbell's

position of demanding both the incarnation and the atonement as of supreme significance for the salvation of mankind, and with Campbell our present-day emphasis is upon the incarnation.

The Christian church to-day is a gathering of people whose great concern is for 'action,' who are just as anxious about the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount as that of the Passion Narrative; the present emphasis is upon salvation in the whole of life, political, economic and social, as well as in the narrowly so-called spiritual life. This conviction, that the Christian religion must be made incarnate in the world, is especially evident in Scotland in the work of the Iona Community; and there are similar groups emerging in this and other countries, such as the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York, the Sheffield Industrial Parish, and certain Worker Priest Movements in France and other European countries.

The Christian to-day is becoming more concerned with how his faith is changing his relationships with people day by day, at home and at work; this he sees as flowing from belief in the incarnate Word of God, the will of God being worked out in the shops and streets, in factories and in family life. All this may be emerging without any awareness of a particular concern for the individual's relationship with Christ through His atoning work, although most would admit that the commitment of one's life to this latter belief is essential to the faithful exercise of faith. In actual practice, the work of the atonement is more taken for granted than specifically studied and applied to life.

Campbell was speaking a new word to his own day when he said that the incarnation required a more urgent emphasis from church people, whereas to-day, we are more inclined to take the incarnation seriously to such an extent that we may be in danger of neglecting our appreciation and understanding of the atonement and the whole doctrinal basis of salvation. This latter charge could never have been made against the church of a century ago.

In 1831, the church declared that the proof of heresy and orthodoxy in the matter of doctrine lay in the Westminster Confession; indeed, many who opposed Campbell insisted that no other proof was necessary. Campbell had denied that he could be ultimately condemned by the Confession alone, which fact by itself was sufficient evidence for his deposition. On the other hand, Campbell insisted that there was only one ground of appeal regarding heresy and orthodoxy, namely, the Bible. Consistent with his view of the centrality of the Bible in his study and preaching, Campbell demanded that every doctrine suspected of heresy be compared with the Bible and the Bible alone.

Most churchmen to-day, would reject both of these standards as being alone the ultimate proof of heresy and orthodoxy. Campbell's was a day of divisions in the church, when individuals were struggling against the inroads of other religious bodies, when, for example, one learned clergyman told Campbell that his doctrines would be acceptable in the Church of England. "Let him go to England and preach it," he

said, "and we may bid him God speed."<sup>1</sup> By contrast, we live now in an age of uniting churches in which the divided church in many lands is seeking to heal her divisions and in doing so is often willing to overlook differences of doctrinal interpretation which were considered more dogmatically in a former day. As an example, we need simply compare the Westminster Confession of Faith with the 'Faith of the Church' of the Church of South India, which demands an acceptance of the Old and New Testaments "as containing all things necessary to salvation," the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed "as witnessing to and safeguarding that faith" and the belief in "Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity."<sup>2</sup>

In the Church of Scotland to-day, such a proof of heresy and orthodoxy as Campbell saw in the Bible and as the Church saw in the Confession simply does not exist. The Westminster Confession is still binding upon every minister as the confession of his faith, although it is explicitly stated that ministers have some freedom of interpretation in the matter. At the licensing of probationers in the Church of Scotland, the Moderator declares, "The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard the Westminster Confession of Faith, recognizing liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the Bible and the Confession are documents which may be interpreted in such a way as to form the basis

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1 Memorials i p. 79.

2 'The Constitution of the Church of South India' Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1952. p. 4.

3 'Ordinal and Service Book' London: Oxford Press, 1954. p. 4.

of a proof against heresy but they are not that proof according to the understanding of Campbell and the Church of 1831.

