GEORGE CAMPBELL (1719 - 1796),

HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT

by

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to consider fully the life and thought of George Campbell (1719-1796). He is a man of some considerable stature among the Scottish thinkers of the eighteenth century, yet little is known of his work aside from that represented by his reply in the Dissertation on Miracles to the scepticism concerning the miraculous set forth by David Hume in his celebrated Essay on Miracles.

Indeed, my own interest in Campbell arose out of a prior interest in the philosophy of Hume. In seeking to ascertain what reaction had been stimulated among Scottish churchmen by the philosopher's work, my attention was led to the controversy between Hume and Campbell. From this my attention was directed towards the lesser-known writings of this Moderate churchman, and this thesis embodies the results of my research.

In the first chapter, I have attempted to set forth something of the spirit of the age in which Campbell lived, in order to provide a background for his life and thought. It was, of course, necessary to pass over many of the rich facets of eighteenth century thought and life, else the chapter would have turned into a book. But I have discussed the rise of the Moderate party within the Church, the rich cultural achievements of Scottish genius, and the progress of the patronage controversy -- all matters directly related to George Campbell's life and thought.
The second chapter is a brief sketch of the life of George Campbell. No such account exists, except for the one written by his friend, the Rev. George Skene Keith, in 1800, which is prefixed to the edition of Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History published in the same year. I have relied on Keith's account for much of my information concerning the character and personal habits of the man, and have tried to add to its rather meagre details such information as might be found by a thorough investigation of the records available at Banchory and in Aberdeen, especially at the University Library. Thus, although the life is brief, I believe it as full an account as can be given.

From the third through the sixth chapters of the thesis, I have tried to give an accurate and systematic account of Campbell's thought as it is set forth in his various sermons and in the lectures he delivered to his classes at Marischal College. My method has been largely expository. I have dealt with all of Campbell's writings, both published and unpublished, and, in each case, allowed Campbell to speak for himself. To the exposition I have added and inserted my own critical comments to point up both the strengths and the weaknesses which seem apparent to me in his thought.

The seventh chapter is perhaps the real "meat" of the thesis. It deals extensively with the controversy between Campbell and Hume on the subject of miracles. It has seemed necessary to me to treat Hume's thought rather fully, and I have devoted almost half the chapter to a discussion of his thought in which I try
to show that his Essay on Miracles embodies a type of reasoning which follows naturally from his whole philosophical position. This is followed by an examination of the thesis put forward by Campbell, and the chapter concludes with some observations of my own on the strengths and weaknesses of Campbell's apologetic effort.

The last chapter is an appraisal of George Campbell, the Moderate, based upon the preceding analysis of his life and thought. Its tone is dominantly critical, yet I did not wish it to be only so. Campbell was a man of rare gentility, great humility, and true piety, whose works will still repay any who study them carefully.

My sincere thanks are due to my advisers, the Very Rev. Principal John Baillie, D.D., D. Litt., S.T.D., LL.D., of New College, and the Rev. Principal Charles S. Duthie, M.A., B.D., of the Scottish Congregational College and the New College staff. They have guided me well, and whatever merit this thesis may have is, in large measure, due to their kind and thoughtful help. I alone am responsible for its defects.

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I would be remiss if I did not also set down my deep appreciation of the generosity of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education in my own country, who did me the honour of electing me a Fellow in 1949, and furnished stipends for two successive years to make this study at the University of Edinburgh possible.

Nor can I neglect to mention my indebtedness to my wife, who never failed to lend encouragement to me during the whole period of my study, and graciously surrendered me to the world of dusty stacks and musty tomes.

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Arthur R. Mc Kay
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CHAPTER I.

THE CLIMATE OF OPINION

IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SCOTLAND

When William of Orange landed at Torbay on the fifth of November 1688, the signal for Presbyterian insurrection was sounded and ecclesiastical revolution was begun in Scotland. Six weeks later, James II was a fugitive, and within the next year, on the fifth of June 1689, William’s first Scottish Parliament met. As Hume Brown has pointed out, there is good reason for setting 1689 as the true beginning of the eighteenth century in Scotland, and 1789 as its true ending, for at either limit "there was a new departure in the national life that sharply marks it off from what went before and what came after."¹ With the expulsion of the Stuarts in 1689 a period which had its beginnings in the Reformation of religion in 1560 came to a close. And with the advent of 1789, that epoch-making year in which on the fifth of May the States-General of France met to set a course which would overthrow the existing constitution and issue in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Scotland was shocked into a general awakening to political life.² Again, a new century was at hand.

William of Orange, now William III, was persuaded, largely through the counsel of William Carstares, that the Scottish people

¹. Hume Brown, Surveys of Scottish History, pp. 105, 106.
preferred Presbyterianism. When the first Scottish Parliament met in 1689, therefore, it immediately took ecclesiastical matters under its consideration and passed an act that abolished Episcopacy, because it had been "a great and insupportable grievance to this nation, and contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation...."

Of all the Presbyterian clergy who had been deposed from their pulpits in 1662 when Episcopacy was established in Scotland only sixty were still alive in 1689. These aged survivors, fondly known to their friends as "antediluvians" from having lived before the flood of Prelacy, together with forty-three elders and seventy-six "indulged" ministers allowed since 1687 to preach, met in the first General Assembly in 1690.

In the same year Parliament re-established Presbyterian church government, restored all Presbyterian ministers who had been ejected for not complying with prelacy, abolished patronage, and required the Oath of Allegiance to be sworn in place of all other oaths imposed by preceding Parliaments.

To this first Revolution General Assembly the new Parliament also gave powers "to try and purge out all inefficient and scandalous and erroneous ministers by due course of ecclesiastical process and censure," a task to which the presbyters immediately set them-

1. As quoted by Mc Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 2.
selves. At the same time, country people, particularly in the southern and western counties, were attacking the manses where for twenty-six years Episcopal ministers had lived. Every form of petty persecution and parochial malice arose. One Scottish historian writes of the period, "It was alike a crime in the people's eyes to have opposed the Confession of Faith and to have whistled on the Sabbath, to have played bowls on a week-day and prayed for King James on the Sunday."¹

Within a short time peasants and clergy had conspired to oust six hundred of the nine hundred Episcopal incumbents. So many were ousted in the Lowlands, particularly in Whig counties where a complete sweep was made, that they could hardly be replaced. The remaining number continued to occupy parish kirks, mostly in the East and the Midlands where the covenanting spirit had never been strong, and in the North where it had hardly been known.²

Professor George Henderson writes,

For some time after the Revolution Presbyterianism had only the slenderest hold upon the north-east of Scotland. South of the Tay closer acquaintance with the representatives of England, and with the horrors of their administration, experience of the 'Killing Time,' intenser dread of Romanism, the weight of official opinion, and the sagacity of William Carstares combined to establish firmly the Presbyterian rule.³

². According to Spaulding's *Miscellanies*, Vol. II., p. 72, the Lord's Supper was not administered in Aberdeen by Presbyterian clergy until 1704.
In Aberdeen, for example, so far as Presbyterianism is concerned, for years neither Synod nor Presbytery existed. There was no Presbytery in being until 1694 when five ministers from Aberdeenshire and one from Banff constituted themselves such; and the first post-Revolution Synod did not meet until 18 May 1697. To the first General Assembly in 1690 only two representatives went from the whole of Aberdeenshire.

Undoubtedly, the people of Aberdeen and the entire north-east had found little in the work of such men as Forbes and Scougall to alienate them from the system of Episcopacy. Actually, Episcopalianism seems to have been quite like Presbyterianism, except perhaps in its attitude towards dogma, until after the Union of Parliaments in 1707. At that time Scottish Episcopalianism came "to look more towards English sympathy and to be more ready therefore to fall into line with the Church of England. Queen Anne was very favourable in her attitude, and the Toleration Act of 1711 authorised their separate meetings, whereupon we find the English Prayer Book coming into general usage."

Thus we see that Aberdeenshire, birthplace of George Campbell and scene of his parish and academic work, together with the rest of northeastern Scotland, was very slow to accept the consequences of the Revolution settlement. In this chapter we are concerned to set forth in broad strokes a background for the life and thought of George Campbell. We shall try, therefore, to show something of the

spirit of this eighteenth century, especially as it is reflected in
the rise of Moderatism within the Established Church, and in the vast
cultural achievements of Scottish genius. In addition, we shall indi-
cate the progress of the patronage controversy and of the treatment
of Episcopalian and Roman Catholic minorities by the Presbyterians.
Such a fundamental question as whether or not the defeat of the Popu-
lar party in the church by the Moderates represented a blow to true
religion we shall leave over for discussion in the final chapter,
after we have examined the works of the Moderate, George Campbell.

The extravagant intolerance of the Presbyterians throughout the
Lowlands caused Parliament to thrust upon the Church in 1694 a poli-
cy of toleration which compelled the General Assembly to maintain in
their livings and admit to a full share in the government all Epis-
copalian ministers who would take the oath of allegiance, subscribe
to the Confession of Faith, and conform to Presbyterian rule. That
ttoleration should be the policy of the Assembly roused much critic-
ism from those who saw in it certain evidence of an indifference to
the cause of God. The defenders of the policy, however, maintained
that the Assembly ought not to involve the country in fresh troubles
or weaken the hand of the new government to which it was so deeply
indebted.

Among the ejected Episcopalian clergy, many of whom had been
collected hastily from the farms and trades to fill the pulpits in
1662, there were few learned and cultured men. Nor were learning
and culture the marks of the Presbyterians who now succeeded them.
Most were interested not in learning but in Calvinist Orthodoxy, men
grimly religious and bigoted in spirit. Yet while they were earnest and honest men, according to their own lights. Inasmuch as the Moderate party in the Church was in part a reaction against these clergy of the Revolution and their successors, it becomes necessary to consider the characteristics of their religion.

The preaching of the Revolution clergy was characteristically fluid, long, and ardent. It generally followed much the same pattern: the four-fold state of man. Invariably the preacher would deal, first, with what man was in a state of innocency; second, what man was after the Fall; third, what man is under the Gospel of grace; and, fourth, what shall be man's eternal state. These dogmas the preachers, with remarkable ingenuity, found in nearly every verse of Scripture. Thomas Boston, for example, when he became minister of Simprin in 1699 began a course of sermons on man's four-fold state that lasted five years, till 1704. Consequently, there was a rather severe limitation of topic.

The sermons were very long, and committed to memory. Indeed, the General Assembly declared in 1720 that the reading of sermons was displeasing to God's people, and caused no small obstruction to spiritual consolation. In the sermon known as the "ordinary" the preacher was expected to discourse for week after week upon a single text or passage of Scripture. One very ingenious gentleman preached for

1. "There never was such a set of pious, painful, and diligent ministers in Scotland as at the Liberty and since." Life of James Wodrow, p. 173.
a year and a half on the twelve wells of water, and the three-score and ten palm trees of Elim (Exodus xv., 27), devoting a Sunday to each well and each tree.

Until far into the century the preaching was in the broad Scots which everybody spoke, so that to be protected is to be "under scogg;" to condemn becomes "to vilepend;" God knows what has happened is "God jalouses that it is notour;" to pray is "to wrestle." ¹

The Scottish Sabbath was a most austere day at the beginning of the eighteenth century. After family worship in the early morning, the household went on to church. There were two services, each lasting two to two and a half hours. Between services those who lived close at hand went home for a cold snack -- for nothing was cooked on that day; others went to a nearby ale-house kept open for the convenience of the worshippers; and some stayed in the kirk-yard listening to the young children reciting the Catechism. In the evening, home once again, the children and servants were assembled to be catechised on the doctrine of the Confession of Faith and examined as to what had been said in the lectures and sermons of the day. Psalms were sung, a private expounding of Scripture was given, and those who could read might peruse a devout book, perhaps Doolittle's Call to Delaying Sinners.

To attend church was a matter of compulsion, not of choice. Those who desecrated the Sabbath were nowhere free from the intrusion of the elders and deacons, who were frequently assisted in their

¹. From the writings of such men as Spaulding, Boston, and the Erskines, as quoted by Graham, op. cit., p. 297.
operations by "seizers" appointed by the Town Councils. Acts of Parliament, resolutions of the Town Councils, and decisions of Sheriffs combined to support the Church in her vigil over the sacred day, and none escaped her watchful eye. In 1735, even the minister of New Machar was libelled before his Presbytery for powdering his wig on the Sabbath.¹

Undoubtedly the most solemn and striking of all services was that connected with the Lord's Supper, which was known variously as the "Occasion," the "Great Work," or the "Sacred Solemnity." Usually held once a year, in June or July, this service included "preachings" on Thursday, Saturday, and Monday, as well as on the Communion Sunday. There might be two services and sermons on Thursday, two or three on Saturday, a long communion service on Sunday with an "action sermon" preceding the Supper and another sermon concluding at night, and, Monday services besides. One eye-witness about the middle of the century, writing under the guise of a blacksmith, gives a vivid though unfavourable picture of such a meeting:

At first you find a great number of men and women lying together on the grass; here they are sleeping and snoring; some with their faces towards heaven, others with their faces downwards and covered with their bonnets; then you will find a knot of young fellows and girls making assignations to go home together in the evening or to meet in some ale-house; in another place you see a pious circle sitting on an ale-barrel, many of which sit on carts for the refreshment of the saints ... When you get a little nearer the speaker, so as to be within reach of the sound, if not the sense of his words -- for that can reach only a small circle, even when the preacher is favoured with a

¹ Fraser, Thomas Reid, p. 9.
calm, and when there is a wind stirring hardly a sentence can be heard distinctly at a considerable distance — in the second circle you will find some weeping and others laughing; some pressing nearer the tent or tub in which the parson is sweating, bawling, jumping, and beating the desk. Others fainting with the stifling heat or wrestling to extricate themselves from the crowd; one seems to be very devout and serious, the next moment is scolding his neighbour for squeezing or treading on him; in one instant afterwards his countenance is composing to serious gloom, and he is groaning, sighing, and weeping for his sins; in a word, there is such an absurd mixture of the serious and the comic, that were we convened for any other purpose than that of worshipping the God and governor of nature the scene would exceed any power of face.¹

Such festivals continued in several districts beyond the century. But on the whole, when the difference of theological views to which we shall presently come arose, such enthusiasm was discouraged as fanatical.

Not only the Sabbath conduct of the community but its week-day morality as well were watched over by the Church with careful eye. Every rumour and suspicion of misbehaviour was reported to the Kirk-Session, and each culprit was brought to trial. Offenders were obliged to stand "at the pillory," a raised platform or stool in front of the pulpit, clad in sackcloth which they were required to make or buy for themselves, and there they were admonished by the minister until he was satisfied of their penitence. Those convicted of grave offences might be required to stand at the pillory for as many as twenty-six Sundays in succession, or, perhaps, to give the "circular satisfaction," wherein the Presbytery instructed them to

¹. Witherspoon, Letter from a Blacksmith to the Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland, etc.
appear in all the churches within its bounds in turn.

If a charge could not be proved an oath of purgation before the congregation might be required of the suspect in which he asserted his innocence, "before the great God, and Jesus Christ, and the angels." Apparently the mildest offences and the most heinous sins were treated with equal gravity. Only drunkenness is curiously absent from the records, and Graham suggests that this is because it was so common.

Every gentleman would have been constantly at the pillory had it (drunkenness) been punished, and that would have been very awkward for the elders (not themselves quite innocent) who, if farmers, were more afraid of offending the gentry than the gentry were of the Session.¹

No charges, however trivial, were ignored. Even the ministers were subject to trial. Some Presbyteries sent "visitants" to all the churches within their bounds each year, who questioned the heritors, elders, and heads of families regarding the behaviour of the pastor, and, while he preached his "ordinary," judged of his "painfulness" and doctrine. The same visitants then examined the minister as to the conduct and character of his people. On the whole, however, this practice died out by 1750.

Throughout the time when the Revolution clergy dominated the life of the Church of Scotland, that is, for the decade or more immediately following 1690, there was great unrest in many parts of the country, especially in the Highlands. Jacobite sentiments were still strong among the nobles, the lairds, and the Episcopal clergy. The memory of King James was still fresh, and the benefits expected

¹. Graham, op. cit., p. 327.
from his restoration were longed for and eagerly awaited. On the other hand, in the sections where zealous Presbyterians glorified the Covenants, King William was regarded as an unlawful king just because he had not signed them, and, what was worse, was a member of the Church of England. Then, in 1702, William died and Queen Anne ascended to the throne with the approval of the Scottish Estates. She broached the subject of the union of the Scottish and English parliaments in her first speech and in 1707 it was accomplished.

The Church had a clause in the Treaty that provided for its protection. This stated that the Presbyterian Church government, as it had been established by various acts of Parliament, with its Confession of Faith, its discipline, and its ecclesiastical judicatures, should remain forever unalterable, and be "the only government of the Church within the kingdom of Scotland." It further provided that every sovereign of Britain should take an oath at his accession to protect "the government, discipline, rights, and privileges of the Church." 1

With the Union of Parliaments in 1707, Scotland was brought into fuller intercourse with the world. As time went on a growth of interest and employment in trade brought with it new modes of dress, new manners of living, a fresher knowledge of literature, and wider views in religion. All these changes took place most rapidly among the educated, and from this point on the power of the old school of

Revolution ministers with this group began to fail. The uncouth sayings and mystic ways of the clergy of the Revolution became the subjects of jesting, and not only in the houses of Jacobite lairds but among Whig Presbyterians as well. A new generation was at hand, one preferring milder sermons, with less damnation, and more morality. In the ranks of the clergy men of culture, refinement, and breeding now appear, men with little or nothing in common with the old "ante-diluvians" or the fanatical evangelical preachers.

One outstanding characteristic distinguishing the eighteenth century in Scotland from the century and a half preceding it is the predominance of secular over religious and ecclesiastical interests. And this secular spirit manifested itself not only in material interests, but also in thought and speculation. There was a breaking away from the traditions of the past in every department of inquiry. Men "were tired of fighting about religion and wanted rest."¹

As Hume Brown writes, "Religion itself was not left untouched by the spirit of the time. It was now that the type of religion began to assert itself which, under the name of Moderatism, was to attain full fruition in the latter half of the century."²

The origin of the name, "Moderates," is not altogether clear. It may have been taken from King William's message to the General Assembly of 1690, "Moderation is what religion requires, neighbouring churches expect from you, and we recommend to you."³ William Watt, Representative Churchmen of Twenty Centuries, p. 228.


3. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, p. 35.
Leechman, who became Principal of the University of Glasgow, used the adjective, "moderate," in 1741, and it was in common use as a party designation before Witherspoon's famous satire of 1753.¹

It has been suggested at an earlier point that Moderatism was in part due to reaction against the type of religion which the Revolution brought forth. In addition, Moderatism represents one more manifestation of currents of thought to be found elsewhere in Europe under different names. In England it was Bangorianism or Latitudinarianism; in Germany, the Aufklärung or Enlightenment; in France, Newtonianism. All these movements represent the fruition of ideas that had their birth in the seventeenth century.