There are some in the Church of Scotland who suggest from time to time that the Confession of Faith should be revised because of objections which are raised against antiquated expressions of thought which are no longer meaningful or acceptable to the majority in the Church to-day. In the past, such attempts have been defeated since, in the Westminster Confession, the doctrines of the Church are outlined in a document of matchless logic and consistency, and at the same time, freedom is permitted to each individual in his understanding of any but the fundamental doctrines according to the Word of God, interpreted by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the definition of 'the fundamental doctrines' is not stated but is left to the judgment of "the Church itself."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. James Brown suggests that "orthodoxy is a hardening of a particular answer or interpretation of the Christian answer to man's existential situation in terms of a situation which is no longer our situation."<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, there will always be a conflict between the necessary 'hardening' of any interpretation of the Christian faith and the necessary freedom of man's spirit. The tragedy is that, in this conflict, individuals will from time to time be called upon to suffer, but through such suffering doctrinal truth is safe-guarded on

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1 Ordinal and Service Book p. 4.

2 Brown, J. 'Subject and Object in Modern Theology' London: S. C. M., 1955. p. 208.

the one hand and a deeper awareness of truth is made possible in the individual human spirit.

Finally, the question of subjectivity and objectivity, with regard to the atonement, is one which vexed certain people in the church in Campbell's day and remains a troubling question to-day. Formerly, the church had been quite clear in her position for God was looked upon as an objective Being and his actions were objective actions. The individual human had nothing whatever to do in the process of salvation because, from the beginning of time, the elect had been objectively elected by God. Regardless of their acceptance or rejection, regardless of their way of life morally speaking, the elect were in 'a saved state,' and this fact did not at any time depend upon subjective action on the part of the elected person or any other person.<sup>1</sup> This was the teaching of the Westminster Confession.

Campbell objected strenuously to such an interpretation of man's salvation because he believed that a man cannot be saved will he will he. Ultimately, Campbell did believe that salvation was a work of God, but it was a work which required the free acceptance of man's spirit. It was not merely a matter of God dealing with men through Christ, but in some way, Christ was dealing with God on behalf of mankind.

Some would suggest that Campbell stood between the school of thought of the Confession and that of the modern existentialist school

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1 Vide Chapter III.

of theology. To-day, some would charge Buber, Bultmann, Tillich and others with holding the subjectivism which has been associated with the name of Schleiermacher, and they would attempt to support this charge by claiming that these men are working from the assertion of Kirkegaard, made in 1846, "The passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity becomes the truth."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in support of this position, they might quote such views as these. " 'God' is the answer to the question implied in man's finitude; he is the name for that which concerns man ultimately. This does not mean that first there is a being called God and then the demand that man should be ultimately concerned about him. It means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is god for him."<sup>2</sup> "Whatever the determinative place of the Object in Christian faith, yet faith is an exercise of human subjectivity."<sup>3</sup> "Theology must never forget that its Objects exist always and only in their reference for us."<sup>4</sup> But are we right to speak of this as subjectivism, or is the modern theologian rather attempting to remove the study of the Christian faith out of the realm of subject and object altogether?

The present writer would stand with Campbell, and indeed with Donald Baillie, on the matter of subjectivity and objectivity. For them, these

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1 Brown, Subject and Object p. 13.

2 Tillich, P. 'Systematic Theology' vol. I. London: Nisbet, 1953. p.234.

3 Ibid p. 192.

4 Ibid p. 209.

twin aspects of the atonement cannot be separated in spite of the many attempts at classification of atonement theories. The atoning sacrifice of Christ was God offering Himself for the sin of the world, and in this sense, the atonement is an objective action which includes the continual expression of God's infinite love dealing with the sin of mankind. Such a love cannot tolerate such an evil and out of the suffering of such a love dealing with such an evil there emerges the forgiveness of God. This is the objective nature of the atonement.

This atonement however has no value or validity for any human individual unless he himself takes some integral part in the action. The atonement holds no more validity for the man who apathetically looks away from it than for the man who defiantly turns his back on it. If man is to be reconciled to God, he must desire this reconciliation and reach for it and accept it and know that he is so reconciled. This is the subjective nature of the atonement.

On this point, as on the others, the climate of opinion in the church has seriously changed since Campbell's day and we find ourselves standing with Campbell. His urgent denial of the merely objective view of the nature of the atonement is evidently no longer necessary. However, his position of paradoxical tension between subjectivity and objectivity is, we believe, the position which speaks most helpfully to the church to-day.