The first decisive appearance of these ideas is usually associated with the publication of Descartes' Discourse on Method in 1657. In this work a new attitude of mind emerged which for a century and a half was to determine men's speculations. "Descartes' evangel, for such it was in his eyes and in those of the thinkers who followed him, was the application of reason to human experience in the entire range of its content."²

Alfred North Whitehead has described the eighteenth century as an age of reason based on faith — the faith in question being a confidence in the stability and regularity of the universal frame of Nature.

One meets everywhere a sense of relief and escape, relief

from the strain of living in a mysterious universe, and escape from the ignorance and barbarism of the Gothic centuries. Nature's laws had been explained by the New Philosophy; sanity, culture, and civilisation had been revived; and, at last, across the vast gulf of monkish and deluded past, one could salute the ancients from an eminence perhaps as lofty as their own.1

In Scotland by 1726 men like Professor Hutcheson of Glasgow were forming a liberal school of clergy. Himself quite unlike the enthusiasts of the Revolution, this professor of moral philosophy "disputed no dogma, and taught no heresy as he discussed the beauty of moral virtue, descanted on the 'harmony of the passions and the dignity of human nature..."2 As he spoke of these themes Calvinistic doctrines and dogmas seemed to lose their meanings; "the orthodox doctrines of the Kirk of the total corruption of human nature, of reprobation, of salvation by faith alone, became to his audience strangely unreal."3

The dominant note of the preaching of the clergy of the Revolution, of course, had been the total corruption of the whole nature of every man, woman, and child. These men had robbed atonement of all its finer moral and religious meaning, treating it as a legal transaction in which God, Christ, and man are the several parties to a bond. To gain assurance of salvation and confidence of election, believers were to accept Christ as their surety and to believe that He had paid their debt to God.

3. Ibid., p. 352.
To preach the duties of the common life was held a crime, and while it was conceded that morality was a desirable thing in its proper place it was held to be soul-ruining when allowed to assume the place of Christ's imputed righteousness. Such a rejection of "moral" preaching found favour among most laymen at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and many agreed with Ralph Erskine who, in his beloved Gospel Sonnets pronounced the moral path, "the cleanest road to hell."

Consequently, the new type of preacher, the "moral" preacher trained under such men as Hutcheson and Simpson of Glasgow and Campbell of Saint Andrews, shocked many of the lay people and most of the godly ministers. Wodrow said of them that they gave a "paganised Christianity," and consolated himself with the fact that "there are a few of the old antediluvians amongst us like a shock of corn, very much edified, and re-opened from Sabbath to Sabbath for the glory of the Gospel."¹

Brought up in the stern theology of Calvin, accustomed to doctrinal preaching, believing that salvation was won only by trusting to the atonement and in making a bargain with Christ, people in many districts detested the rising group of "legal" or "moral" clergy.

In any event, these were men who spoke for the first time in the pulpit of good works and a good life as the only way to serve God. Two parties are now, therefore, met in hot opposition in the Scottish Church: the "moral" preachers, known also as "moderates" and "legal"

¹ Wodrow, Correspondence, September, 1709.
preachers; and the "high-flyers" or "Evangelicals," known also as the "popular" preachers.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the despised and reprobated "legal" preachers so increased in number and influence that they became the prevailing class of clergy in Scotland. The old reign of fanaticism was gone. Toleration had changed the whole tone of the clergy. With the unfolding of the century, even the "high-flyers" modified the morose ways of their predecessors and took part in the conviviality of a period which was rejoicing in escape from a pious reign of terror.

As Mc Cosh puts it, two sentiments combined in this period, "the desire to have a liberal or loose creed, and the aversion to the discussion of lesser differences" in doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters, to lead the great thinkers to spend their strength,

not so much in discussing doctrines disputed among Christians, as in defending religion in general, and in laying a deep foundation on which to rest the essential principles of morality and the eternal truths of religion, natural and revealed.¹

These new preachers, the Moderates, cultivated refined language, avoided all extravagance of statement and appeal, declined doctrinal controversy, and dwelt on such truths as the immortality of the soul, common to Christianity and to natural religion, or enlarged on the loveliness of Biblical morality.

Of course the rise of Moderatism was not fondly viewed from all sides. One Evangelical appraisal is worth noting,

When they preached their sermons generally turned on honesty, good neighbourhood, kindliness. To deliver a Gospel sermon and preach to the hearts and consciences of dying sinners was as completely beyond them as to speak in the language of angels. Their discourses were the most insipid and empty ever to grace the sacred name of sermon. Their congregations, rarely amounting to one-tenth of the parishioners, were generally during the half-hour's soporific harangue fast asleep. They had no more religion in private than in public.1

Nevertheless, Moderatism, adapting Christianity at once to the dominant tone of existing society and the current thought of the time, won the victory in Scotland. Minimising the Christian mysteries by introducing Reason as the arbiter of all beliefs the mind was bound to accept, this new school of religion was in step with its day. It may be true, as its critics asserted, that Moderatism surrendered all that constitutes Christianity's essence as a divine revelation and so perverted religion into lifeless morality. So moderate and well-balanced a critic as Principal Watt, in writing of this period, says, "A Christianity grew up which practically ignored the Founder.2 But it is also true that Moderatism helped "bring the Church in line with the spirit of the great age of Reason which had dawned with the rise of modern philosophy and science," as another of Scotland's outstanding present-day church historians, G.D. Henderson, writes.3

2. Watt, op. cit., p. 228.
The struggle between Moderates and Evangelicals turned on one main ecclesiastical issue, that of the rights of congregations to have a voice in the selection of their own ministers. It becomes necessary, therefore, to indicate briefly the role of patronage in Scotland in the eighteenth century.

When Presbyterianism was re-established in 1690, William III grudgingly consented to the abolition of patronage and Parliament provided that, when a vacancy occurred, elders and heritors were to choose a person for approval by the congregation. If the congregation disapproved of the selection made, they were to give their reasons to the Presbytery, by whom the whole matter was to be finally determined.

The patrons, in consideration of their deprival of their ancient rights, were to receive from the congregation 600 merks, upon which they were obliged to execute formal renunciation of the patronage. They were also to receive all unallocated teinds of the parish to which no one else could prove a right.

By 1712 only two parishes had received effective renunciations; two others had paid the money but received no renunciation. In that year the British Parliament debated the whole matter of patronage, and on 22 April a bill reviving the practice passed both houses, received royal assent, and became law -- over the protests of Carstares, Blackwell, and Baillie who had been instructed by the commission of General Assembly to oppose the bill.

This Patronage Act of 1712 brought dismay to the Presbyterians. General Assembly, meeting on 1 May, sent its protest to Queen Anne, but to no avail. And, as Henderson writes, "...from this political
enactment, which was certainly not promulgated as a result of pressure from within the Church, but was forced upon the Church without even pretence of consultation, arose most of the troubles that beset the ecclesiastical life of the country in the eighteenth century, and finally the Disruption itself. Indeed, three secessions from the Church came before, finally, in 1874, the Act of Anne was repealed. In 1843 about one-third of the membership of the entire Church went out on this issue.

Even the Evangelicals who remained within the Church were largely of the same mind as the Seceders regarding the evils of patronage, but felt that they could make their protest and achieve their ends within the established Church.

The patrons, of course, began to believe themselves in possession of an undoubted right, and gradually came to exercise it with full assurance that the Presbytery would induct their presentee. The call still remained, but only as a memorial of an ancient freedom. A presentee might be ordained, for example, though not a single parishioner's name was appended to his call.

It is to be remembered here that the policies of the Church in the second half of the eighteenth century were in the hands of the Moderate party. Although a protest was lodged annually with the Crown, for more than forty years, and although from 1735 to 1784 the Church passed resolution after resolution aimed at the redress of the grievance of patronage, the Moderates really acquiesced in the

system. They were a party "who placed law before liberty and authority above conscience, and were prepared to enforce discipline and order and the will of the organised community even at the risk of the repression of the individual and the restriction of rights."¹ Actually, patronage for the greater part of the century tended to favour Moderatism which, in turn, defended the system. One historian writes, "Sine Knox lifted up his voice at St. Andrews, there has been a constant struggle with Popery, with Prelacy, with Patronage."²

Before turning our attention to certain extra-religious manifestations of the spirit of this age in Scotland, it is necessary to indicate the status of the non-Presbyterian churches once Moderatism has come into power. During the struggle between the Moderates and the Evangelicals within Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism lingered on in Scotland, but with diminishing influence. In the Rising of 1715 the Jacobites had gambled on the Stuart prince and lost. The Act of 1719 had accordingly treated them as political conspirators, making it a legal offence from that point forward for an Episcopal clergyman to minister to more than nine persons in addition to the members of a household without expressly praying for King George. However, as fear of new Jacobite schemes disappeared, this law was never strictly enforced.

But the Rebellion of '45 convinced the Government that more

¹. Henderson, op. cit., p. 37.
stringent restrictions upon the Episcopalians had become necessary. Thus, in the summer of 1746 legislation was passed which required that before the following September every Episcopal clergyman should take the oaths prescribed by the law, and should pray specifically by name for the King and the royal family. A first offender against this Act was liable for six month's imprisonment; a second offender might be transported for life to the American plantations.

Then in May 1748, an additional restriction was enacted which held that after 29 September in that year no Episcopalian orders would be considered valid except those granted by a Bishop of the Church of England or of Ireland. This legislation, reflecting the judgment of the British statesmen that the Episcopal Church in Scotland was merely an agency of Jacobitism, struck a very heavy blow at Episcopacy.

Finally on 31 January 1788 Charles Edward Stuart, grandson of James VII, died in Rome, and most Episcopalian clergy at last believed themselves free of their allegiance to the Stuarts, and resolved to pray for George III by name in the words of the English liturgy. A few Jacobites regarded this as a surrender of principle, but most resolved so to seek the protection of the law. Hence, in 1792, Episcopacy, greatly diminished in numbers and strength, was relieved of the disabilities which had been placed upon it.

While Presbyterianism and Episcopacy were fighting, Roman Catholicism was multiplying. There were parishes in the Highlands and in the Islands where almost the entire population was Roman Catholic. And this despite the fact that an Act of William III had prohibited
the Roman Catholics from teaching their own children, from purchasing or inheriting a single acre of land, and even from becoming domestic servants.1

In 1788 Parliament passed an act, applicable only to England, by which these restrictions were removed. The legislation had both Whig and Tory support, but was the occasion for some dissatisfaction and rioting among the English populace, nevertheless. In the same year it was rumoured that Henry Dundas, Lord Advocate of Scotland, was to introduce a similar bill applicable to Scotland. This rumour being confirmed, an outburst of national feeling in opposition to Dundas' plan soon arose. Such men as Drs. Abernathy Drummond and John Erskine denounced the bill, holding that it would be disastrous to both religion and liberty. A society, the Friends of the Protestant Religion, was quickly formed for the purpose of averting the threatened calamity, and sent out its agents gathering petitions against the proposed bill.

By 1799 popular fury against the bill submitted by Dundas led to serious rioting in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and smaller centres of population.2 Finally Dundas informed the House of his intention to withdraw the bill. With the withdrawal the cause of Roman Catholic emancipation was buried for that century. Not until 1829 was there enough change of sentiment among the people to support any measure favouring

2. See below, p. 48, for the reaction of the Aberdeen Town Council to Dundas' proposal, and Campbell's sermon dealing with the issue.
Catholic relief.

We turn now to the extra-religious manifestations of the spirit of this age. There can be little doubt that this eighteenth century is the century in the national history when Scotland made her greatest contribution to the forwarding of human culture. To mention but a few names: in philosophy, Hutcheson, Hume, Campbell, and Reid appear; in science, Cullen, Hunter, Leslie, Black, Hutton, and Watt make their contribution; in political economy, Adam Smith is the man to reckon with; in literature and history, Kames, Gerard, Thomson, Macpherson, Robertson — and again, Hume — assume roles of importance.

Voltaire, speaking ironically but quite correctly, says, "It is an admirable result of the progress of the human spirit that at the present time it is from Scotland we receive rules of taste in all the arts — from the epic poem to gardening."¹ Such German thinkers as Kant and Goethe were to acknowledge their indebtedness to Scottish thinkers, particularly to Hume, Reid, and Stewart. Frenchmen like Renan were nurtured on the speculative opinions of the Scots. As Hume Brown points out, there was a large number of Scottish books, and not only in philosophy but literature, religion, and science as well, which were soon translated into the continental languages.

"The works of Lord Kames, the sermons of Hugh Blair, Beattie's Essay on Truth, all made the tour of Europe — significant evidence of the amount of truth that lay behind Voltaire's criticism."²

² Ibid., p. 299.
Aberdeen played its part in this great flowering of genius. It could boast not only of Campbell, whose reply to David Hume was most widely read in Scotland and abroad, but of such Senators of the College of Justice as Sir Alexander Seton, Sir George Gordon, Sir George Nicolson, and Sir Richard Maitland, such philosophers as Reid and Gerard, such linguists as Thomas Ruddiman who gave his name to the *Rudiments of the Latin Tongue* 11, so great an architect as James Gibbs who designed St. Martin's in the Fields and St. Mary's in the Strand of London, and many others. Perhaps the outstanding boast of the city was the Gregory family, sixteen of whom held professorships in British universities in such subjects as medicine, philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy, and one of whom, James Gregory, was the inventor of the reflecting telescope.1

Nowhere in Scotland did science and the belles lettres flourish more ... than in the two colleges of Aberdeen, particularly in the Marischall, where the good seed sown first by Blackwell and afterwards by David Fordyce produced ere long an abundant crop.2

Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, a Moderate, in a sermon before the Society for the Sons of the Clergy, exults in the fact that the ministry of the Scottish Church produced quite a galaxy of literary characters: such historians as Robertson and Ferguson; such philosophers as Reid, Ferguson, Campbell, and Gerard; such a rhetorician as Blair; such poets as Home and Wilkie; such scientists as Leechman, Stewart, Playfair, Greenfield, Finlayson, Walker, and Dickson. He is

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especially proud of the high achievements of the many sons of the clergy among the men of genius. There can be no doubt that the concern of the liberally-minded Moderate clergy for the new secular studies brought them into prominence as important contributors to the culture of the period, and threw them into the company of the outstanding non-clerics. It was in this wise that David Hume came into such cordial relations with the Moderates.

Carlyle of Inveresk tells in his Autobiography of the pleasant activities of an Edinburgh group which included Hume, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, Lord Elibank, Drs. Blair and Jardine, and himself. Writing of Hume, he says, "... they (the Moderates) best understood his notions, and could furnish him with literary conversation."¹

We shall see at a later point in this thesis that it was through Blair's friendship with Hume that George Campbell established his own communication with the philosopher. But it should be noted now that although Aberdeen was far to the North it was not unalive to the thought currents which were sweeping over the capital city of Edinburgh.

In the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, such men as Reid, Campbell, and Gregory joined with Gerard and Beattie in very profitable debates on the topics of science, philosophy, history, and religion.² It was in fact out of the meetings of this group that such works as Reid's Inquiry, Beattie's and Gerard's Essays, and Campbell's own

². See below, p. 37, for a fuller note of this Society.
Dissertation were to come. It was also probably in this group that Hume's *Essay on Miracles* was first considered by Campbell. We have Thomas Reid's letter to the famous skeptic in which he tells Hume that the Aberdeen men are deeply indebted to him for providing them with so much material for fruitful discussion, and expresses the thanks of Campbell, Gregory, and himself.

The purpose of this chapter has been simply to sketch in broad strokes the background for the life and thought of George Campbell. We have, therefore, put forward something of the spirit of the age as that was reflected in the ecclesiastical situation and in the flowering of Scottish cultural genius. It has seemed necessary for our purposes to indicate also the progress of the patronage controversy and of the treatment of Episcopalian and Roman Catholic minorities. Such a treatment leaves many important facets of eighteenth century life in Scotland unconsidered, but will serve perhaps to provide an adequate setting for the life and thought of the man we have singled out for our special attention.

Such a fundamental question as whether or not the defeat of the Popular party represented a blow to true religion will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis, after we have examined the works of the Moderate, George Campbell.

At this point, however, we may safely say that, whatever its faults, Moderatism was far better suited than the religion of the Revolution clergy to meet the new social forces which rapidly developed in Scotland after the Union of 1707. Its greatest value, from this perspective at least, was precisely its "moderate" spirit, for
that spirit gained for Scotland a more charitable creed, a greater freedom of thought, and a wiser tolerance of religious opinion than had ever before been known. And that spirit made it possible for the Church to commend itself to the cultured classes.

In anticipation of our last chapter, we may also safely say at this point that this greatest "virtue" was perhaps the greatest weakness of Moderatism. For a religion which gains the ascendancy primarily because it is in harmony with the spirit of the times always stands in peril of passing out of fashion. And this is what happened in time to Moderatism.

When the impact of the French Revolution made itself felt in Scotland, a new century and a new spirit were at hand. As Hume Brown correctly observes, "... now another note was dominant and not moderation but zeal was the watchword to which men were rallying in every sphere of action."¹

Thus by 1789 the end of the power of the Moderate party was in sight. The assertion of the rights of the people in opposition to the privileged classes which enlisted the zeal of the people in political activity had its counterpart in the Scottish religious life. The Popular party, the Evangelicals who had long defended the cause of the people against the patrons in the whole controversy over the election of ministers came into power and favour. They commended themselves to an age which respected zeal by the fervour with which

they delivered their sermons.

Democratic ideas were stimulated by the happenings in France in the period from 1789 ... Many had high hopes of a better world. World tendencies were really with the Evangelicals ... the Moderate party had now no great men left. It retained its coldness, but lost its brilliancy. It became more formal and legalistic, less open-minded and common-sense.1

Thus, although the Moderates retained a numerical superiority in the General Assembly until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the spirit of Evangelicalism was on the march. The people of Scotland wanted a change, in politics and in religion. The change in religion was not long in coming, through such men as Andrew Thomson, John Erskine, and Thomas Chalmers who in the early days of this new period shaped the course of the Church's history in Scotland according to the new spirit of zeal.

George Campbell's life spans almost the entire period during which Moderatism was in the ascendant and at its fullest strength. Born in 1719, the year in which Episcopacy was first stringently restricted owing to its suspected Jacobitish activities, he died in 1796, the year in which a still-Moderate-dominated General Assembly dismissed certain foreign missions overtures as counselling the Church to a foolish, dangerous, impracticable enterprise. As we turn to his life, then, and subsequently to his works, we may expect to find Campbell reflecting something of the spirit of this age, the climate of opinion which made this century in Scottish history "the period of her most energetic, peculiar, and most various life."2

CHAPTER II.

GEORGE CAMPBELL: THE MAN

George Campbell was born in Aberdeen on 25 December 1719. His father was the Rev. Colin Campbell, then minister of the First Charge (now St. Nicholas' West Church) in that city, a post he had held since 1702. His grandfather was George Campbell, Esq., of Westhall in Aberdeenshire, who had originally come from Moray, and was a descendant of Campbell of Moy, and a cadet of the family of Argyle.¹

Colin Campbell, educated at Marischal College and at Leyden, was known throughout the country for his piety, humane disposition, simplicity and integrity of character, and was held in high esteem by the people of Aberdeen. Orthodox in his theology, he found favour with his fellow-presbyters and was frequently pressed into service as preacher at meetings of the provincial synod. He seems to have developed a peculiar style of preaching, delighting to make all the heads and particulars of his discourses begin with the same letter of the alphabet.²

Besides his stipend as a clergyman, Mr. Colin Campbell had a slight private fortune, being the proprietor of a house in the city and a small estate in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. A

¹ Keith, "Some Account of the Life and Writings of George Campbell," prefixed to Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, p. vi.
decided Whig, he followed the fortunes and adhered to the policies of the Argyle family. During the Rising of 1715 he actively supported and promoted among his parishioners the cause of Hanoverian succession.

He married Margaret Walker, daughter of Alexander Walker, an Aberdeen merchant. They had six children, three daughters and three sons, of whom George was the youngest. Then while George was only nine years of age, Colin Campbell died suddenly on 27 August 1728. At this time, the family residence seems to have been at 49 Schoolhill, on property later taken over by the Aberdeen School Board.

George Campbell was educated in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, at that time noted for the careful tutoring in Latin which it provided, and for the capable instruction offered by Mr. Alexander Malcolm in arithmetic and music. It is said that Campbell was a lively and idle rather than a studious boy, but made a respectable appearance in this school.

From the Grammar School he went on to Marischal College in 1734, where he took the common course in arts. In this

1. Keith, op. cit., p. vii., erroneously suggests that Mr. Alex. Walker was at one time Provost of Aberdeen, but the city's records do not bear out this contention.

2. On this point I have followed Keith, op. cit., p. vi. A notice of George Campbell which appears in The Aberdeen Magazine for June 1796, states that he is the second son.

3. Valentine, An Aberdeen Principal of Last Century, p. 3.
institution, under the sponsorship of Dr. Thomas Blackwell, Principal and Professor of Greek, a thorough knowledge of Greek literature had been introduced. Campbell distinguished himself in that language, but "made no marked display of scholarship among his comppeers, being more inclined to vivacity and frolic than continuous application to study."¹

On the Marischal teaching staff at this time were such men as Turnbull, the younger Blackwell, and Francis Skene. Campbell's undergraduate days at Marischal also partly coincided with Thomas Reid's tenure of Librarianship in the same institution, 1733-1736. Towards the end of Campbell's course, he and a fellow-student, John Glennie, became directly involved in a dispute between Principal Blackwell and one of the Regents of the college, William Duff. During 1737 the Principal had given several admonitions to Duff for neglect of duty and other irregularities, and towards the close of that year Campbell and Glennie appeared as witnesses before the Rectorial Court to testify to Duff's non-attendance at college for two years. Finally, on 20 January 1738, sentence of expulsion was formally pronounced, and Duff's relationship with Marischal was severed.²

After receiving his Master of Arts degree in 1738, Campbell intended to follow the profession of the law, and, accordingly, was bound as apprentice to a Mr. Stronach, W.S., in Edinburgh.

¹ Martin, *Eminent Divines in Aberdeen and the North*, p. 188.
His friend Keith writes, "It was no doubt partly owing to this cause, that he acquired, very early, a general idea of the laws and constitutions of this country, and a particular art in reasoning very ingeniously, and in drawing up very accurate papers."1 But before finishing his apprenticeship, he became dissatisfied with the employment of a lawyer, and in 1741 began to attend the divinity classes of Professor Goldie in Edinburgh, and turned his attention to preparation for the Christian ministry.

At this time, Hugh Blair, about Campbell's own age, was minister at the Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh, and had begun to attract a considerable following. Campbell himself became a devoted admirer of Blair's pulpit style, and an intimate personal friend of the rising young Moderate churchman. This relationship helped confirm Campbell's decision to prepare himself for the church.

Upon the conclusion of his apprenticeship, he returned to Aberdeen and entered himself as a student in theology, both in King's College, where he attended the lectures of Professor John Lumsden, and in Marischal College, where he listened to Professor James Chalmers. In January 1742, he became the leader of a literary society, the Theological Club, which concerned itself with the advancement of the members' theological learning.

The original group included Campbell's old classmate, Mr. James Mc Kail, afterwards minister of Monwhitter, and Mr. William Forbes, who was to candidate successfully against Campbell some years later for the church of Fordoun.

Among the members admitted soon after the club's organisation was Alexander Gerard, later professor of divinity both in Marischal and King's College. In the former post he was to be Campbell's immediate predecessor. Glennie writes of this literary society, "As long as I could attend ... all the members esteemed Mr. Campbell as the life and soul of the society."1 Campbell is said to have read to this club the substance of the lectures on pulpit eloquence which he later delivered to his classes at Marischal College.2

Upon the completion of his theological training, he went through the ordinary trials before the Presbytery of Aberdeen and was licensed as a probationer on 11 June 1746. In the following year, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the parish of Fordoun in Kincardineshire, the post going to his old friend, William Forbes, who had a majority of the heritors in his favour. The reputation of Campbell was growing, however, and in 1748, without any solicitation on his part, he was presented to the parish of Banchory Ternan, seventeen miles west of Aberdeen, by Sir Alexander Burnett of Leys.

1. As quoted by Keith, op. cit., p. lx., from a personal letter.
2. Bruce, Eminent Men of Aberdeen, p. 322.
Neither the patron nor those who had recommended him for this parish knew Campbell's Christian name, so the invitation to come to Banchory to preach a trial discourse was simply addressed to "Mr. Campbell". On the appropriate date, "Mr. Campbell" came along, and the result was disappointing to the people of the parish. Colin Campbell, George's brother, had been the aspirant in response to the carelessly-directed invitation, a fact which Sir Alexander discovered in the course of conversation with the preacher. A new invitation was then addressed to Mr. George Campbell, who candidated successfully, and, after the usual trials before the Presbytery of Kincardine-o-niel, was ordained minister of Banchory Ternan on 2 June 1748.

This little old church still stands close to the banks of the Dee in much the same condition of Campbell's pastorate, though the centre of Banchory's population has shifted away towards other parts of the village. In this quiet country parish, he found time to engage in serious study, and "while explaining the New Testament to his parishioners ... first formed a plan of translating that part of it, viz., the four gospels, which he afterwards published."¹ We have already seen that in the Church of Scotland it was the usual practice in the eighteenth century to explain a portion of Scripture each Lord's Day. Campbell paid so much attention to this, and became such a master of it, that in a short time he was considered as the best expounder of the

¹ Keith, op. cit., p. xiii.
Scriptures in that part of the country. Here in Banchory also he composed the most important parts of his Philosophy of Rhetoric. And here, too, he married Grace Farquharson, daughter of the family of Whitehouse.

In a letter addressed to his niece, Ann Richardson, who was in boarding school at Durham, Campbell wrote of Miss Farquharson, "I can say with truth that I never knew a more pious, more humane woman, or a woman of better sense. She had an enlargement of sentiment not often to be found in man (who have many advantages by education) and very unlike the contracted notions of the party among whom she had been bred." Mrs. Campbell was uncommonly attentive to the health of her delicate husband, and by her care undoubtedly prolonged his life. She herself died on 16 February 1792. They had no children.

During Campbell's Banchory pastorate, he had as his nearest neighbour his old school friend, now Dr. John Glennie of the parish of Drumoak, and we may be certain that the proximity of such kindred spirits would be mutually most agreeable to each of the young ministers. Campbell was much beloved by his parishioners for his kindly manner and humble disposition.

He was an agreeable companion to those whom he visited; was very fond of young people; and he could, from the sweetness of his temper, and

1. As quoted by Mc Cosh, Scottish Philosophy, p. 244, from a letter in his possession.

condescending manners, render himself agreeable even to young children.¹

After nine years at Banchory Ternan, during which the young minister became well-known as a preacher, he was chosen by the magistrates and Town Council of Aberdeen and presented in February 1757 to the Second Charge (now St. Nicholas' East) in that city. On 23 June he was admitted to the parish, succeeding the late Rev. John Bissett. Bissett had been a bitter enemy of patronage; when Thomas Reid succeeded him at New Machar, Bissett used the induction sermon as an occasion to inveigh fiercely against patronage, and succeeded in exciting certain animosity against Reid.

Now at Second Charge, Aberdeen, a considerable portion of the congregation, having been under Mr. Bissett's tutelage until his death in 1756, left the church in disgust upon the arrival of the Moderate, George Campbell, and set up a meeting place of their own.² It may be said that the appointment of Campbell caused the formation of the first secession church in Aberdeen.³

The Second Charge originated in 1577. It held its services in the choir and crypt of old St. Nicholas' Church, which had been severed from the main building on 14 September 1596. The First Charge, it will be remembered, was that which the Rev. Colin Campbell, George's father, had held. This congregation,

¹. Keith, op. cit., p. xvi.
². Bruce, op. cit., p. 328.
³. Martin, op. cit., p. 190.
too, met in St. Nicholas', in the naves and transepts. So George
Campbell was back on territory that had been familiar to him as a
boy. His new parish contained for the most part the upper class of
the people of the city of Aberdeen.

Within half a year of his coming to Second Charge, Campbell
with Drs. Thomas Reid and John Gregory, both professors in King's
College, formed the Aberdeen Philosophical Society. The original
members of the group, besides these men, were Dr. David Skene,
physician and botanist, Mr. Robert Trail, afterwards minister of
Banff, and Mr. John Stewart, professor of mathematics in Marischal
College. To these were soon added Dr. Alexander Gerard, James
Beattie, and George Skene, all professors in Marischal College,
Mr. John Farquhar, minister of Nigg, and a number of less well-known
gentlemen. Campbell remained a member of this group down to the end
of the Society in 1773.

Soon nicknamed the "Wise Club," the Society's fame lies in the
fact that its discussions brought forth a number of the most note-
worthy cultural contributions made by Scottish thinkers during the
entire eighteenth century, for example: Reid's Inquiry into the
Human Mind on the Principle of Common Sense; Gregory's Comparative
View of Man and the Animal World; Beattie's Essay on Truth; Gerard's
Essay on Taste; and Campbell's own Dissertation on Miracles, his
answer to David Hume. The Society met on alternate Wednesdays at

1. The minutes for what may be presumed to be the first meeting are
dated 12 January 1758.

2. Davidson, A Philosophical Centenary: Reid and Campbell, p. 18.
five o'clock in a tavern called "The Red Lion," read and debated essays until eight o'clock, when they sat down to a modest repast, which concluded as the clock struck ten. In this group, Campbell showed himself to be witty in conversation, apt to laugh freely, and sometimes a bit absent-minded due to reflection.

Philosophy, science, history, religion, and many other topics occupied the attention of this group. Indeed, the wide range of subjects with which the members of the Society were fully conversant is a remarkable illustration of the broad cultural achievements of eighteenth century Scotland. Usually one member read a paper to the club, and discussion followed. But when the member appointed to read the paper was not ready with it, there was no lack of impromptu discussion, which, no matter where it started, always found its way to and ended on David Hume and his scepticism. There can be little doubt that it was in this group that Campbell developed his thorough familiarity with the philosophical writings of Hume.

When Campbell had been in Aberdeen about two years, Principal Pollack of Marischal College died. It seemed likely that either Professor Duncan or Professor Francis Skene would be appointed to the office. But Campbell, who at first had no thought of making application for the post, was prevailed upon to write to Archibald Duke of Argyle who had for years dispensed the government patronage of Scotland. In his letter, Campbell hinted at his relationship to

2. See Thomas Reid's letter to this effect, addressed to Hume, in Burton, Life and Correspondence of David Hume, Vol. II., pp. 154-156.
the Duke's family, and got the post, in August 1759, holding it in conjunction with the Second Charge. The fact that one of his ancestors was supposed to have held the basket into which the Great Marquis of Argyle's head toppled when that gentleman was beheaded played some part in influencing the Duke's decision.

Up to this time Campbell was unknown as an author, having published nothing except a sermon on the character of a minister as teacher and pattern, which he delivered before the Synod of Aberdeen on 7 April 1752. But he was soon to come before the world as a writer of considerable ability.

In 1748 David Hume had published his celebrated Essay on Miracles, which made a great noise in the learned world, and brought forth many opponents. Hume himself felt that he had discovered an incontrovertible argument against the possibility of miracles, "which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and consequently, will be useful so long as the world endures." ¹ To Hume's Essay Campbell first replied in a sermon preached before the provincial synod of Aberdeen on 9 October 1760. At their request, he moulded this sermon into the form of a dissertation and published it in 1762 as a Dissertation on Miracles.

The Dissertation established Campbell's reputation as a metaphysician and as a well-bred polemical writer. Before publishing it, he sent his manuscript to his old friend, Dr. Hugh Blair, in

Edinburgh. After Blair had read it, he passed it along to Hume, and then reported to Campbell that Hume had stated a few objections to what had been advanced; whereupon Campbell altered some expressions which the philosopher had complained of as offensive or too severe, before forwarding the material to the press. Upon publication, the Principal sent Hume a copy of the Dissertations, and Hume replied:

I own to you, that I never felt so violent an inclination to defend myself as at present, when I am thus fairly challenged by you; and I think I could find something specious, at least, to urge in my own defence: but as I had fixed a resolution, in the beginning of my life, always to leave the public to judge between my adversaries and me, without making any reply, I must adhere inviolably to this resolution, otherwise my silence on any future occasion, would be construed to be an inability to answer, and would be a matter of triumph against me.  

Shortly after its publication, Campbell's Dissertation was so popular that it was translated into French, Dutch, and German, and went through several English editions. On 1 October 1764, largely as a result of the importance of this writing, the neighbouring university of King's College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

For twelve years Campbell continued as Principal of Marischal College and as minister of Second Charge. During this period he became widely known as an excellent lecturer, and as Principal showed himself unassuming, mild, kind, and tender towards his colleagues. In the pulpit he was a universal favourite.

After a sermon delivered one Sunday by him in the town's church, a wit remarked, 'I have a woe to pronounce unto

1. Keith, op. cit., p. lxxxix., where Hume's letter to Campbell, dated 7 June 1762, is reprinted.
you, Principal — Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! ¹

During these years also Campbell turned his attention to scholarly pursuits, devoting considerable time to composing and revising his Philosophy of Rhetoric. In addition, he studied seriously Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and Italian, becoming proficient in all these tongues. For amusement he took up the science of botany.

Then on 26 June 1771, Campbell was elected by the Town Council of Aberdeen as Professor of Divinity in Marischal College. Here he succeeded his old friend, Dr. Alexander Gerard, who became Professor of Divinity in King's College. The new appointment made it necessary for him to relinquish his pastoral work at Second Charge, but he became minister of Greyfriars, an office conjoined with the professorship. To these two new posts he was admitted on 7 August 1771.

Now he had three offices to discharge — Principal, professor, and minister — the last of these requiring him to preach once every Sunday in one of the established churches. His new duties as professor were quite heavy, and he added to them considerably by doubling the number of lectures per week. This he did in spite of his extremely delicate health, which required constant care and attention. Keith offers an interesting insight into Campbell's study habits after his assumption of professorial duties:

Few men husbanded time more, or allowed themselves less relaxation. Intervals, between public meetings, or hours of business, which are commonly given to recreation, he generally employed in study. He

¹. Rodger, Aberdeen Doctors at Home and Abroad, p. 87.
usually arose by five in the morning, and was engaged in study, in one shape or other, till twelve at night, excepting when called to meals, interrupted by company, or engaged in other duties.\textsuperscript{1}

The new professor's views on the proper method of lecturing from a divinity chair provide an interesting insight into his spirit and temperament:

Gentlemen, the nature of my office has been much misunderstood. It is supposed that I am to teach you everything connected with the study of divinity. I tell you honestly, that I am to teach you nothing. Ye are not schoolboys. Ye are young men, who have finished your courses of philosophy, and ye are no longer to be treated as if ye were at school. Therefore I repeat it, I am to teach you nothing; but, by the grace of God, I will assist you to teach yourselves everything.\textsuperscript{2}

In this year 1771, one of Campbell's most controversial sermons was published. He had preached it before the synod in April, entitling it, "The Spirit of the Gospel a Spirit neither of Superstition nor of Enthusiasm." It is a typically Moderate sermon, asserting that the discoveries of revelation are the same as those which may be discovered by the light of natural reason, and urging men to put their trust in a sound mind and in good sense, shunning superstition and enthusiasm, which lead only to bigotry, fanaticism, and the corruption of true religion. As might be expected, this sort of doctrine was not favourably regarded in all quarters, and several bitter replies came forth.

\textsuperscript{1} Keith, op. cit., p. xiv.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. xxiii. Italics are his.
Two of these, both presented to the public anonymously, are worth noting: "The Detection of the dangerous tendency both for Christianity and Protestancy of a sermon said to be preached before an assembly of divines by G.C., D.D., on the Spirit of the Gospel," by Staurophilus; and, "Further Remarks, upon Dr. Campbell's late Synodical Sermon; to which are prefixed, (by way of Introduction) Some Observations on a Former Synodical Sermon by the Same Author," by an anonymous writer.

The former of these, Campbell replied to in an unpublished discourse which he apparently intended to prefix to some later edition of the sermon, entitled "Defence of the doctrine contained in the foregoing sermon ('The Spirit of the Gospel')."