"To Scotland has fallen the honour of leading the way among English-speaking nations in the dispersion of religious ideas and the



discussion of theological problems. She has had a democratic Church, and that, along with a rigid adherence to the Confession of Faith, has carried her into this proud position. As she has been accustomed to bring all her affairs before a popular tribunal of clerics and laymen, every apostle of progress that has appeared in her midst has had to fight his way through a phalanx of resistance and prejudice, with the result that he has always had a large and influential constituency to address; and the more his views have been challenged, the more widely they have spread.<sup>1</sup> This statement is profoundly true of John McLeod Campbell, for in his case the 'fight through a phalanx of resistance and prejudice' constituted both the tragedy of his life and its crowning victory. Driven from the church of his fathers at such an early age, Campbell was given the freedom he required in order to pursue truth solely at the expense of personal suffering in his own life. To achieve the ends which he envisaged, breaking down the stranglehold of Calvinism and presenting his own views on the inherent nature of Christ's atoning work, Campbell was called upon to give up his own happiness and security for a lifetime of loneliness and material uncertainty. Yet, there was no irresolution in pursuing his aims, no hesitation or dubiety; Campbell had a message to proclaim and the Church's action in 1831 left him no alternative but to bear the martyrdom of loneliness and shame. At the end of his life it is clearly seen that he had truly lived what he had believed and written. "To follow God as dear children, walking in love, ...

1 Hewison, H. C. *Religious Controversies*, p. 2

implies such a dying daily as is possible only in a faith which is a constant commending of our spirit into the Father's hands. For lonely as death is, not less lonely is true life at its root and core, --I mean lonely as respects the creature, a being left alone with God." It was out of his personal experience that he was able to write, "Christ's witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession, is for strength according to their need, to those who are called to suffer as martyrs for His name." In lonely isolation as one 'called to suffer,' Campbell worked the work of his Lord and gave freely to the world of the treasures of his walk with God.

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First, You had said in your sermon that you were going to you in the Floating Chapel at ... ..  
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1 Campbell, The Nation of the Anointed, p. 298  
 2 Ibid. p 248

## Appendix A. The Libel

Mr. John Macleod Campbell, Minister of the Gospel at Row, You are indicted and accused this seventh day of September, eighteen hundred and thirty, by the subscribers, heads of families, and inhabitants of the said parish, That albeit the doctrine of universal atonement and pardon through the death of Christ, as also the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith, and necessary to salvation, are contrary to the Holy Scriptures and to the Confession of Faith approved by the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, and ratified by law in the year sixteen hundred and ninety; and were moreover condemned by the fifth Act of the General Assembly held in the year seventeen hundred and twenty, as being directly opposed to the word of God, and to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Church of Scotland: Yet true it is and of verity, that you the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell hold and have repeatedly promulgated and expressed the foresaid doctrines from the pulpit or other place or places from which you delivered discourses, as also in conversation, in your addresses to communicants at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and in your ministerial visitations of families within your parish: In so far as on various occasions during the course of the last twelve months, you the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell have declared that God has forgiven the sins of all mankind whether they believe it or not: That in consequence of the death of Christ, the sins of every individual of the human race are forgiven: That it is sinful and absurd to pray for an interest in Christ, because all mankind have an interest in Christ already: And that no man is a Christian unless he is positively assured of his own salvation: And more particularly:

First, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, in a sermon preached by you in the Floating Chapel at Greenock on the twenty-eighth day of April, eighteen hundred and thirty, or on one or other of the days of that month or of March immediately preceding, or May immediately following, used the following expressions, or at least expressions of a similar import and tendency, videlicet: "Before I can say to any man fear God and give him glory, I must know that his condemnation is taken away, and his sins forgiven;" And again, "It is a fact at this moment of every person present that his sins are put away, and if I did not know this, I could not say to you fear God and give him glory, because it would be an impossibility:" And again, "I could not conceive any thing I could ask of God which he has not told me that he has already given me:" And again, "Christ's right to judge men is that he has redeemed them:" And again, "Judgment pre-supposes our forgiveness." And again, "It is as persons who have been forgiven that we shall be judged:" And again, "We cannot repent and give God glory unless we now have forgiveness:" And again, "There could be no judgment to come, unless there had been pardon to come."

Secondly, you the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell in a sermon preached by you at Row, on the eighth day of July eighteen hundred and thirty, in presence of the Presbytery of Dumbarton, being the day on which the said Presbytery held a parochial visitation of the parish of Row, or on one or other of the days of that month, or of June immediately preceding, or of August immediately following, used the following expressions, or at least expressions of similar import and tendency, videlicet, "That he alone bore the character of peace-maker who knew that Christ died for every human being:" And again, in speaking of the love of God, you said, "That that love to every individual of Adam's family was equal or according to the agonies of the Son of God:" And again, in speaking of the words in the fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, "Blessed are they that mourn," you said, "that the causes of this mourning were not within the believer, his sins having been taken away, but they existed outwardly in the unbelief and sinfulness of the world."

Thirdly, you the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, in a Sermon preached by you in the School-house at Helensburgh, on one of the days of the month of October eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, used the following expression or expressions of a similar import and tendency, videlicet: "That it was a gross error in the modern preachers of evangelical doctrines to maintain that the reason why men were not cured was that they did not seek an interest in Christ or come to him, because according to his idea an interest in Christ was the privilege of all men indiscriminately, and that the reason why men were not happy in the enjoyment of it was, that they would not allow themselves to be persuaded that they were continually in a state of reconciliation:" And again, "That the only cause why a man should at any time be sorrowful, was regret or dissatisfaction at himself, for not believing himself to be in a state of favour with God:" And again, "That by the death of Christ, all mankind were put into a state of pardon, or in that state in which God was not imputing their sins to them, and that the continued belief of this fact was all that was necessary to constitute the faith of the gospel."

Fourthly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, in the sermon preached by you as aforesaid on the eighth day of July eighteen hundred and thirty, in presence of the Presbytery of Dumbarton, being the day on which the Presbytery held a parochial visitation of the parish of Row, or on one or other of the days of that month, or of June immediately preceding, or of August immediately following, used the following expressions, or at least expressions of a similar import and tendency, videlicet, "That it was an indispensable feature in the character of a Christian, that he should know that God has had mercy on him, and has forgiven him."

Fifthly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell in the sermon preached by you as aforesaid, in the school-house at Helensburgh, on one of the days of the month of October eighteen hundred and twenty-

nine, used the following expressions, or expressions of a similar import and tendency, videlicet, "That men allowing themselves to remain in doubt with respect to the simple fact of their having been individually restored to a state of favour with God, was the cause of all their misery, and that this was really the unbelief which the gospel condemns, it was giving the lie to God."

Sixthly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at Row, in the month of July eighteen hundred and thirty, in fencing the tables, debarred from the Lord's Supper, "all who had not a personal assurance of their own salvation."

Seventhly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, in a sermon preached by you in the parish church of Row, on the fourth day of July eighteen hundred and thirty, or on one or other of the days of that month, or of June immediately preceding, or August immediately following, used the following expressions, or expressions of a similar import and tendency, videlicet, "All men are both under the curse and under grace at the same time:" And on the same occasion, you said that the doctrine of the Church of Scotland regarding election "tended to fatalism."

Eighthly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, at a parochial examination at Easterton, in the parish of Row, in the autumn of eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, when explaining the nature of faith from the question in the Shorter Catechism, "What is faith in Jesus Christ," observed, "That none could receive and rest upon Christ for salvation, who had not an assurance of their own salvation;" or words to that effect.

Ninthly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, in a sermon preached by you at Row on the fourth day of July eighteen hundred and thirty, or on one or other of the days of that month, or of June immediately preceding, or August immediately following, used the following expressions, or expressions of a similar import and tendency, videlicet, "That every man is in this state, that while he has in him death in Adam, he has life given him by Christ,"--"That the curse in Adam extended only to the death of the body, and takes effect upon all--the blessing of life in Christ is co-extensive with the curse, and belongs to all upon whom the curse has passed--that if Christ had not died, mankind would not have risen, nor would they have gone to hell to eternal punishment, but to Hades."