He also took passing note in this article of the "Further Remarks, etc." mentioned in the above paragraph. Campbell's reply fills five notebooks and gives ample evidence of his working methods, being filled with marginal notes containing Scriptural buttresses of his arguments, and with considerable revision of phraseology in search of the most precise language. His opponents, Campbell maintains, have falsely charged that he has been deceived into thinking his own party, the Moderates, represent true religion. On the contrary, they have asserted, the Moderates are the foes of evangelical Christianity, not so much because of what they say, but because of what they leave unsaid. The Moderates,

1. Manuscript in possession of King's College Library, Aberdeen, "Defence of the doctrine contained in the foregoing sermon ('The Spirit of the Gospel')," which bears no date.
it is charged, have become so broadly tolerant that they have lost the central and significant emphases of true Christian religion. But these charges are aside from the main point of his sermon, Campbell replies. What he endeavoured to do was not simply to express his understanding of true religion, but his conviction that those who ordinarily regard themselves as the exponents of true Christian religion, namely those like his critics, are so zealous that they have become bigoted fanatics. "No ardour of charity, the inseparable attendant on genuine zeal, (is) there discoverable; no communication of the genial warmth of cordial affection."¹ His opponents overlook entirely the whole matter of necessary tolerance for differing points of view, and, in so doing, fail to see what is really most obvious, namely, that the fruits of true evangelical zeal and those of bigotry are not the same. The zeal of bigotry is "not of the family of love, and consequently has nothing in it of the zeal of the true Christian."²

In still another unpublished manuscript, entitled, "Theological Tracts: Tract I. (of implicit faith)" Campbell attacks the author of the "Detection" personally, holding it shameful that such a man who dares to call himself "a lover of the cross," and speaks of himself as "a member of the Aletheian Club," should be so uncharitable and so untruthful in his writings. The fact of the matter is, Campbell goes on, that this author who spoke of the Principal's sermon as showing "a dangerous tendency" has himself produced in the "Detection"

¹. Campbell, MS, "Defence of the doctrine, etc.," Book 5.
². Ibid., Book 5.
a work of which in a report to the S.P.C.K. in 1773 it was said that
the alleged growth of popery was in part imputed to the
uncommon pains taken by popish priests and their adherents
in dispersing copies of the "Detection" — and the effect
which the reading of that performance had on the simple
and the illiterate.¹

That he replies at all to such a scurrilous document, Campbell
continues, is due not to any merit which attaches to the arguments
of his pseudonymous opponent, but simply because he believes that
"the public hath a claim on me to do my best to redress an evil, to
which, however innocently and unintentionally, I have contributed."²

Here again we have insight into Campbell's character and
temperament. He writes of his conviction, that "when the interests
of religion and society demand one's voice, it is impious to continue
silent."³ Speaking of himself in contrast to his opponent,
Staurophilus, he writes that he is "a man who walks openly the king's
highway; who conscious of no crime, affects no concealment, one who
hath never given to the public what he is either afraid or ashamed
publicly to own."⁴ The gist of his argument concerning implicit
faith may be summarised briefly: in the term "implicit faith" what
is meant by "implicit" is simply "that in lieu of evidence one
acquiesceth in the testimony of him or them by whom the doctrine is

1. Campbell, "Theological Tracts, etc.," p. 5. MS is undated.
2. Ibid., p. 5.
3. Ibid., p. 6.
4. Ibid., p. 10.
It does not suggest that one believes on authority something of which one is totally ignorant:

... a man must understand what is meant, before he can either assent to it, or dissent from it. In other words ... a person cannot be said to believe that which never enter'd his thoughts, and of which consequently he never so much as formed an idea. But there is no ignorance implied here, except of the proofs. Assent to such testimony constitutes a real belief; whether it ought to be called rational belief is another matter entirely. "This depends entirely on the nature of the subject and the degree of credit due to the person or community in whose judgment we confide." We shall have occasion, when we come to Chapter VII, to see how Campbell is here expounding a distinction which forms a major part of his argument against David Hume on the subject of miracles.

William Laurence Brown, Campbell's successor as the Principal of Marischal College, may have had this controversy in mind when he wrote of Campbell:

He entertained the greatest respect for sincerity of religious profession, however erroneous he might account it; but hypocrisy he viewed with particular aversion. He was equally remote from bigotry and licentiousness in his religious principles, from lukewarmness and fanaticism. Bigotry he regarded as having a fatal tendency to sour the temper, and to harden the heart. Laxity of principle he considered as cutting the sinews of Christianity. Lukewarmness was, in his opinion, incompatible with conviction of the truth of religion; fanaticism was subversive of all its blessed effects.

2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Ibid., note opposite p. 22.
In 1776 Campbell published his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, a work which established his reputation as an excellent grammarian and a judicious critic. Bruce calls it, "a wonderful work of literary criticism to have been the production of a clergyman and a Principal."\(^1\) As recently as 1902, a British scholar set forth an abstract of this work, which he spoke of as "full of depth of thought and ingenious original research, as well as of practical utility to the student."\(^2\)

The same year, the Principal preached on the occasion of the national fast on account of the American war a sermon entitled, "The Nature, extent, and importance of the duty of Allegiance." Six thousand copies of this sermon were later published and circulated throughout America. Here again Campbell shows his unctious temperament. After maintaining that the British colonies in America had no right, either reasonable or Scriptural, to throw off their allegiance, and humourously describing the terms upon which America was willing to be reconciled to England, he goes on to suggest that America should be allowed to be independent, rather than that Great Britain should continue the war.

The following year, 1777, Campbell preached before the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge a sermon later published at their request, on "The Success of the First Publishers of the Gospel considered as a Proof of its Truth." During 1779, when the country

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was upset over the proposals made to repeal the statutes which had imposed persecution on the Roman Catholics, he viewed the proceedings with disgust. The Town Council of Aberdeen on 29 January had resolved to oppose the repeal of these Acts of William III, considering their abolition to be "of most dangerous consequence to the civil and religious liberties of this country."¹ And they had further resolved to spend the money of the corporation in the maintenance of persecution. Here the Principal showed his willingness to stand up for his convictions, even when it meant opposing the main citizens of Aberdeen, even the Council which had appointed him. In this sermon, he wrote:

For the sake of God, men will divest themselves of humanity; and to advance their Church, will sacrifice every remain of virtue, will even turn assassins and incendiaries. But how few, in comparison, can be persuaded for God's sake, to make a sacrifice of their pride, of their revenge, of their malice, and other unruly passions? Who can be induced to be humble, to be meek, to be humane, to be charitable, to be forgiving, and to adopt their Master's rule of doing to others as they would that others should do to them .... Permit me, then, my dear countrymen, fellow-christians, and fellow-protestants, to beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that you would maturely weigh this momentous business, and not suffer your minds, by any means, to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.²

Such talk brought a Protestant mob down upon Professor Campbell's house which, calling him "Pope Campbell," proceeded to smash all his windows, ignorantly supposing him to be favourable to Popery.

Also in 1779 Campbell preached at the assizes in Aberdeen a

². Campbell, "An Address upon the Alarms in regard to Popery," Aberdeen, 1779.
sermon on "The Happy Influence of Religion on Civil Society," later published at Edinburgh. Unfortunately, the Principal did not often write out his sermons in full. Many that he did compose, chiefly occasional discourses for the service of Holy Communion, were never published, and some consequently have been lost to the student of his thought.

The next work that he sent to the printer, and the last that he lived to publish, was his Translation of the Gospels, printed in 1789. Largely because of the critical materials — certain preliminary dissertations and explanatory notes — but partly, too, because of its non-partisan spirit, this work won great favour, and had by 1834 gone through seven editions. It was incorporated in two other works: a life of Jesus Christ, and a translation of the entire New Testament, both published after Campbell's death.¹

Other published works, all sent to the printer by friends after Campbell's death, are Sermons on Various Subjects, edited by Campbell and Gerard, 1799; Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, 1800; Essay on Christian Temperance and Self-Denial, bound with the foregoing lectures, 1800; The Four Gospels, a new edition of his Translation, 1803; Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, 1807; Lectures on the Pastoral Character, 1811; Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1814; and, The New Testament, translated from the original Greek (with others), 1827. One published work, his Remarks on Dr.

¹. See Angus, The Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, based on Campbell's translation. See also, The New Testament, translated from the original Greek, by Campbell, Doddridge, and MacKnight, Aberdeen, 1839.
Paterson's Will bears no date, but was evidently printed in 1794.1

Several unpublished manuscripts are in the possession of the King's College Library, Aberdeen. We have already referred to two of these: "Defence of the doctrine contained in the foregoing sermon ('The Spirit of the Gospel')" and "Theological Tracts: Tract I. (of implicit faith)." In addition, mention should be made here of the "Defence of the Conduct of Marischal College, In relation to the present Scheme of Union, against the Attack made on it by the Principal and six Professors of King's College, In a letter to a friend by a member of Marischal College," which is autographed by Campbell and bears the date of October 1786; his "Strictures on Dodwell's Pseudesis, in five sections," which is undated; and two autograph letters, one dated 30 September 1762, and probably addressed to the third Earl of Bute, Chancellor of Marischal College, transmitting an address to King George III on the birth of a Prince, and the other dated 22 July 1795, addressed to Lord Mansfield, and containing Campbell's resignation as Principal of Marischal College.

It is said that when Campbell was appointed to the professorship of divinity at Marischal College in 1771 his predecessor, Dr. Alexander Gerard, made a slighting remark about the new man's indolence. The account of Dr. Campbell's powers of application which the foregoing paragraphs attest shows that if the remark was originally true it was not long justified. In addition to producing his lectures, sermons, and various publications, he learned German when he was nearly

seventy, in order to be able to read Luther's translation of the New Testament.

Three of the works mentioned above must be discussed briefly here for their biographical interest, and because they do not warrant a place in the more systematic treatment of Campbell's thought in the following chapters: Remarks on Dr. Paterson's Will; "Strictures on Dodwell's Paraenesis, in five sections;" and, "Defence of the Conduct of Marischal College, etc." The reference in the first of these is to the will of a Dr. John Paterson of Pancras Lane, London, who had established a bursary which Campbell, as Principal of Marischal College had to administer. We cannot enter fully into the details of the legal dispute between Campbell and Alexander Paterson, the Hammermen Trades of Aberdeen, and their advocate, Matthew Ross, Esq., but the dispute hinged on the meaning of a phrase in the will which said that the Principal was to make the award to "any of the two scholars who shall happen to be a bursar in the said college."¹ Under the terms of the will, two scholars were to hold bursaries in the Grammar School, preference to be given first to Dr. Paterson's relatives, then to scholars by the name of Paterson, and finally to sons of Hammermen burgesses in Aberdeen. In this case, Alexander Paterson, a shoemaker, claimed, with the support of the other memorialists, that Campbell had misinterpreted the will and abused his power in failing to grant the plaintiff's son, Joseph, a bursary for 1793-94.

¹. Remarks on Dr. Paterson's Will, p. 1. This is an excerpt from the will, as quoted by Campbell. Italics are his.
While Joseph Paterson was not a bursar of Marischal College his work in the "versions" which determined who should receive all bursar¬ies had been such that he was not dishonoured by the express note of incapacity sometimes pronounced by the examiners, namely, non habile. By a queer stretch of language, the petitioners held this to mean that he was, therefore, qualified to hold a bursary, and, not having been declared ineligible to be a bursar, was equivalent to one. Campbell replied most courteously, but nonetheless firmly, that the mere fact that Joseph Paterson had not been dishonoured by the examiners by being named non habile can hardly mean that he is a bursary holder, or even that he is qualified to be one. There are three distinctions which ought to enter into the discussion, Campbell goes on, bursar, non-bursar, and non habile. Either of the latter two is hardly the first, although they admittedly differ from one another. Consequently, he concludes, he had no alternative but to award the bursary to another student, one Charles Blake, who was the highest man in the "versions."

That he would even discuss the argument of the memorialists, the Principal adds, is for the sake of future Principals of the college, as well as for the sake of truth and justice in the present dispute. Whenever there is more than one eligible candidate for the Paterson bursary, the Principal must be bound to award it to the man who is most proficient in learning; he can do nothing less.¹

¹ Ibid., pp. 5ff.
Here again we see Campbell's high sense of duty and his unwillingness to compromise conviction. He had been Patron to the Trades in Aberdeen since 1783,¹ and those who were now taking offence at his conduct in awarding the Paterson bursary were among his close friends and neighbours. In fact, he says that he was moved by personal considerations towards an entirely different course of action; he would have preferred to make the award to Joseph Paterson, but duty forbade such an illegal and academically unwise decision.²

The "Strictures on Dodwell's Paraenesis" is of interest because it reveals that Campbell had been at work on the thesis concerning church government which he later developed in his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History for some time before these were presented to the public. In fact, the "Strictures" are embodied in the Lectures, and are intended to supply answers to the following questions which are discussed at somewhat greater length there: 1. Are bishops entitled to prerogatives ensured by promises made only to apostles?; 2. Are bishops entitled in particular to pronounce authoritatively on the admission or retention of men's sins?; 3. Was ever the independency of the bishops so great as the Paraenesis represents it?; 4. Was James, son of Alpheus, Primate among the apostles, or was there a primacy in the see of Jerusalem?; 5. Was ever the form of ecclesiastical polity of so great consequence as the Paraenesis assigns to it? To all these queries, Campbell replies with a simple, No, and lays the groundwork

¹ Bain, Merchant and Craft Guilds, a History of Aberdeen Incorporated Trades, p. 186.
² Campbell, Remarks on Dr. Paterson's Will, p. 7.
for the revival of the New Testament conception of the church which he expounds in his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, marked by a singularly non-partisan broad churchmanship.

In his "Defence of the Conduct of Marischal College, etc." Campbell replies to "An Estimate of the Expediency, Justice, and Legality, of the Plan proposed by the Marischal College of Aberdeen for a Union of it with the University and King's College, by the Principal and Professors of the University," probably published a short time before his own work.1 As early as 8 November 1754 the Principals and Masters of both colleges had agreed in a joint meeting on certain Articles of Union. These had been republished by Marischal College people on 20 July 1786, together with "Outlines of a Plan for uniting King's and Marischal Universities of Aberdeen, with a view to render the System of Education more complete." But the Principal and six professors of King's College felt that they were being rushed into the matter, and that their point of view was not receiving fair consideration in the public discussion. They held that Campbell and certain others of the Marischal faculty had made moves relating to the civil authorities of which they had not advised their colleagues either at Marischal or at King's College.

To this Campbell simply replies that the critics have been misinformed. While it may be true that certain of the Marischal faculty members have spoken to influential non-college people concerning the proposed union, and have made public statements concerning their own feelings in the matter, every official action taken by

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1. All the following material is based directly upon the pamphlets mentioned, which are in the possession of King's College Library.
Marischal College has been transmitted to the King's College faculty for their information and consideration. Campbell then expresses the hope that mere partisanship will not stand in the way of a just and full discussion of the whole proposal to improve the educational system of the University. His whole essay is marked by what Brown has called his "unaffected piety, disinterested benevolence, and predominant self-command."¹

Mention should now be made of the Principal's conduct in the church courts. As might be expected, he made no attempt to shine here, but when aroused gave a good account of himself. "Some of his speeches in the General Assembly displayed so much knowledge, discovered so much liberality, and were delivered with so much animation, that they will not soon be forgotten by any who heard them."²

In all great matters, Campbell belonged to the Moderate party, and generally supported the laws of the state regarding patronage. But he was no slavish party man. He had far too much native candour for that, and

... really was not qualified, had he attempted it, to be leader of a party. For he would not renounce his opinion, except upon conviction -- he would not ask a vote in a matter of right or wrong -- and he would not make those concessions, which leaders of parties are, in some cases, obliged to make, in order to conciliate, or to preserve, the affections of their partisans.³

When aroused Campbell was a powerful master of argument, at his best in extempore replies to other men's prepared speeches. Here his

command of language and his integrity of character showed to full advantage. In a day when extravagant sectarian language was often used in public debate, Campbell showed commendable restraint. He is described by Keith as a "man of mild disposition, and even temper, ... not much subject to passion."1

Though Campbell was a Moderate he was not, as some members of that party were, a modern Socinian or rationalist, attempting to explain away the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. However, characteristically "Moderate," he had little use or time for abstruse theological questions concerning such topics as the Trinity, or the nature of Christ's satisfaction. Love of truth was the outstanding feature of his approach to all questions, and he showed, as in his controversy with Hume, a willingness to expose his faith to criticism. He joined with his love of truth a genuine liberality of thought that permitted him to be generous with those who differed from him in religious matters.

In his seventy-second year, Campbell's delicate constitution, long subjected to violent colics, broke down and he became very seriously ill. During his confinement, Mrs. Campbell attended him with such assiduity that she injured her own health. The Principal, who had believed his recovery hopeless -- and, in a conversation with his friend, the Rev. Dr. David Cruden, had expressed the desire to be relieved, and professed his faith in his Saviour -- made a remarkable recovery. Though his strength was impaired, he was able to resume the

duties of his office. But Mrs. Campbell, worn out by the strain of caring for her husband over the years, died early in the next year on 16 February 1792.

After her death, which struck him very heavily, Campbell ceased almost all public activity, except for preaching an occasional sermon. He spent most of his time correcting works already published, and preparing his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History for the printer. On 18 October 1794, he offered his resignation as Professor to the Town Council, on condition that they elect one of three men as his successor, either Mr. David Cruden of Nigg, Mr. James Shirrefs of Aberdeen, or Mr. James Fraser of Drumoak.1 This the Council refused to do, so Campbell held on to his post until 2 June 1795, when he relinquished it in favour of William Laurence Brown, a man of whom he heartily approved. To his brethren in the Presbytery of Aberdeen, the old man sent the following characteristic letter:

I hope I shall not be misunderstood by any to mean, by this deed, a resignation of the character of a minister of the Gospel, a servant of Christ. In this character I glory, so far am I from intending to resign it but with my breath; nor do I mean to retain it only as a title. For if, by the blessing of God, I should yet be able to do any real service, either in defence, or in illustration, of the Christian cause, I shall think it my honour, as well as my duty, and the highest gratification of which I am capable, to be so employed.2

Some months later, on 18 January 1796, after receiving a pension of 300 pounds from the government, Campbell resigned the

2. Letter to the Moderator of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, dated 11 June 1795.
principalship, which was also conferred upon Dr. William Laurence Brown. In a letter to Lord Mansfield, Campbell expresses his emotions on ending his academic career:

It is to me a real self-denial, I confess, to be no longer a member of Marischal College. I was ever proud of my connection with it; I was proud of my colleagues; above all (if, without offence, I dare mention it) I was proud of our connection with the worthy nobleman who has done our university so much honour in accepting the office of Chancellor ... Your Lordship will do me the honour to believe, that it (Campbell's resignation, that is) arose principally from a conviction, that it would conduce most to public benefit.1

Then, early in his seventy-seventh year, the old man suffered a paralytic stroke which deprived him of the power of speech. Finally, on 6 April 1796, George Campbell died. He was buried in St. Nicholas' graveyard, beside his wife, on the west side of the entrance from Union Street, next to James Chalmers of Westburn. The inscription on the altar-type tombstone, restored in 1896 by a Farquharson of Whitehouse, reads:

MEMORIA SACRUM
GEORGII CAMPBELL, S.S.T.D., COLLEGII
MARISCHALIANI APUD ABREDONENSES
PRAEFFECTI, THEOLOGIAE PROFESSORIS
VERBIQUE DIVINI MINISTRI, QUI VI.
DIE APRILIS, ANNO MDCCXCVI., MORTEM
OBIIT, ANNO NATUS LXXVII., QUIN ET
GRATIAE FARQUHARSON, UXORIS,
VITA FUNCTAE DIE FEBRUARIIS XVI.,
ANNO MDCCXCII., AETATIS LXII.

An original portrait of Campbell, done in oils by Archibald Robertson, hangs in Trinity Hall, Aberdeen, the home of the Incorporated Trades of that city. A copy of it may be found in Marischal

1. Manuscript letter, in possession of King's College Library, Aberdeen, dated 22 July 1795, unpublished.
College, painted by Sir George Reid, P.R.S.A., and the same portrait has been reproduced in the stained glass window of Mitchell Hall, at Marischal College.

Two appraisals of George Campbell, Moderate, made a century apart, will provide a fitting close to this brief life. The first is part of the eulogy preached by Dr. William Laurence Brown, Campbell's successor as Principal and Professor of Divinity in Marischal College, at West Church, Aberdeen, on 17 April 1796:

He was satisfied that the more the pure dictates of the Gospel were studied, the more they would approve themselves to the mind, and bring forth, in the affections and conduct, all the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The unadulterated dictates of Christianity, he was, therefore, only studious to commend and inculcate, and knew perfectly to discriminate them from the inventions and traditions of men. His chief study ever was, to direct belief to the great object of practice; and, without this, he viewed the most orthodox profession as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.1

The second is taken from the opening lecture of the Logic class in Marischal College during the session of 1896-97, as delivered by Dr. William L. Davidson, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Aberdeen:

Theologian, rhetorician, preacher, he was essentially a metaphysician; and, had he devoted himself wholly to Philosophy, it is not unreasonable to believe that he would have left a reputation in this field not inferior to that of any of his countrymen.2

In the succeeding chapters of this thesis, we turn to a systematic consideration of Campbell's thought; first as preacher, then as

2. Davidson, A Philosophical Centenary: Reid and Campbell, p. 21.
theologian, church historian, rhetorician, translator, and apologist. It is in this final role, as the defender of the faith against David Hume's scepticism, that George Campbell has been best known, yet his Dissertation on Miracles is but a small part of the works he has prepared. When the many sides of Campbell's thought have been examined, it will be possible for us in the final chapter to make our own appraisal of his significance, which may then be set over against the two appraisals with which we have concluded this chapter.
CHAPTER III.

CAMPBELL AS PREACHER

Four years after ordination and installation in his first charge at Banchory Ternan, George Campbell had become well enough known throughout Aberdeenshire as a preacher to receive an invitation to address the Synod of Aberdeen at its meeting on 7 April 1752. He chose the subject, "The Character of a Minister of the Gospel as a Teacher and Pattern." This sermon is of interest because it reveals clearly the conception of preaching held by the young divine and offers some insight into the principles which were to guide him in all his later public addresses. It was most cordially received by the Synod and published at their request in the latter part of the same year.

After a brief summary of the contents of this earliest of Campbell's published works, consideration will be given to his later writings on the same theme, as these are found in the Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence and the Lectures on the Pastoral Character, both published posthumously, in 1807 and 1811 respectively. The remainder of the chapter will deal with the occasional sermons delivered by Campbell during his career in Aberdeen, and close with an appraisal of his pulpit work.

In the Synodical sermon, Campbell defines the aim of preaching as the reformation of the hearers in heart and life. By preaching the minister seeks to impart to the people knowledge of "the being, the attributes, the transactions, the designs, the laws of the all-perfect GOD the supreme, the only potentate of heaven and earth, the
creator, the preserver, the governor of the universe."¹ This knowledge comes to man by way of divine revelation and the natural unassisted powers of man could never have discovered it. It is knowledge intended by God for the instruction of all mankind. Consequently, it must be delivered by the preacher in all its own beautiful simplicity.

But the preacher must always remember, and must continually remind his hearers, that salvation comes not by the bare assent of the understanding to the Gospel; on the contrary, "this assent can only be available, in so far as it operates a change upon the disposition; that if it have not this effect, it will but inhanse (sic) their guilt, and aggravate their condemnation."² The preacher is to "imprint in indelible characters upon the hearts of the attentive; that our ALL for time and for eternity depends upon our conduct."³

Here we see the "Moderate" characteristics of Campbell's viewpoint clearly exhibited. This is "moral" preaching, a type rather infrequently heard before the rise of this new party in the church.

The preacher, Campbell goes on, must not act as though he had domination over the faith of others. He must rather be related to the people as helper, prompter in divine things, as one "who would compel them to believe and obey the truth, solely by enlightning (sic)


². Ibid., p. 23. Italics are his.

³. Ibid., p. 16. Italics are his.
their minds, and by persuasion. ¹ Therefore, he must be self-effacing, not seeking his own headship over the people, but possessing a generous zeal for the headship of Christ. In this way he will be a light "whose uniform splendour cherishes, enlivens, invigorates the soul, and clearly indicates the way."²

But preaching is more than oral instruction in the tenets of Christianity. Campbell quotes with approval the proverb to the effect that example goes farther than precept. Example, he holds, illustrates more clearly and enforces more powerfully the duties of life than precept possibly can. A good life is the most effectual teaching. "This is preaching, not indeed to the ear, but to the eye, the brightest and the noblest of our senses."³ Whereas oral instruction in the truths of Christianity provides abstract lessons, a truly Christian life embodies the precepts and shows them to be practicable. The words of the preacher of exemplary life come with greatest advantage as his doctrines and practice correspond.

Therefore, the preacher must avoid such faults as intemperance, impiety, levity, and giving offence. Not only do these weaken the power of his message, but they also draw criticism upon the whole order of clergy, and, still worse, may even bring religion itself under suspicion and into contempt.

Campbell's sermon closes with several admonitions addressed

1. Ibid., p. 27. Italics are his.
2. Ibid., p. 31. Italics are his.
3. Ibid., p. 32. Italics are his.
to the lay members of the Synod. Their duty is to attend church and hear the Gospel. But hearing alone is not sufficient; mere formal attendance upon the ordinances of religion is not enough. Campbell quotes the Epistle of James, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." The hearers must absorb the instruction of the preacher so that it may mend their hearts and improve their lives. They must come to church not to observe what is to be found in the discourse which reproves another's conduct. "Mind thou then thy own province, which is thy own reformation; and if thou look well to that, thou'lt find work enough."1

The note of humility which runs throughout this sermon is sounded over and over again in all of George Campbell's work. To the end of his life he remained a foe of all self-display, and a staunch champion of Christian humility. It is not known whether as a youth he had read William Law's great book, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, first published in 1728, but it is certain that he shared Law's conviction that to serve Christ self-importantly is to be both a thief and a liar.

It has the guilt of stealing, as it gives to ourselves those things which belong only to God; it has the guilt of lying, as it is denying the truth of our state, and pretending to be something we are not.2

In 1772, twenty years after this Synodical sermon, Campbell began to lecture to the students of divinity in Marischal College on pulpit eloquence and the pastoral character. These lectures were

1. Campbell, op. cit., p. 68.
composed without any view to publication, but the author's friend Dr. James Fraser, minister of Drumoak in Aberdeenshire, edited them and had them published after Campbell's death. These later writings show clearly the Principal's close adherence to the principles which he established in the days at his first charge in Banchory.

He writes:

The duties of a Christian pastor may all be comprised under these two heads, instructing and governing. The first of these, from the different ways in which the people may be instructed, admits a subdivision into two, namely, teaching and example. For assisting you in regard to the proper discharge of the duty of teaching, I have given you a course of Lectures on Christian Eloquence. I now proceed to give you my sentiments on that propriety of character, and exemplary conduct, which every minister ought carefully to observe. Indeed it may be said that the duties of the private life, of every Christian and of every pastor, are materially the same. Love of God, and love to man, constitute the sum of both.¹

Preaching is one great part, if not the principal part of the charge which the apostles received from the Lord. "And without de¬rogating from ... (the) sacraments, preaching may be said to be of more consequence than they ... It is besides the great means of con¬version as well as edification."²

Again here Campbell underscores his conviction that the sermon must be delivered in a style that is simple and perspicuous. "The immediate end is direct apprehension."³ Thus technical language

¹ Lectures on the Pastoral Character, pp. 1-2. Italics are his.
² Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence, pp. 165-66.
³ Ibid., p. 290.
should be avoided and the preacher should endeavour to express himself in the style and sentiments of the Bible.

I have often recommended, and can scarce sufficiently inculcate in all students in theology, to be more conversant with their Bible, than with the writings of any of the most celebrated divines, to whatever sect or party they belong...¹

But the preacher must be careful not to use the Biblical style itself in an unmeaningful manner. There are many passages about the sense of which the most learned interpreters are not agreed. To employ these in discourse, without interpretation, is to speak to the people in an unknown tongue.

Though the immediate end of preaching is direct apprehension, the ultimate end is the practice of what is apprehended. "And the knowledge and belief of the hearers are no farther salutary to them, than this great end is reached."²

All theological study is a preparation for preaching, furnishing the minister with the materials whereby he instructs the people in the knowledge and practice of the tenets of the Christian religion. The instruction must be given sincerely, with meekness and reverence, but also with fortitude and steadiness.

On the whole matter of teaching by example, Campbell repeats verbatim in the Lectures on the Pastoral Character certain sections of his Synodical sermon of 1752.³ The Lord, he writes, "seems to

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¹ Pulpit Eloquence, p. 292.
² Ibid., p. 297.
³ Compare the Lectures on the Pastoral Character, pp. 6ff., and "The Character of a Minister," pp. 31 ff.
have considered a Christian example as the most efficacious teaching. "Let your light," says He, "so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven."  

We may now summarise Campbell's views on preaching. It is clear that he considers preaching the first and chief task of the ministry. All theological training and study is for the end of preparing the preacher to present distinctly the tenets of Christianity. Distinctness is best served by the use of Biblical style and sentiments. But preaching is more than imparting the knowledge of God by oral precept; it is also the attempt to persuade the people to practice the Christian life. To this end, the preacher is required to embody Christian virtue in his own life, in order that he might personally exemplify the practicability of the way of life in which he seeks to instruct the people. The preacher who does this will proclaim the Gospel with deep personal conviction and with convincing power. The people in their turn must hear the word and do it, so that their reformation of heart and life may be effectuated.

This view of preaching is in accord with the New Testament conception and maintains the basic and essential role of preaching in the life of the church. Whether or not the content of Campbell's preaching was such as to improve the lives of his hearers is a question to be left over until his occasional sermons have been examined.

1. Pastoral Character, p. 8.
The Principal did not often write his sermons, and many that he did compose were never published, so that many have been lost to the student of his thought. Fortunately, however, four of his most important sermons, in addition to the one already considered, were preserved among his effects and appended to the 1812 edition of his Dissertation on Miracles: "The Spirit of the Gospel a Spirit neither of Superstition nor of Enthusiasm," preached before the Synod of Aberdeen on 9 April 1771; "The Nature, extent, and importance of the duty of Allegiance," delivered in Aberdeen on the occasion of a national fast on account of the American war, 12 December 1776; "The Success of the First Publishers of the Gospel considered as a Proof of its Truth," preached before the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge at Edinburgh on 6 June 1777; and, "The Happy Influence of Religion on Civil Society," presented at the assizes in Aberdeen 23 May in 1779. The same volume also contains an address which Campbell intended to make before the General Assembly in 1779, but for reasons of health did not, "An Address to the People of Scotland upon the Alarms that have been raised in regard to Popery." These five writings will form the basis of our analysis and evaluation of the Principal's preaching.

Campbell's sermon on "The Spirit of the Gospel, etc." is based on II Timothy 2:7, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The sermon has four main divisions: first, an exposition of the meaning of the apostle's language in the text; second, an inquiry into the "spirit of false
religion, as here denominated the spirit of fear,1 and its opposition to the spirit of true religion; third, an inquiry into the spirit of true religion, "here styled the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"2; and, fourth, some reflections on what has been advanced in the foregoing sections.

Campbell holds that by spirit is meant "an habitual frame or temper."3 The apostle is describing the temper of soul which the religion of Jesus inspires in the faithful. Consequently, he goes on, the spirit of the Gospel would be a fit and equivalent term for that character of spirit which is marked by power, love, soundness of mind. Infidel writers have commonly adopted the pretense that religion is synonymous with superstition, or enthusiasm, or both. But though religion is sometimes blended with these, Campbell insists that in its true nature it is totally distinct from them and participates in neither.

False religion does rely on superstition to create the spirit of fear. But this is precisely the difference between it and true religion: the love which animates true religion excludes fear, the fear which awes the superstitious excludes love.

For this reason it has been justly observed of superstition, that whatever the outward appearance it assumes, there is always more or less of demonism at bottom.4

Again, false religion does contain a degree of malevolent enthusiasm.

2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
Those who are gripped by the spirit of fear are led to hate those whom they suppose to be the enemies of their deity.

Opposition is then branded with the name of impiety, and contradiction with that of blasphemy. Their own revenge ... they dignify with the title of zeal; and malice against the person of an antagonist, they call love to his soul.¹

In the third section Campbell turns to the characteristics of true religion. He decides to devote the whole of his attention to soundness of mind, on the grounds that this is the least frequently considered.

A sound mind is here opposed to a frantic or disordered imagination, wherein the light of reason is obscured, if not extinguished, by the terrors of superstition, or the arrogance of fanaticism.²

The doctrines of revelation, Campbell continues, coincide with the discoveries we make by the light of our natural reason. When men forgot that a sound mind, good sense, had a concern in religion, the corruption of superstition and enthusiasm tainted the doctrine, morals, and worship of Christianity, fanaticism thrived, and true religion was perverted.

True religion is "the offspring of knowledge, and nourished by love, its object is inward purity."³ It is deeply concerned with truth, "not that men may be either allured or terrified into a verbal profession of what they do not believe (the grossest insult that can be offered to truth) but that they may attain a rational conviction."⁴

² Ibid., p. 17.
³ Ibid., p. 44.
⁴ Ibid., p. 44.
The final section contains four conclusions Campbell draws from the foregoing: first, that though the spirit of true religion is different from and opposite to that of false religion, a man may have a measure of both within his character; second, from the spirit of a sect or party within the church it is not always possible to infer with justice what spirit predominates in an individual member of the party; third, "that that set of opinions and practices is the most dangerous, which looks with the malignest aspect on love, and tends most to contract its circle;"¹ and, fourth, that some of the strongest objections of the infidels affect not the Gospel itself but only the corruptions men have introduced into it.

The sermon ends with an appeal to the presbyters to live according to the spirit of the Gospel, to "show forth in everything, the meekness, the gentleness, the moderation of Christ."² Thus the power of true religion will overcome superstition and enthusiasm, bigotry and rancour.

One sees evidence in this sermon both of the toleration and of the rationalism which had been developed by seventeenth century thinkers and was being put into practice in all phases of thought and life during the eighteenth. Reason had become the primary criterion of truth; every conclusion was tested by it, in the religious field as in any other.

2. Ibid., p. 64.
A person...who surveys the course of English theology during the eighteenth century will have no difficulty in recognising that throughout all discussions, underlying all controversies, and common to all parties, lies the assumption of the supremacy of reason in matters of religion....Rationalism was not an anti-Christian sect outside the Church making war against religion. It was a habit of thought ruling all minds, under the conditions of which all alike tried to make good the particular opinions they might happen to cherish.

Campbell, of course, does not make the claim here that Reason can discover the truths of divine revelation; he does, however, suggest that the Christian religion offers a divine revelation which coincides with what natural reason does discover. One feels that the Principal is inclined to believe that the religion which can be discovered by the light of natural reason is a "republication" of the religion of Jesus, but it would be manifestly unfair to charge him with this position on the mere basis of his vagueness with respect to the uniqueness of the revelation in Christ Jesus.

Campbell's sermon on "The Nature, extent, and importance of the duty of Allegiance" is of special interest because it reveals quite clearly his deep conviction that the preacher is entitled to deal with any subject in a sermon, provided that he does it for the purpose of pointing out to the people what the precepts of Jesus command, and what they prohibit. If the teaching of the Gospel concerns at all men's conduct as citizens, no minister can

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be excused from treating even so political a subject as this.\textsuperscript{1}

The pulpit has often been employed in the service of error. Shall it never be used for the advancement of truth? It has often been perverted to be instrumental in kindling persecution. Shall it therefore be accounted improper to use it in recommending the moderation, meekness, and the gentleness of Christ? Besides, will those who abuse the pulpit, by employing it to a bad purpose, be the less disposed to do so, because nobody dares oppose them from the pulpit?\textsuperscript{2}

The text chosen is Proverbs 24:21, "Meddle not with them that are given to change." This Campbell takes to mean that Christians are prohibited from favouring innovations in matters of government, or concurring in violent measures for the purpose of bringing about some change in the governors or the form of government. Such alterations as are regularly and constitutionally made are, of course, not prohibited by this word of Scripture. But "the general precept to be observed by the people in regard to their rulers is, to obey them."\textsuperscript{3} Here Campbell quotes with approval St. Paul's words in Romans 13:1, 2, 5: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers"; "He who resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God"; "Be ye subject, therefore, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake."

These sayings do not imply that resistance to governors is in every case unlawful for the Christian citizen. Obedience is our

\textsuperscript{1} "The Nature, extent, and importance of the duty of Allegiance," appended to Campbell's Dissertation on Miracles, in which the sermons have their own pagination, pp. 123-124.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp. 125-126.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 131.
obligation only so long as the government remains the means appointed by providence for promoting the important end, the good of society. But a government may adopt particular measures which do not serve the end for which governments exist, because governors are but men and fallible. At this point, a Christian must decide whether by resistance to this particular measure, he will lose the bands of society. There are many bad measures adopted by the ruling powers "which nevertheless could not do half the mischief that would necessarily ensue from the subversion of authority." Are we then, Campbell asks, never to resist a bad measure, a bad law, or a bad government? How can we amend or improve civil affairs? He answers his own query,

To attempt the amendment by force, that is, by subverting the public peace, and throwing all into confusion, is to seek to attain a distant good, about the attainment of which we are uncertain, at the price of a certain and immediate evil, in all probability greater than the good can compensate, if attained.

Campbell then goes on to the center of the present controversy between Britain and America, the right of taxing. That right, he argues, is favoured by custom, by the colonial charters, and by the practice of the legislature in other articles. He dismisses the complaint of the colonists that they are being taxed without consent, on the grounds that if consent were

2. Ibid., p. 134.
3. Ibid., p. 140.
necessary no one would be bound by a law except those who voted for it. The American infatuation with a republican type of government is what has misled them into this revolt. They, and many British, have failed to see that it is impossible to reconcile Christianity with the idol of a republic.¹

The proposals of the colonists are laughable; they demand all the privileges of British subjects,—inheritance, succession, offices, honours and dignities—equally with the natives of Britain, and in return they offer whatever they please, and, if they please, nothing at all.²

Certain it is, however, that their terms of reconciliation, if they can be called terms, where all the concessions are extracted from one side, and nothing engaged for on the other, are, on every principle of good sense, utterly unworthy of regard.³

One would now expect Campbell to go on to urge that the strongest military measures be taken against the Americans, but instead he concludes the sermon with a somewhat more typical and usual liberality.