Tenthly, You the said Mr. John McLeod Campbell, in the sermon preached by you as aforesaid, in the Floating Chapel at Greenock, on the said twenty-eighth day of April eighteen hundred and thirty, or on one or other of the days of that month, or of March immediately preceding, or May immediately following, used the following expressions, or expressions of a similar import or tendency, videlicet, "Now, inasmuch as it is true concerning you, that in the first place, the work of God in Christ has put away your sins, so that it is the fact, that your sins are at this moment not imputed to you--inasmuch as it is true, in the second place, that the character of God, the real name of

God, what he truly is, is revealed in this very work of God in Christ, so that no person can see that work and be ignorant of God;--and inasmuch as it is true, in the third place, that Christ has the Holy Ghost for you, that in the Spirit you may behold and enter into and dwell in the light of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ; inasmuch as these things are true, you observe, that sinners as you are, that deserving of condemnation, and by nature under condemnation as you are, that notwithstanding all the evil of your circumstances as these have arisen from the fall; your new circumstances which have arisen from the work of God in Christ, are such that it is perfectly reasonable to say to you, 'fear God and give him glory.' You are actually in a condition to meet this demand; you are precisely in circumstances in which to receive this command; there is no one thing you can name that creates the least obstacle, why you should not at this moment 'fear God and give him glory.'" And again, "Now let me not be misunderstood, I am not saying that God has no right to judge his creatures, I am not saying that the judgment recorded 'in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' is not a righteous judgment. But this I say, that the principle upon which Christ judges the earth, is that Christ has redeemed us.--Not that the judgment suspends the pardon--not that the judgment makes the pardon conditional--not that it makes it uncertain till the judgment is come;--but that the judgment pre-supposes our forgiveness, that it has a reference to our forgiveness, that it is as those who have been forgiven that we judged shall be:" And again, "If we look at the actual condition of men, we would say, here is the darkness of total ignorance of the mercy that is in God--of the might that is in God for us.--Here are people who do not know that Christ died for them--who do not know that Christ has the Spirit for them--who do not know that Christ says that their sins are remitted--here are people who conceive that they are giving God glory in saying there is no proof of these facts. This is the real darkness in which men are living." All which or part thereof being found proveth by the said Reverend Presbytery of Dumbarton, before which your Case is to be heard, it ought to be found and declared that you are unfit and unworthy to remain a minister of the Church of Scotland; and you ought to be forthwith deposed from the office of the holy ministry, and from the pastoral charge of the said church and parish of Row, and the said church ought to be declared vacant. According to the Laws of the Church of Scotland, and the usage observed in the like cases.

(Signed) George McLellan, Farmer, Bolernick.  
 Peter Turner, Farmer, Bolernick.  
 A. Lennox, Surgeon, Helensburgh.  
 Alex. McDougal, Grocer, Row.  
 John McKinlay, Greenfield, Row.  
 John Thomson, Spirit-dealer, Helensburgh.  
 Parlan McFarlane, Farmer, Farlane.  
 Alex. McLeod, Feuar, Helensburgh.

## Appendix B. The Act of 1720

Act concerning a Book, intituled, The Marrow of Modern Divinity,  
Edinburgh May 20, 1720. Sess. 9.

The General Assembly having had under their Consideration the Book, intituled, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, Reprinted at Edinburgh, Anno 1718, with an ample Recommendation prefixed thereto, which they found was dispersed, and had come into the Hands of many of the People, and having had laid before them the following Passages, collected out of the said Book, by a Committee for preserving the Purity of Doctrine in this Church, appointed by the Commission of the late General Assembly. The Tenor whereof follows.

## Concerning the Nature of Faith

'Page 118, There is no more for him to do, but only to know and believe 'that Christ hath done all for him. Page 119, This then is perfect 'Righteousness,--only to know and believe, That Jesus Christ is now 'gone to the Father, and sitteth at his Right Hand, not as a Judge, 'but as made unto you of GOD, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and 'Redemption; wherefore as Paul and Silas said to the Jailor, so say I 'unto you, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, 'that is, be verily perswaded in your Heart, that Jesus Christ is yours, 'and that you shall have Life and Salvation by him, that whatsoever 'Christ did for the Redemption of Mankind, he did it for you. Page 120, 'Forasmuch as the Holy Scripture speaketh to all in General, none of us 'ought to distrust himself, but believe that it doth belong particularly 'to himself,' the same is asserted, Pages 121, 122, 123, 124, 131, 136, 137, 175, 176, 177. and in many other places of the Book. This Notion of saving faith, appears contrary to Scripture, Isa.50.10. Rom.8.16. I John 5.13. and to Confess. Cap. 18. Sec. 1,3,4. and to Larger Catechism, Quest. 81. 172. all which Passages show, That Assurance is not of the Essence of Faith, whereas the Passages cited from the Marrow Etc. appear to assert the contrary, making the Saving Faith commanded in the Gospel, a Man's Perswasion that Christ is his, and died for him, and that whoever hath not this Perswasion or Assurance hath not answered the Gospel Call, nor is a true Believer.

## Of Universal Atonement and Pardon.

'Page 108, Christ hath taken upon him the Sins of all Men. Page 119, 'The Father hath made a Deed of Gift, and Grant unto all Mankind, That 'whosoever of them all shall believe in his Son shall not perish, etc. 'i.e. (whosoever believes or is perswaded that Christ is his, for this

'must be the sense according to the former Passages.) Hence it was  
 'that Christ said to his disciples, Go and preach the Gospel to every  
 'Creature under Heaven, that is, go and tell every Man without exception,  
 'That here is good News for him, Christ is dead for him.--Even so our  
 'good King the Lord of Heaven and Earth hath, for the Obedience and  
 'Desert of our good Brother Jesus Christ, pardoned all our Sins. To the  
 'same Purpose, Pages 127, and 128.' Here is asserted an universal  
 Redemption as to Purchase, contrary to John 10. 15, 27, 28, 29. and  
 15. 13. and 17. Titus 2. 14. Confess. Cap. 3. Sec. 6. Cap. 8. Sec. 8.  
 Larger Catechism, Quest. 59.

#### Holiness not necessary to Salvation.

'From Page 150, to Page 153; and if the Law say good Works must be done,  
 'and the Commandment must be kept, if thou wilt obtain Salvation, then  
 'answer you, and say, I am already saved before thou camest; therefore  
 'I have no need of thy Presence,--Christ is my Righteousness, my  
 'Treasure and my Work, I confess, O Law! that I am neither Godly nor  
 'Righteous, but this yet I am sure of, that he is Godly and Righteous  
 'for me.' Page 185, good Works may rather be called a Believer's  
 'walking in the Way of eternal Happiness than the Way it self; this  
 Doctrine tends to slacken People's Diligence in the Study of Holiness,  
 contrary to Heb. 12. 14. 2 Thes. 2. 13. Ephes. 2. 10. Isa. 35. 8.  
 Jam. 2. 20. Confess cap. 13. Sec. 1. Larger Catechism, Quest. 32.  
 Confess. cap. 15. sec. 2.

Fear of Punishment and Hope of Reward, not allowed to be Motives of  
 a Believer's Obedience.

'Page 181. would you not have Believers to eschew Evil, and do good for  
 'Fear of Hell, or Hope of Heaven. Answer, No indeed,--for so far forth  
 as they do so, their Obedience is but slavish. A great Deal more to  
 'this Purpose is to be seen,' Pages 175, 179, 180, 182, 183, 184, and  
 appears contrary to Psalms 45, 11. 119. 4, 6. Exod. 20.2. Ja. 1. 25  
 and 2. 8, 10, 11, 12, I Tim. 4. 8. Col. 3. 24. Heb. 11. 6, 26.  
 Rev. 2, 10, 2. Cor. 5. 9, 10, 11. Heb. 12. 2, 28, 29, 2 Pet. 3. 14.  
 Confess. cap. 16. Sec. 2, and 6.

That the Believer is not under the Law, as a Rule of Life.