Better far to let them have their beloved independence. I am not sure that this would not have been the best measure from the beginning....let us consider them as objects of our pity more than our indignation. In behalf of the mere populace, the unthinking multitude, it may with truth be pleaded almost in every insurrection, that their ignorance is their apology. They know not what they do. They are but

². Ibid., p. 167f.
³. Ibid., p. 169.
the tools of a few aspiring, interested, and designing men, both on their side of the water, and on ours. Already, alas! they have severely felt the effects of their folly. Let us ardently pray to the Father of lights and of mercy, that he would open the eyes of the people, and turn the hearts of their leaders.¹

Professor G. D. Henderson writes of the Moderates, in connection with the matter of patronage in the Scottish church, that they were a party "who placed law before liberty and authority above conscience, and were prepared to enforce discipline and order and the will of the organized community even at the risk of the repression of the individual and the restriction of rights."² Something of that same spirit seems to move the Principal here, but he remains too much the advocate of toleration, too much the champion of moderation, meekness, and gentleness to complete his sermon without the conciliatory phrases quoted immediately above.³

The sermon, "The Success of the First Publishers of the Gospel as a Proof of its Truth," delivered before the annual meeting of the SPCK at Edinburgh on 6 June 1777, called forth

3. Perhaps an American citizen of the 20th century, long indoctrinated in his own schools to believe that the Revolutionary War was "holy" may be forgiven if he finds this work of Campbell quite strangely reasoned. Its merit would seem to attach to the abstract portions of the discussion, such as the definition of the bounds of obedience.
from that body the following resolution:

RESOLVED,
That the thanks of this Society be given to the Reverend Dr. Campbell, for his excellent sermon preached this day before them; and that he be desired to permit the same to be printed for the use of the Society.

JAMES FORREST, Clerk

A study of the sermon indicates that the Society's judgement was warranted, for Campbell here exhibits most clearly his skill and his spirit in preaching. The text is I Corinthians 1:25, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The development is three-fold: the foolishness of the doctrine; the weakness of its publishers; and the improvement to be made of the lessons implied under the first two heads.

The doctrine of the cross on which all hinged for Christians was exposed to universal dislike and derision in the early days of Christendom.

Considered as an article of faith in this new religion, as exhibiting the expiation of sin, and consequently as the foundation of the sinner's hope of divine pardon and acceptance, to men principled as they were, it both shocked their understanding, and was humiliating to their pride.

And considered as a practical lesson, as evidence of what the followers of the Lord might themselves expect to receive, the


doctrine of the cross might have been expected to alienate even the disciples. Again, considered as a memorable historical event, the cross was "exceedingly disgusting" and contradictory to all that men expect to be the lot of Heaven's favourites.

Crucifixion was incomparably more disgraceful in the Roman Empire than any kind of death known in any part of eighteenth century Christendom. In short, the cross was sheer foolishness in the eyes of the world, and long continued to be a "principal matter of offense to the enemies of our religion, and was regarded by such as an insurmountable objection."2

Campbell now turns to the weakness of the first publishers of this doctrine, Christianity's first missionaries. The successful promotion of so foolish a teaching would seem to require men of great natural shrewdness and acquired knowledge, possessed preferably of wealth, nobility, and authority. But we find exactly the opposite:

A few fishermen of Galilee, and some others of the lowest class of the people, poor, ignorant, totally unacquainted with the world; without any visible advantages natural or acquired; men who, before they received this extraordinary mission, had been obliged to drudge for bread within the narrow limits of a toilsome occupation, and had probably never dared open their mouths in places where men of condition (their betters, as we familiarly express it) were present.3

2. Ibid., p. 77.
3. Ibid., p. 78.
How then can we explain the success of the first publishers of the Gospel? It cannot be said that even Paul, a man of letters, would have commended himself to the Gentiles, for his knowledge was primarily of Jewish scriptures. No, the success cannot be understood in terms of their great fitness for the tremendous task, nor in terms of their message. They were weak instruments and their doctrine was foolish. Such a combination could never have succeeded by merely natural means. To account for their success, therefore,

we must necessarily admit the divine original of the whole, and have recourse to the concurrence of him who calleth the things that are not as though they were, and who alone can destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.1

Nothing less than the assistance of Almighty God can account for the success of these first missionaries. By His power, the weakness of the instruments became their glory and boast. No parallel for their great and rapid success can be found in later Christendom, even in the expansion of the Roman Catholic church.

Here Campbell contrasts the lowliness, poverty, and ignorance of the first apostles with the grandeur, richness, and erudition of the Roman clergy, and asks how it is that the labours of the former were so much more fruitful. He answers that the Roman approach fails because it relies more on insinuation than upon open and professed teaching.

Their direct and only object long appeared to be to teach the savages agriculture, the most necessary manufactures, the art of building, and the other arts most conducive to civilisation; and when in this way they had sufficiently recommended themselves to their confidence to take occasion of inculcating, especially on the children entrusted to their care, their religious principles. The method of the apostles was shorter; they did not find the least necessity for such artificial management.¹

In the last section of his sermon, The Principal draws three conclusions: first, that we ought to strengthen our faith in the divine original of the holy religion we possess, remembering that our Gospel is of God and not of man;² second, that from anything advanced in the former sections it cannot be justly inferred that human learning is not useful in the cause of religion, for it is the ordinary means employed by God -- "It was not (our intention) to depreciate the wisdom of man, but to show that the foolishness of God is wiser";³ third, that though present-day missions cannot "hope for success comparable to that which attended the ministry of the apostles, this ought not to discourage such attempts, or lessen the ardour of Christians for the advancement of the Gospel."⁴

The success of those who laid the foundations of the church, Campbell concludes, was given by God as a sign that their commission came from Him. Our duty is so to serve God that the most sublime and important of all objects may be accomplished, "the extension

1. Ibid., p. 92.
2. Ibid., pp. 94ff.
3. Ibid., p. 99.
4. Ibid., p. 100.
of the Kingdom of Messiah, and the salvation of the souls of men."\(^1\)

While many Moderates were so lacking in any evangelical fervour that they looked with suspicion upon every effort to win converts to the Christian faith, Campbell reveals in this sermon that he for one believes it the duty of every Christian minister and lay person to engage in missions and advance the Gospel. One wonders what he might have said had he been able to attend the General Assembly in the year of his death, 1796, where the Moderates dismissed certain foreign missions overtures as counselling the church to a foolish, dangerous, impracticable enterprise. It might be supposed, at least, that he would have spoken directly after the lines developed in this sermon, urging his fellow-prestbyters to submit to the foolishness of God which is wiser than the wisdom of men.

"The Happy Influence of Religion on Civil Society" is the shortest of Campbell's sermons. Proverbs 14:34 is his text, "Righteousness exalteth a nation." Four items are advanced to show that righteousness or "true and practical religion"\(^2\) has a happy influence on civil society. First, religion is conducive to the welfare of the community by virtue of the tendency and extent of its laws. The laws are two: Love God; love thy neighbour. Their tendency is to promote the peace and happiness of society by inspiring mutual confidence, harmony, and good will among the fellow-citizens. Their extent is greater than that of civil law, which deals only with the destructive

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1. Ibid., p. 101.

consequences of evil, for the laws of religion remove the causes of evil.\(^1\) Second, religion promotes the welfare of society by the nature and importance of its sanctions, by the rewards it promises and the punishments it threatens.\(^2\) The sanctions of religion "always regard the motive, the disposition, and intention of the agent..."\(^3\) and thus are laid upon men whom human laws may be unable to reach. The rewards and punishments of religion being eternal and future, as well as temporal and present, are more ultimate and significant than those of civil law. Third, religion promotes the welfare of society by the aid it gives civil authorities in securing fidelity and in discovering justice and truth. Civil society requires faithfulness and veracity if justice is to be administered in her courts.\(^4\) Fourth, religion contributes to the welfare of the community by the positive enforcement it gives to good government by the rulers, and obedience and subjection by the people.\(^5\)

... a pious sense of religion is the best security for good government on the part of the rulers, it is also the most effectual means of ensuring submission and obedience on the part of the subjects. Without some impressions of this kind, it would be difficult to persuade men that they are under any tie to obedience and subjection to others of their species, when any strong temptation from interest or ambition should incline them to revolt.\(^6\)

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 107-8.
\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 110ff.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 111.
\(^4\) Ibid., pp. 111ff.
\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 117ff.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 118.
In an epilogue Campbell urges that because of the happy influence of religion on civil society the secular authorities "ought to give all possible countenance to religion,"\(^1\) and regard as enemies of civil society all those who would attack its indispensable support, religion.\(^2\)

Here we find Campbell again stressing the moral aspects of religion. The good Christian is the good citizen. It cannot be denied that men of good faith will be disposed to conserve the commonweal upon which stable societies must be predicated, but one may yet wish that the Principal had stated the other side of the truth, the revolutionary concerns of Christian faith and practice. The Christian citizen is always concerned both with the maintenance of the stability of society and with the reformation of its order. He desires both that that which is worthwhile should be conserved and that that which is unworthy should be torn out. He never confuses the first with the Kingdom of God; and he never quite expects that the second will ever completely disappear. He both obeys and rebels against the order of civil authority in the name of a higher order, which is God's.

The last of Campbell's works to be considered in this chapter is his "Address to the People of Scotland upon the Alarms with Regard to Popery." Being unable to attend the meeting of General

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1. Ibid., p. 119.
2. Ibid., p. 120.
Assembly in 1779, he felt it his duty to make public his judgment concerning the violent reaction then taking place against the proposal to repeal the Acts of William III against Roman Catholics. Here again we find ample evidence of the Principal's candid and liberal spirit.

The Address is divided into three chapters. In the first, Campbell considers the doctrine of the Gospel in regard to persecution and persecutors. He shows that the methods by which the Lord commanded His religion was to be propagated were teaching and the attractive influence of an exemplary life; and that the maxims of the Apostles are entirely in accord with the lessons they received from their Master. He points out how Jesus objected to the antipathy and rancour which existed between the Jews and Samaritans in His own time, and makes an analogue between that relationship and the current one between Protestants and Papists. Neither the example nor the precepts of Jesus Christ or the Apostles, he goes on, "authorise the use of the sword, or any such carnal weapons for the advancement of religion."1 Rather, these examples and precepts "fortify our minds with meekness, faith, and patience to bear, but in no case permit us to inflict persecution,"2 not even in retaliation for persecution we have formerly been made to suffer.

But, say our opponents in this argument, popery is a superstition so baneful as not to deserve any favour,

1. "An Address to the People of Scotland upon the Alarms with regard to Popery," p. 201. Hereafter called, "Address on Popery."

2. Ibid., p. 201. Italics are mine.
especially at the hands of Protestants. Its intolerance to them, and persecuting spirit, if there were nothing else we had to accuse it of, would be sufficient to justify the severest treatment we could give it. This treatment to papists could not be called persecution, but just retaliation, or the necessary means of preventing perdition to ourselves. I do not say that either popery or papists deserve favour from us. On the contrary, I admit the truth of the charge against them, but not the consequence ye would draw from it. Call it Beelzebub, if ye please. It is not Beelzebub that I am for casting out Beelzebub, but by the spirit of God.¹

The necessary consequence of unsanctified persecution of the Romans would be "to subvert the power, for the sake of establishing the form of godliness, and to make us sacrifice the spirit of our religion, that charity which animates the whole, to a mere lifeless figure."²

In the second chapter, Campbell considers the conclusions to which sound policy would lead the people of Scotland in this matter. The propriety of giving papists in Scotland such tolerance as has already been granted them in Ireland and England is a decision which properly belongs to the legislature, not to ecclesiastical authorities. "It is a question solely regarding the safety of the body politic."³ But individual churchmen may be permitted properly to discuss the expediency of such toleration. To the objection raised by those who are opposed to the repeal of the Acts and argue that they do not seek to persecute Roman Catholics but desire only that

¹ Ibid., p. 191.
things may continue as they are, Campbell replies:

It must be owned that the law was rarely executed, in consequence of the temper of the times, and the lenity of our government ... And what was the reason that it was not oftener? It was the conviction which men have, when their minds are not inflamed by fanatic zeal, that the law was too severe, and when self-defence does not render it absolutely necessary (which God be thanked is not our case) not reconcilable with the principles either of humanity or of justice (it was, I say, this conviction) that prevented its execution.1

The chapter closes with an appeal for toleration. So small a group as the Roman Catholics can be of no real danger to the constitution of the country.

It should be remembered how different the fate of the like bill was in England, and even in Ireland, where that sect, with some colour of reason, might have been accounted dangerous. But here! where comparatively they are so inconsiderable both in number and property, -- I could say a great deal, but I forbear. I will not dissemble. I am both ashamed and grieved, that there should be occasion to say anything on such a subject.2

In the third chapter of this "Address" Campbell turns to the proper and Christian expedients for promoting religious knowledge and repressing error. Not violence, not intolerant legislation, but an increased Protestant force of teachers and pastors to present the truth is needed.

The places we deserted, they occupied. Can we wonder at this? -- Nothing can be more manifest than that the great cause of the evil complained of, is the great want of Protestant teachers, both pastors and schoolmasters.3

2. Ibid., p. 225.
3. Ibid., p. 236.
Let these be supported, Campbell concludes, by the money which certain individuals, boroughs, and corporations are now throwing away on lawyers engaged to prevent the repeal of a law which "by their own confession, has not been of the smallest utility, for checking the evil complained of."¹

This sermon, like those already considered, shows Campbell's great passion for toleration. But, more than this, it reveals his courage. Shortly before its publication the Town Council of his own city Aberdeen had resolved to oppose repeal of the statutes for the persecution of the Roman Catholics, and to spend public funds in maintenance of the persecution. It was no easy matter for the Principal to take his active stand against the councilmen and the bulk of the city's populace, but from what we have already seen of his love of truth and his desire to practice Christian charity we are not surprised to find him standing against all of them in the name of the meekness and gentleness of Christ Jesus.

It is now possible to make an evaluation of Campbell's work as a preacher. Six things may be observed. First, all of his sermons show forth his skill at developing a reasoned and carefully phrased discourse. Second, all his sermons are deliberate efforts to apply Biblical doctrine to the problems of contemporary society. Third, all his sermons have a two-fold emphasis, being concerned both with instruction in the tenets of the Gospel and exhortation to practice these tenets. That is, the dominant note of his preaching is moral

¹ Ibid., p. 237.
and practical. Fourth, all his sermons set forth the meekness, the
gentleness, patience, and faith of Jesus as the pattern for Christian
conduct, the ideal of the exemplary life which all Christians are
called upon to live. Fifth, all his sermons appeal to the common
sense of the hearers, and avoid carefully any appeal whatever to
superstition or fanaticism. It is as though he were continually
suggesting that men of all parties will agree with the reasonableness of what he sets forth, and never doubting the willingness of
all to hear him through to the end. His own tolerant and liberal
spirit anticipates a tolerant and liberal reception. Sixth, all of
his sermons fail to strike clearly the central note of evangelical
Christianity, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

It is on this last point that we would make special comment.
We find Campbell speaking of a man named Jesus who came out of Nazareth with a word of peace upon his lips and goodwill in his heart.
We find him declaring that all who walk in Jesus' way do good works
and practice brotherhood. But we wait in vain for him to proclaim
that this man is the very Son of God, the Lord and Saviour of men.
Yet surely this is our Gospel, our good news as Christians -- not
that a new system of ethics has been taught -- but that God has be-
come flesh and dwelt among us, that we now behold His glory ...
full of grace and truth.

It may be that we are in danger of making an argumentum ad igno-
norantiam if we conclude that this great lack in the sermons we
have considered is characteristic of Campbell's preaching ministry, for we have just these few examples of his work. It may well be that in some other sermons not now available for study the Principal did strike a more evangelical note. But we are inclined to believe that those sermons chosen by his friendly editors, the ones which do survive and which we have discussed in this chapter, would very probably be characteristic of his predominant convictions. At the very least we are entitled to conclude that so far as the extant sermons are concerned George Campbell was a rather typical Moderate preacher.

More evangelical than many of his own party, far less bound to its particular concerns in church polity than most, he was yet one of them of whom a critic wrote,

*When they preached their sermons generally turned on honesty, good neighbourliness, kindliness. To deliver a Gospel sermon and preach to the hearts and consciences of dying sinners was as completely beyond them as to speak in the language of angels.*

To preach a moralism and call it the Gospel is to lose the central fact of the Christian witness. Such an announcement sends forth no challenge worthy of God's mighty act in Christ Jesus. If Christians are called to a new life, if they are different people, new men and women of power, it is because He has gripped them with His strength. They live in and by Christ, and this is their good news.

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CHAPTER IV
CAMPBELL AS THEOLOGIAN

Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology were first delivered to the students of divinity in Marischal College in the years 1772 and 1773. They were composed without any view to publication, and the Principal continued to read them in the form in which they had been at first composed, during his entire professorship. In 1807 they were published posthumously, together with his Lectures on the Pastoral Character in a single volume edited by his friend, Dr. James Fraser, minister of Drumoak, Aberdeenshire.

The Lectures on Systematic Theology do not present a full scheme of Christian doctrine, but rather an introduction to the theological discipline. The students were required to attend but four sessions at the theological college, and although Campbell doubled the number of lectures in his course, he was fully aware that in so ample a field

... not the best thing we can do, but the only thing we can do, that will serve any useful purpose, is to give directions, both as to the order in which the student ought to proceed in his enquiries, and as to the books or assistances he ought to use. If these directions are properly attended to by him, and if they are followed by the right improvement of his leisure hours ... it may be hoped, that a competent knowledge might in a little time be attained, both of the evidences of our religion, of its essential articles, and of all the principal controversies that have arisen concerning them.

1. Campbell, Lectures on Systematic Theology, 1810 edition, from the Advertisement, p. 3.

2. Ibid., 1824 edition, p. 55. All subsequent quotations from this work are taken from this edition.
To the end that the brief span of lectures might be most useful to his students, Campbell resolved to deliver them in English rather than Latin. It would be unpardonable, he holds, to "sacrifice the profit of the students to the parade of learning; or to waste more time in composing, to no other end, I may say, but to render the composition less useful ..."¹ And he further resolved to limit the length of each lecture to 30-45 minutes in order to secure a patient and attentive hearing.

There are ten lectures in all; four introductory discourses and six lectures on systematic theology proper. The introductory discourses are entitled: Lecture I, "Of the Science of Theology, and its several Branches"; Lecture II, "Of the practical Part of the Theological Profession, or the Duties of the Pastoral Office"; Lecture III, "In what Manner the Branches of Theology above mentioned ought to be treated"; Lecture IV, "Of the Conduct which Students of Divinity ought to pursue." The six lectures on systematic theology proper are named: Lecture I, "Of the Study of Natural Religion, and of the Evidences of Christianity"; Lecture II, "Of the Christian System—the Scriptures ought to be the first Study ..."; Lecture III, "How the Student ought to set about the Examination of the Scriptures—Directions for forming an Abstract of the Doctrine of Holy Writ"; Lecture IV, "Directions for forming a System of Christian Morality ..."; Lecture V, "The Knowledge of the Scriptures the most essential Part of the Study ..."; Lecture VI, "Method of prosecuting our

¹ Campbell, op. cit., p. 17.
Inquiries in Polemic Divinity ...."1 The exposition of Campbell's thought in this chapter will follow his own order.

In Lectures I and II of the Introductory Discourses, Campbell holds that the work of the ministry requires a man to gather all that Christian knowledge which

... supplies the materials necessary for edifying, comforting, and protecting from all spiritual danger the people that may be committed to his care, or is of use for defending the cause of his Master ..."2

But it also requires, he adds, that the minister make a proper application of these acquisitions in knowledge, "so far as to turn them to the best account for the benefit of his people ...."3 Here Campbell is repeating what is characteristic of his conception of the pastoral office, as has been observed in the preceding chapter: knowledge and practice, faith and works are for him inseparable components of the Christian life, for the minister no less than for the layman.

The nature of the theological profession then may properly be divided into two parts: the theoretical and the practical. The first of these may itself be subdivided into three branches: biblical criticism, sacred history, and polemic divinity. The second also may be subdivided into pulpit-eloquence, propriety

1. Campbell, op. cit., pp. ix.-xi. I have abbreviated several titles in the listing of lectures on systematic theology proper.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

3. Ibid., pp. 7ff.
of conduct in private life, and propriety in the public character.\textsuperscript{1} These six branches, theoretical and practical, comprise the scope of systematic theology.

In the third introductory lecture Campbell deals with the manner in which these branches ought to be treated. On the theoretical side, \textit{Biblical criticism} ought to be of primary importance to the theologian, for two reasons: first, because the Bible is the Foundation from which all that is necessary for Christian belief and practice must be learned --- "Whatever therefore is subservient to the elucidating of the sacred pages must be of the utmost consequence to him;"\textsuperscript{2} second, because study of the Bible will enable the theological student to enter into the spirit of the sacred writers, and will keep him from receiving "by a kind of implicit faith, the whole system of Christian institutes from the dogmas and decisions of some favourite chief or leader."\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Sacred history} will serve to convey to the student some notion of the nature, origin, and essential features in the development of the Church.\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Polemie divinity} ought to show the student the harmony, connection, and mutual dependence of the several parts of theology.\textsuperscript{5}

On the practical side, \textit{pulpit eloquence} ought to reveal both

\begin{itemize}
\item 1. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 22ff.
\item 2. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.
\item 3. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.
\item 4. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 34-5.
\item 5. \textit{Ibid.}, PP. 31-34.
\end{itemize}
the techniques of oratory and rhetoric in general and the peculiar demands of pulpit delivery.¹ Study of the propriety of private character ought to present the student with some knowledge of the virtues he must cultivate as a pastor, the vices which will obstruct his success, and the evils to which his very occupation as a minister tends to expose him.² Examination of the propriety of public character should treat such subjects as the discipline, ordination, and civil rights of ministers.³

Having now set forth his plan of teaching Campbell turns in the last introductory discourse, Lecture IV, to the conduct which his students should pursue in order that they might profitably engage in the study of theology. He urges them to remember three important bits of advice. First, they are enjoined to attend classes regularly. Apparently many were engaged as preceptors in private families or as school teachers, and had used this employment as an excuse for absenting themselves from divinity lectures.

On what a miserable footing would a university education stand ... if such sham attendance, as is sometimes given here by students, were enough to entitle our young collegians (that is, university students) to academical degrees? ... is it fit that there should be less caution in regard to preparation for holy orders than is thought necessary for attaining the degree of master of arts?⁴

Second, the students are urged to be diligent in their language

¹. Lectures on Systematic Theology, pp. 38-9.
². Ibid., p. 40.
³. Ibid., p. 41.
⁴. Ibid., p. 47.
study. They should familiarise themselves with Hebrew and Greek, so that they may study the Bible properly. It is improper, and even absurd, Campbell argues, "that a person should be by office the interpreter of a book, which he himself cannot read without an interpreter."¹ And, further, the students should know Latin, "long the universal language of the learned."²

Third, the students are implored not to lay aside those branches of knowledge which do not immediately belong to the ministerial profession, for they are "ornamental to the character of a minister, and on many occasions may prove greatly useful."³ In short, Campbell concludes,

... a proper appetite for knowledge is here all in all ... If you love learning, you will be learned. If on the contrary you read and study more through a sort of constraint than through choice, you will never arrive at eminence.⁴

There is little, Campbell tells his students, which any professor of divinity can do to contribute to their instruction, if they do not themselves strenuously cooperate. None of the branches of theology will be treated, nor could they be, in so full a way as to complete the students' knowledge of them.

Ye cannot here be considered as schoolboys. We claim no coercive power over you of any kind. Our only hold of you is by persuasion. And for attaining this hold, our only dependence is on your own discernment and discretion. We proceed on the supposition, that ye are not only willing

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¹ Campbell, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
² Ibid., p. 50.
³ Ibid., p. 50.
⁴ Ibid., p. 51.
but even anxious, to learn something every day, by which ye may advance in fitness for the great end in view.¹

Lecture I of the discourses on systematic theology proper is concerned with natural religion and the evidences of Christianity. Campbell accepts the division of religion into natural and revealed which was commonly held in the eighteenth century. Natural religion he further divides into two parts: the first called natural theology, which treats of the nature and providence of God; the second, ethics, which deals with the duties and prospects of man.² These two together comprise pneumatology, "itself a branch of philosophy, in the largest acceptance of that word, as importing the interpretation of nature."³

Scripture, Campbell holds, always presupposes that the knowledge of divine attributes and of human obligations is discoverable by the light of nature. It is the same God who is the author of nature and the author of revelation. We may, therefore, "if God is pleased to address us in two different languages ... find considerable assistance in comparing both for removing the difficulties of either."⁴ Strictly speaking, natural theology and ethics are the province of the philosopher; he is "the interpreter of nature, that is, of the language of God's works."⁵ The realm of the theologian is the

1. Lectures on Systematic Theology, p. 45.
2. Ibid., pp. 55ff.
3. Ibid., p. 55.
4. Ibid., p. 58.
5. Ibid., p. 57.
interpretation of Scripture, "that is, of the language of God's spirit."  

The first enquiry that occurs in the proper department of the divine is phrased by Campbell: "Is the doctrine which Jesus Christ preached, from heaven, or of men?" Christians assert the former; Jews and pagans the latter. The arguments advanced by unbelievers against the truth or divinity of the Christian religion attack either the character of the institution itself, as being unworthy of God or contrary to natural conscience, or they attack the proofs of revelation, seeking to invalidate its evidence. That is, they are either questions of right or of fact.

Arguments of the first type, Campbell proceeds, tend on the whole to confuse the spirit of churchmen or the hierarchy with the spirit of the Gospel. He commends Bishop Butler's reply to such criticism in his treatise, The Analogy of Religion, and asserts that the spirit of true Christianity which is found in the New Testament, and not in the corrupted systems, has

an energy which no feeling heart can withstand, and which seems not to have been withstood by some who have even dared to combat all its other evidence. Rousseau is offered here as an example of such a critic.

Objections of the second type strike either at prophecy or at miracles, the two principal branches of external evidence for Christianity. Here questions of fact arise: Was the miracle truly performed? Did the event by which the prophecy is said to be accomplished

2. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Ibid., p. 61.
occur as alleged?

If a Christian wishes to reply to either of these types of attack upon the Christian religion, Campbell asks, how shall he begin? The general cry is

'Read, read, commentators, systematists, paraphrasts, controvertists, demonstrations, confutations, apologies, answers, defences, replies, and ten thousand other such like;' I should think the most important advice to be, 'Devoutly study the Scriptures themselves, if you would understand their doctrine in singleness of heart.' Get acquainted with the sacred history ... Study the sacred languages ... Study the Jewish and ancient customs ... 1

In this way, he concludes, with the help of some natural philosophy, a man may serve as commentator, controvertist, or systematist to himself. As the light from the Scriptures breaks in upon him the objections raised by the opponents of the Christian religion will vanish. He will see that many opponents of Christianity are ignorant of its essential nature, and he will find that many of its so-called defenders are little better informed. This method of preparation is most appropriate, Campbell insists, just because it drives a man back to the Fountain of the Christian religion, the New Testament, for his notion of what Christianity really is, and so equips him to defend the true or divine institution.2

Lecture III carries on the thesis that the study of the Scriptures ought to be the first study of the theologian, rather than the study of the various theological systems. Those who begin with

1. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
2. Ibid., pp. 66-71.
the systems are apt to "repeat by rote the judgments of others"\(^1\) and to see with the eyes of other people, rather than their own. But those who begin with the Bible establish to themselves a rule by which they may judge of the truth or falsehood of what all systems affirm. "It is only thus we bring systems to be tried at the bar of Scripture, and not Scripture to be tried at theirs."\(^2\) Further, as the study of the Bible itself must take precedence over theological systems, so also it must take precedence over the work of Bible commentators, who tend to have their own favourite systems.

For those beginning their theological studies, then, Campbell recommends

... the serious and frequent reading of the divine oracles, accompanied with fervent prayer ... the comparing of Scripture with Scripture ... the diligent study of the languages in which they are written ... the knowledge of those histories and antiquities to which they allude.\(^3\)

What Campbell is here presenting is the then-current orthodox Protestant doctrine of the perspicuity and absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures in things essential to salvation. He is also avowing the right to private judgment, urging his students to be free of systems imposed by commentators or theologians upon the clear truths of the Bible. A man who begins here provides himself with principles by which, when later he does turn to them, he may examine all systems, commentaries, paraphrases, and the like. "This

\(^1\) Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 76.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 77.
we must do if we would constitute Scripture the umpire in controversy, and not bring it to be tried at the bar of some system maker or commentary. 1 Some passages may be difficult but the careful and prayerful student will discover that the more perspicuous parts will shed light on the more obscure.

The third lecture offers advice on how to examine the Scriptures and directions for forming an abstract of the doctrine of the Bible. As for the advice, Campbell here returns to his earlier insistence upon the attainment of proficiency in the Biblical languages. Add to this proficiency, he urges, sincerity, humility, and patience. 2 So equipped the student may, after becoming well-versed in both Old and New Testaments, attempt a summary of their doctrine.

Let him set forth in the plainest and simplest terms a collation which can convey the sense of what is taught in the Scriptures concerning: 1) the divine nature and perfections; 2) the creation of the world and divine providence; 3) human nature; 4) the Messiah; 5) the Holy Spirit; 6) the regeneration or recovery of man; 7) the world to come; and, 8) the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning itself, especially its nature and its authority. 3

All this should be done without recourse to anything but the revealed Word. The question the student is concerned to answer:

... not what is the doctrine of this or the other learned man, of this or the other sect or party, but what, to the

1. Ibid., pp. 80-1.
2. Ibid., pp. 94-9.
3. Ibid., pp. 103-105.
best of his judgment, is the doctrine of the sacred volume. What have I to do, should he say, to take this doctrine upon trust and at second hand, when I have access to the fountain itself? If this book was given of God as a rule to all men, it must be in things essential level to the capacity of all.\footnote{1}

And the study must also be done without speculation on points that cannot with propriety be said to be revealed. "Let us ever stop where revelation stops; and not pretend to move one single inch beyond it."\footnote{2}

Lecture IV gives directions of the same type for forming a system of Christian ethics. Christian morality, Campbell holds, is divided into three great branches: "sobriety, or the duty which every man owes himself;" righteousness, or the duty which every man owes to all mankind; and "godliness or piety, which has the great author of our being for its immediate object."\footnote{3} On all these matters a digest of Biblical doctrine should be made. It will be discovered that the Christian scheme is "exactly conformable to the purest dictates of the unprejudiced mind ...."\footnote{4} The lecture closes with a summary of the advantages of the method of Bible study suggested here and in the preceding lecture. It brings the student to an intimate acquaintance with his Bible; it suggests to him an excellent way of employing his time usefully in any kind of situation; it helps form his style in religious matters on the style of holy writ; it prepares

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{1} Ibid., pp. 106,107.
\item \footnote{2} Ibid., p. 106.
\item \footnote{3} Ibid., pp. 116-119.
\item \footnote{4} Ibid., p. 121.
\end{itemize}
him for understanding the general controversy concerning the truth of Christianity, as well as the particular disputes which have arisen in the church.¹

The last of these advantages is considered in fuller detail at the outset of the fifth lecture. The arguments of Christianity's opponents, it will be recalled, Campbell divided into two types: those which attack the evidences advanced in its support, and those which attack its character or content. The diligent study of the Bible will acquaint the student with what the content of the Christian religion really is, and by familiarising him with Scripture idiom such study will also equip him for adequate participation in the controversies concerning the external evidences, whenever these hinge on the meaning of a passage. Critical knowledge of the Scriptures will both enable the student to understand and to abridge the whole controversy concerning the truth or divinity of Christianity. In addition, it will afford the best preparation for entering into the particular controversies that have arisen among Christians themselves concerning articles of faith, matters of government, worship, discipline, and morals.²

In short, here as elsewhere Campbell's main thesis is that full critical knowledge of the contents of the Bible is by far the most essential part of the study of Christian theology. Once the young student has attained this knowledge and added to it the history of

². Ibid., pp. 131-135.
the Christian religion, "he hath obtained all, or nearly all that is instructive ...."¹ But he needs something more if he is to be fit to instruct others; he "should be prepared for warding off the blows of those adversaries, to whom his people may be exposed."² The need for such preparation leads a man to the study of polemical divinity. Not every heresy or pagan attack need be considered, but

the principal heads of our disputes with the Romanists, and the chief questions that have been started concerning the divinity of Christ, his expiation of sin by the sacrifice of himself, and concerning the operation of the Spirit, it will be proper to canvass more thoroughly.³

Lecture IV deals with the method to be employed in carrying out the enquiries into polemical divinity. The argument proceeds as follows:⁴ the briefest way is by means of systems; the best systems are the shortest; all systems have in some measure departed from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. Therefore, all scholia, paraphrases, and commentaries should be taken cum grano salis. If one wishes to be acquainted with the Gospel of Jesus he must not be misled by the gospel of Erasmus, or Clarke, or Doddridge, or any other man, but must habitually read divine history and the divine lessons as they are recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

... commentators, scholiasts, paraphrasts and the whole tribe of expositors ... are to be consulted in the same way, and no otherwise, than we do glossaries and dictionaries; which is only when it is anything perplexeth us, and we think we cannot easily do without them.⁵

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 141.
². Ibid., p. 148.
³. Ibid., p. 148.
⁴. Ibid., pp. 149-156.
⁵. Ibid., pp. 156,157.
And when we choose men to consult, Campbell goes on, they should be men who are critically superior, and are least bound to a particular sect or party. Grotius, Hammond, Whitby, and Maldonat are offered as examples of competent guides to the meaning of the Scriptures.

This final lecture closes with an illustration. If a man intends to travel in a foreign country and proposes to transact a great deal of business with the natives, Campbell remarks, how foolish he would be not to learn the language of those people. He would be at the mercy of his interpreters; their want of knowledge or of honesty could be equally prejudicial to him and might disastrous affect all his affairs. But suppose this man does learn the language. Then his intercourse with the people would proceed in a more secure and independent way. He might occasionally consult an interpreter, when some doubt arises, but his own language resources would provide a check on this man, and prevent any deceit in important matters. So Campbell ends, "I shall leave you, gentlemen, to make the application of these two suppositions at your leisure."

It is now possible to summarise the main features of these Lectures on Systematic Theology, and to indicate our reaction to them. First, Campbell holds that theology must be practical as well as theoretical. Second, theology must be established on Biblical foundations. It has already been noted in the previous chapter that both these emphases -- the practical and the Biblical -- were characteristic of

1. Ibid., p. 167.
2. Ibid., p. 168.
Campbell's view of preaching and of his sermons. Third, the revelation of the Bible seems to be equivalent for Campbell to the revelation of nature. Here his thesis is akin to that held by many eighteenth century divines, that the Biblical revelation brings to the attention of lazy-minded men what they might have known by the light of nature. Fourth, sectarianism in theology is condemned as the source of the corruption of the pure and true religion of Jesus found in the New Testament. Like most Moderates, Campbell was convinced that sectarianism tended to breed fanaticism, and to replace the spirit of the Gospel with the spirit of overly-enthusiastic partisanship.

We find ourselves in fundamental agreement with Campbell on the first two points listed above. As Emil Brunner has written, "The Bible is the soil from which all Christian faith grows. For if there were no Bible we should know nothing of Jesus Christ ... Christian faith is faith in Christ, and Christ meets us and speaks to us in the Bible. Christian faith is Bible faith."[1] And it is clear that that faith is most winsome when it is set forth in practice. But we fail to discover anywhere in Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology any real recognition of the further truth, that Christianity is not primarily the religion of a Book at all, but of a Person. Even the Scriptures are subject to the criterion of Jesus the Christ. As Luther suggested, "The Scriptures are the cradle of Christ."

The absence of this fundamental assertion of the centrality of Jesus Christ in Christian theology may be due to the limited scope

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of Campbell's Lectures, but one can hardly understand how it is missed out even in the matters he does venture to discuss. In 168 pages which in his own terms set forth the most important directions the student ought to pursue in his theological education and inquiries there is no word of what has been considered by many other theologians the first fact of Christian faith, that the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us.

Precisely because this is missed out, we should think, Campbell fails to see the uniqueness of the Biblical revelation over against that to be found in nature. Though God is the Author of nature and of revelation, as he asserts, it can hardly be held that the knowledge of divine attributes and of human obligations are equally discoverable in both. It would seem undeniably true that what God is and what He requires of man are made immeasurably more manifest in the testimony of the Bible to God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ than they were or could be either in the processes of the natural order or through the speculations of unaided human reason.

On the fourth point we also agree with Campbell that sectarianism may tend to obscure Biblical truths. But we would not seek as he would only to rescue the pure and true religion of Jesus from the priestly corruption into which it has fallen. More than this, we would seek to rediscover in the New Testament the peculiar central affirmation of Christian faith, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. This, and not the religion of Jesus, is the
full Gospel, the true religion to which Biblical witnesses testify. In short, a theology which reduces the Christian religion to a mere moralism is something less than truly Christian. This is the defect of Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology.
CHAPTER V

CAMPBELL AS CHURCH HISTORIAN

After the death of his wife early in 1792 Campbell withdrew from public activity and spent most of his time in correcting works he had already published, and in preparing his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History for the printer. His own death in 1796 came upon him, however, before the latter task was completed. The Principal's friend and biographer, the Rev. George Skene Keith, edited the Lectures, and they were published in 1800 as the first of a number of Campbell's posthumous works.

The editor's advertisement tells us that

... the Author had transcribed and revised them, and was every year making considerable alterations and additions to the work. For more than the last twenty years of his life, his Lectures to the Students of Divinity occupied the greater part of his time, and those now offered to the Public were distinguished as the most curious and entertaining branch of the whole.¹

The Lectures were, on the whole, well-received. An anonymous contemporary judging them for The Monthly Review writes that

... we cannot but applaud the impartial spirit, the accurate judgement, and the nice discrimination which they display. The facts which they narrate are well selected, the comments on those facts are masterly, and the inferences drawn from them are natural and ingenious ...²

Some of Campbell's own churchmen, however, and a considerable number of Episcopalian and Roman Catholic clergy, found his broad

churchmanship intolerable.

Strictly speaking, the title given to these lectures is misleading. Though the two volumes comprise close to 850 pages, what is set forth is not a complete history of the Christian Church, but rather some views on the constitution of the church, its order and discipline, as these several aspects emerge in the growth of Christianity up to the time of the Protestant Reformers. Some conclusions of relevance to eighteenth century Scottish churches are drawn.