'Page 150. As the Law is the Covenant of Works, you are wholly and  
 'altogether set free from it. And Page 151. you're now set free both  
 'from the commanding and condemning Power of the Covenant of Works.  
 'Page 216. you will yield Obedience to the Law of Christ, not only  
 'without Respect, either to what the Law of Works either promiseth or  
 'threateneth, but also without having Respect to what the Law of  
 'Christ either promiseth or threateneth,--and this is to serve the Lord



'without Fear of any Penalty, which either the Law of works, or the Law of Christ threatneth, Luke 1. 74. See also Pages 5, 153, 180, 156, 157, 163, 199, 209, 210. contrary to Scripture, Exod. 20. 2. Matth. 5. 17. etc. Rom. 3. 21. and 13. 9. Ja. 1. 25. and 21 8, 10, 11, 12, and Confess. Cap. 19. Sec. 5, 6.

The Six following Antinomian Paradoxes are sensed and defended by applying to them that Distinction of the Law of Works, and Law of Christ.

'Page 198, and 199. 1mo, A Believer is not under the Law, but is altogether delivered from it. 2do, A Believer doth not commit Sin. 3tio, The Lord can see no Sin in a Believer. 4to, The Lord is not angry with a Believer for his Sins. 5to, The Lord doth not chastise a Believer for his Sins. 6to, A Believer hath no Cause, neither to confess his Sins, nor to crave Pardon at the Hand of GOD for them, neither to fast nor mourn, nor humble himself before the Lord for them.

#### Expressions in the Marrow, Etc.

'Page 192, A Minister that dares not perswade Sinners to believe their Sins are pardoned, before he see their Lives reformed, for Fear they should take more Liberty to sin, is ignorant of the Mystery of Faith. And P.27. Christ undertook to suffer under the Penalty that lay upon Man to have undergone. And P.117, The Covenant of Works was twice made. First, With Man, and a second Time GOD was on both Sides. Pag. 115, The Law practised his whole Tyranny upon the Son of GOD, it is cursed and arraigned, and as a Thief, and cursed Murderer of the Son of God, loseth all his Right, and deserveth to be condemned, the Law therefore is bound dead and crucified to me. Pag. 126, Whosoever is married to Christ, and so in him by Faith, he is as acceptable to GOD the Father as Christ himself. Pag. 127. And so shall the Love and Favour of GOD be as deeply insinuated into you, as it is into Christ himself. Pag. 144, Whence it must needs follow, That you cannot be damned, except Christ be damned with you, neither can Christ be saved except ye be saved with him. Pag. 145, 146. Say unto Christ with bold Confidence, I give to thee, my dear Husband, my Unbelief, my Mistrust, my Pride, my Arrogancy, my Ambition, my Wrath and Anger, my Envy, my Covetousness, my evil Thoughts, Affections, and Desires; I make one Bundle of those, and all my other Offences, and give them unto thee. 2 Cor. 5. 21. And thus was Christ made Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD in him. Pag. 207, Nor yet as touching your Justification and eternal Salvation, will he love you ever a Whit the less, tho' you commit never so many or great Sins.

These are collected out of many other exceptionable Positions contained in that Book, which for Brevity's Sake are omitted.

And the General Assembly having had the said Passages, and several others read to them from the said Book, and having compared them with the said Book, and having compared them with the Texts of holy Scripture, Articles of our Confession of Faith, and of the larger Catechism of this Church abovesaid. The General Assembly found, That the said Passages, and Quotations, which relate to the five several Heads of Doctrine abovementioned, are contrary to the holy Scriptures, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and that the Distinctions of the Law, as it is the Law of Works, and as it is the Law of Christ, as the Author applies it, in Order to Sense, and defend the six Antinomian Paradoxes abovesaid, is altogether groundless; and that the other Harsh and Offensive Expressions abovesaid are excerpted out of the said Book. And therefore the General Assembly, do hereby strictly prohibit and discharge all the Ministers of this Church, either by Preaching, Writing or Printing, to Recomend the said Book, or in Discourse to say any Thing in Favours of it; But on the contrary, they are hereby enjoined and required to Warn and Exhort their People, in whose Hands the said Book is, or may come, not to read or use the same.

(This Fifth Act of the General Assembly of 1720 has been copied from a document entitled 'The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; Convened at Edinburgh, the 12th Day of May 1720,' printed in Edinburgh by the successors of Andrew Anderson. M.DCC.XX.)

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