We shall not consider each of the twenty-eight lengthy lectures separately in the course of this chapter. Rather Campbell's thesis will be made clear in terms of his answers to two questions: first, what was the nature of the New Testament Church; second, how closely do the religious establishments of eighteenth century Scotland—Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic—follow that original pattern?

Before turning to the first of these questions, note should be made of Campbell's introductory remarks on the propriety and importance of the study of church history for the theological student. Three reasons are advanced to encourage students to be diligent in their study: first, church history illustrates the truths of the Christian religion; second, church history confirms and strengthens the evidences of the divinity of the Christian religion; and third, church history adorns and recommends the Christian religion.¹

¹ Campbell, op. cit., I., pp. 1-22.
In the study of church history, as in the study of systematic theology, the Principal urges his students to become thoroughly familiar with the Bible, in order to be fortified against the many false views of the Church held by the members of the several church parties.¹

Now to the first question, What was the nature of the New Testament Church? Undoubtedly, there are in the New Testament two original senses of the word ecclesia, Campbell maintains, and these are related. On the one hand, the word is used to denote a number of people actually assembled, or accustomed to assemble together, and is then "properly rendered by the English terms, congregation, convention, assembly, and even sometimes crowd, as in Acts xix, 32, 40."² On the other hand, the word is sometimes used to denote a society united together by some common tie, though not convened, perhaps not convenable, in one place. In both these senses, the word occasionally occurs in the classical writers, as "signifying a state or commonwealth, and nearly corresponding to the Latin civitas."³

Further, the word ecclesia is generally limited in the New Testament by its regimen (as "of God," "of the Lord," or "of Christ"), or by the scope of its place. In the first sense, it

¹. Campbell, op. cit., Vol. I., pp. 28-34.
². Ibid., Vol. I., p. 203.
³. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 204.
denotes a single congregation of Christians; in the second, the whole Christian community. The context always shows which of the two senses is implied. For example, in the first sense, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...," (I Cor. 1:2); and, in the second, "... upon this rock will I build my church ...," (Matthew 16:18).

The apostles, wherever they made enough converts to form a congregation, organised one, and settled bishops and deacons to instruct and guide the converts and to conduct the public worship and ordinances. To this congregation they gave the name, ecclesia, which is commonly rendered church. The word never denotes the place of meeting or of worship, nor does it ever denote more than one assembly meeting in one place, except when used to mean the whole Christian community.

We speak now, indeed, (and this has been the manner of ages) of the Gallican church, the Greek church, the church of England, the church of Scotland, as of societies independent and complete in themselves. Such a phraseology was never adopted in the days of the apostles ... The plural number is invariably used, when more congregations than one were spoken of, unless the subject be the whole commonwealth of the Church.

5. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 204, 205.
Again, the word **ecclesia** in the New Testament never denotes church officers by themselves (i.e., the clergy) in distinction from the congregation, though sometimes it signifies the congregation in distinction from its ministers. It never denotes a representative body, or a combination and council of clergymen, or anything resembling a church judicatory, or church court. Such a use of the word did not appear in church history until the time of Cyprian.

The notion, therefore, of a church representative, how commonly soever it has been received, is a mere usurper of later date. And it has fared here, as it sometimes does in cases of usurpation, the original proprietor comes, though gradually, to be at length totally disposessed.¹

The word, **ecclesia**, then, is used invariably throughout the New Testament either to signify a single congregation or the whole body of the faithful. It is never used in any intermediate sense.

He now turns to the **form** of the New Testament Church. At the time of its establishment, there were two objects which claimed the attention of the apostles: the conversion of the world to the Messiah; the preservation and continuance in faith of the converts made. For the first of these there was a set of extraordinary ministers or officers in the church whose charge was universal and whose functions were ambulatory.²

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¹. Ibid., I., p. 327.
². Ibid., I., p. 115.
For the second, there was a set of ordinary ministers or pastors to whom certain charges were allotted, to which their services were chiefly to be confined, "in order to instruct the people, to preside in the public worship and ordinances, and to give them the necessary assistance for the regulation of their conduct."¹

To the first set of ministers belonged the apostles themselves, prophets, and evangelists—all those who were endowed in an eminent degree with any of the charismata or supernatural gifts. To the second set of ministers belonged those who carried on the ordinary and permanent establishment of the church—men who possessed not the charismata but the charites, the important graces of knowledge, faith, and charity.²

It is with this second set of ministers that Campbell is concerned, those whom the apostles assigned to the churches they planted. He observes that besides some general names applied to them (such as guides, teachers, ministers, or officers) there are three names more frequently applied: bishops or overseers, presbyters or elders, and deacons or attendants. The question confronting all students of the early church is whether or not the first two of these terms, bishop and presbyter, are names for the same or different offices. The last title of the three, deacon, is allowed on all sides to be the name of a different office.

¹ Ibid., I., p. 115.
² Ibid., I., p. 117.
office, though commentators are not entirely agreed as to the extent and the nature of that office.

Undoubtedly, Campbell goes on, the terms bishop and presbyter are sometimes used promiscuously in the New Testament. Passages in Acts xx. and Titus i. are cited to show how the terms are used interchangeably by Paul. Indeed, it is impossible to produce a single passage from the apostle's writings in which it appears from the context that the two terms mean different offices. Rather, "there is the strongest positive evidence which the nature of the thing can admit, that in those writings the two terms uniformly mean the same office."¹

In short, Campbell concludes that there were but two orders established in the New Testament church: bishops or presbyters, and deacons. There is not a single hint, he maintains, in the whole New Testament of anything like two different classes of presbyters. The apostles themselves, despite their pre-eminence in the early church and their extraordinary functions, cannot be held to be the original of a third order corresponding to bishops. That is, the allegation of some modern bishops that they are the successors of the apostles, whereas the presbyters and deacons are only the successors of those who were in the beginning ordained by the apostles, is an indefensible pretension.

Four arguments are advanced against this pretension by the

¹ Ibid., I., pp. 124-128.
Principal. First, the office of apostle was temporary, inasmuch as it was necessary that he should be one who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, after His resurrection. Second, apostles had prerogatives which did not descend to any after them: they received their mission immediately from Jesus Christ, not through any human ordination or appointment; they had the power of conferring the miraculous gifts of the spirit on whomsoever they would, by the laying on of hands; and, they had, by inspiration, knowledge of the whole doctrine of Christ. Third, the mission of the apostles, unlike that of any ordinary pastor, was worldwide. Fourth, the apostles were not in point of fact succeeded; when the last of them died, the title became extinct.1

Campbell's argument here is designed to show that the primitive New Testament church knew nothing at all of bishops in the modern sense of that term: bishops and presbyters were of equal rank in the New Testament church, holding the same office. Once the apostles had established stated pastors in the churches which they had founded, these men were entrusted with full power to perform the ministerial office, and preserve the order established. Each bishop or presbyter had charge of but one congregation or church, never more. In him was vested the superintendency over the congregation in what concerned spiritual matters. But certain other things, even from the beginning, were conducted by the presbyters, the deacons, and the

1. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 144-147.
whole congregation — for example, the admonition of delinquents, 
the excommunication of obstinate offenders, the election of their 
pastors and deacons.

How then did insubordination arise among the Christian pastors? 
Campbell replies that for the sake of convenience one of the presby-
ters, either on account of seniority or superior merit, habitually 
resided in the presbytery.¹

Thus he was in the presbytery, as the speaker in the house of commons, who is not of a superior order to the other members of the house, but is a commoner among commoners, and is only, in consequence of that station, accounted the first among those of his own rank.²

Though he does not think it possible to offer conclusive proof that this designation of a president over the presbytery is the seed from which the exaltation of the bishop over the presbyters proceeded, Campbell does hold that this is the most likely of all the conjectures he has seen.³ A settled distinction did obtain between the presiding presbyter and his colleagues in presbytery. Many titles which had before been commonly applied to all the presbyters came to be applied particularly to him who was considered as their head, the chief of these being the title, bishop. But this "bishop" is still merely the first among those of his own rank.

It is not until the late second century that any subordination

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¹. Ibid., I., p. 166.
². Ibid., I., p. 167.
³. Ibid., I., p. 169.
appears in the ecclesiastical polity, and that a truly primitive episcopacy appears generally throughout the Christian world. At that time many situations obtained where a single church or congregation might have a plurality of presbyters or deacons, all under the superintendency of one pastor or bishop. And what was at first gratuitously conferred came then to be claimed as a right.1

... from making their president a man of great consequence among them, the transition is easy to their making his concurrence in all measures a conditio sine qua non; that is to say, their considering every thing as invalid that is done against his judgment.2

By the end of the third century the number of converts in many parishes had become so great that it was impossible for them all to be accommodated in the parish church and chapels were established in the outlying districts of the parish. Presbyters were assigned to these by the bishop and they carried on their ministrations under his superintendency. At this time, a change in terminology arose. What had formerly been known as a parish (that is, the one church or congregation under the bishop) was now called a diocese, and the several subdivisions of the original parish were themselves given the name of parish. The chapels in turn became known as parish-churches, and the mother church was designated the cathedral, as there the throne of the bishop and the bench of the presbytery were erected.3

From this point on the bishop was no longer directly connected

1. Ibid., I., p. 182.
2. Ibid., I., p. 183.
with the people as he had been from New Testament days onwards, but was connected with them through their pastors. Here are the beginnings of diocesan episcopacy, or, as Campbells calls it, prelacy. By a similar process certain Bishops were converted into Metropolitanans, and certain Metropolitanans into Exarchs and Patriarchs, the whole system being formed on the model of the civil magistracy of the Roman Empire.¹

In fact, Campbell argues, the origin of the superiority of one episcopal see over another arose from the secular division of the Empire. Hence the pre-eminence of the see of Rome, whose bishop, before the conversion of Constantine, had only precedence among the prelates as bishop of the imperial city but no jurisdiction beyond the bounds of the provinces lying within the vicariate of Rome. This artful see rose to power by certain measures of policy: she never decided on the theological disputes which were so frequent in the East until her weight was sure to preponderate; the ignorance prevalent in her communion secured her against troubles from new heresies; to encourage appeals she gave judgment uniformly in favour of the appellants; the heresies which she fostered did not, like those of the East, lead to fruitless and unintelligible questions, but had a tendency either to increase her power, or to fill her coffers.²

The claims which Rome affects to derive from the prerogatives of Saint Peter are dismissed by Campbell as hardly worthy of note.

¹ Ibid., I., pp. 281ff.
² Ibid., II., pp. 33-79.
The claim that the pope is the sole foundation of the Christian edifice, because Christ said to Peter, "On this rock will I build My church," he answers by pointing out that in other places all the apostles are represented equally as foundations. The claim that the pope alone has jurisdiction, because Christ said to Peter, "To thee will I give the keys to the kingdom of heaven...," is met by the observation that in another place, in almost the same words, that power is given to all the apostles, even to the whole church. The claim that the pope is the chief shepherd, the only apostle and pastor, because Christ said to Peter, "Feed my sheep," is said by Campbell to employ a kind of logic which would force us to say that because the question, "Lovest thou me?" was put only to Peter it was not a duty incumbent on the other disciples to love their Master. The claim of the pope's infallibility, based upon Christ's saying to Peter, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," is an example, Campbell maintains, of the dexterity of the Romans in reasoning, for the passage can hardly be taken to mean that Christ was praying for Peter that he might have the gift of infallibility.¹

We have now partly anticipated Campbell's answer to the second question. Before going on to it, we must observe that on all the points advanced in his analysis of the New Testament church Campbell

¹ Ibid., II., pp. 80-106.
seems to have been accurate. It would be difficult to refute his views respecting either the ancient sense in which the word ecclesia was used, or the equal power of presbyters, or the extent of the charge of a primitive bishop.

Now for the second question, How closely do the religious establishments of eighteenth century Scotland -- Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Episcopalian -- follow that original pattern? Campbell's view is stated quite briefly:

In regard to those polities which obtain at present in the different Christian sects, I own ingenuously that I have not found one of all that I have examined which can be said perfectly to coincide with the model of the apostolic church. Some, indeed, are nearer, and some are more remote; but this we may say with freedom, that if a particular form of polity had been essential to the church, it had been laid down in another manner in the sacred books. The very hypothesis is, in my opinion, repugnant to the spiritual nature of the evangelical economy.1

It was the type of broad churchmanship here enunciated which made Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History unpopular with certain Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic partisans. The Protestants were, of course, quite delighted with his careful yet devastating criticism of the pretensions of the Roman hierarchy, but shocked to discover that he was unwilling to assert the truth of the Protestants' pretension to a jus divinum.

In dealing with the Roman Catholic view of the church, Campbell allows Peter a primacy among the apostles, maintaining that he was the

1. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 141.
President of their College. But, he adds, the bishop of Rome has no more claim to be the successor of Peter than the bishop of London has, or indeed any pastor in the church.

He was not among the apostles as a father among his children, of a different rank, and of a superior order, but as an elder brother among his younger brothers, the first of the same rank and order ... It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that whatever was conferred on Peter was merely personal, and could descend to none after him.¹

Certain of the Principal's comments on the papal office have already been noted above. It is only through concealment of the Scriptures and of all the public offices of religion through the use of an unknown tongue, and through the use of persecution and inquisition to deter the advance of knowledge, that the Roman Catholic hierarchy has been able to maintain its power, he now adds.²

Concerning the Episcopalian church, Campbell objects to those in that communion who attempt to advocate the apostolical origin of episcopacy, a point of view which the New Testament does not support.³

The apostles are the predecessors of all those who, to the end of the world, shall preach the same Gospel, and administer the same sacraments, by whatever name we distinguish them, bishops, priests, or deacons, overseers, elders, or ministers.⁴

He is not here questioning the lawfulness or the expediency in certain circumstances of the episcopal model of church polity; he wishes

¹. Ibid., I. p. 165.
². Ibid., II., pp. 234-321.
³. Ibid., I. pp. 125ff.
⁴. Ibid., I. p. 1143.
only to expose the arrogance of pretending to a *jus divinum*.

I am satisfied that no form of polity can plead such an exclusive character as that phrase ... is understood to imply. The claim is clearly the offspring of sectarian bigotry and ignorance.¹

In discussing his own Presbyterian communion, the Principal denies that ruling elders, officers of great authority in the Church of Scotland, have any foundation for their appointment in Scripture. To those advocates of the presbyterian form of church government who hold that some presbyters are properly pastors and teachers, and that others are only assistants in matters of government and discipline, Campbell replies that such a distinction is based upon a poor exposition of Paul's words to Timothy, "Let the elders rule well that be counted worthy of double honour; especially they that labour in the word and doctrine."² This is not a two-fold partition of presbyters into those who rule, and those who labour in the word and doctrine, that is, into ruling elders and teaching elders. The word, especially, in the text is not intended to indicate a different office; it is used rather to distinguish from others those who assiduously apply themselves to the most important as well as the most difficult part of their office, public teaching. The distinction is therefore not official, but personal.

Campbell asserts that if it were only from this passage that an argument could be brought forth for the admission of laymen to a

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share in the management of church affairs he would readily acknowledge that the warrant for such a practice in Scripture is extremely questionable. He indicates that he will consider the matter of ruling elders in a later lecture, but never does return to it.¹

The important matter in all church polity, the Principal asserts throughout all these lectures, is that

... those important and divine lessons, which have been transmitted to us by the pastors who preceded us, should by us be committed to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also; and that as much as possible everything should be done for the advancement of the knowledge, the faith, and the obedience of the Gospel. That is, doubtless, a duty incumbent on the church and her governors to the end of the world.²

There is not a church in the world which is on the model of that formed by the apostles. In fact, changing circumstances have made some changes both necessary and proper in church polity, Campbell asserts. This does not imply, however, that the outward form of polity is an indifferent matter. While it is undeniably true that, whatever form of ecclesiastical polity a man lives under, if he believes and obeys the Gospel he shall be saved, it is also certain that

... one model of church government may be much better calculated for promoting that belief and obedience than another. Nay, it is not impossible that such changes may be introduced, as are much more fitted for obstructing the influence of true religion than for advancing it; nay, for inspiring a contrary temper, and nourishing the most dangerous vices.³

². Ibid., Vol. I., p. 218.
³. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 249-250.
It was the obstruction of the influence of true religion by the Roman Catholic hierarchy which led to the Protestant Reformation. "The pride, avarice, ambition, laziness, and sensuality of the clergy, were never-failing topics of satire everywhere."\(^1\) The personal experience of the corruption of the church which the Reformers' hearers had had confirmed their severest censures and made it possible for them to expose to the conviction of many "the total want of support from Scriptures, reason, or antiquity, of the arrogant claims to dominion, which had been raised by their spiritual guides."\(^2\)

The great virtue of the Reformers, Campbell holds, lay in their exposure of the abuses which had been introduced into the church and had corrupted its form, its worship, and its discipline.\(^3\) The great weakness of the Reformers, on the other hand, lay in their "endless and unprofitable discussion of abstruse and unedifying questions, of which holy writ has either said nothing, or given no decision...."\(^4\)

Here again, as in his *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, Campbell shows that like most members of the Moderate party he was little interested in specifically technical theological questions.

Campbell's thesis is now clearly before us: the New Testament model of the church is nowhere to be found in eighteenth century

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1. Ibid., II. p. 344.
2. Ibid., II., p. 344.
3. Ibid., II., pp. 349ff.
4. Ibid., II., p. 361.
Scotland, whether among Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, or Episcopalians. Nevertheless, he believes that Presbyterian and Episcopal polities are superior because they allow for the right of private judgment based upon a study of the Bible, and because they defend the fundamental tenet of true religion, namely, "that God, having given us his written word for our rule, has seen no necessity for empowering any man, or number of men, to serve as an infallible interpreter of his will."  

In our judgment, Campbell's answers to the two questions under which we have considered his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History are sound. We are in fundamental agreement with his views respecting the ancient sense in which the word, ecclesia, was used, the equal power of presbyters, and the extent of the charge of a primitive bishop. And his analysis of the extension of episcopal powers seems to us historically accurate, as does his criticism of the polity of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic systems.

The Lectures on Ecclesiastical History were delivered at just about the time, 1779, when anti-Romanist feeling was highest in Scotland, and this was still thirteen years before Episcopacy was freed of the restrictions imposed upon it. Such a tolerant view as Campbell adopted toward the "errors" of both these groups was hardly designed to make him popular with his more partisan fellow-Presbyterians. Nor were his critical remarks regarding Presbyterian polity produced to please the majority church. In fact, the whole enterprise

1. Ibid., II., p. 350.
to which the Principal turned himself in these Lectures is one more admirable illustration of his deep love of truth, his catholicity of spirit, and his courage.
CHAPTER VI.

CAMPBELL AS RHETORICIAN AND TRANSLATOR

In this chapter, two rather dissimilar works of Campbell are to be considered, his **Translation of the Gospels with Preliminary Dissertations and Notes**, first published in two volumes in 1789, and his **Philosophy of Rhetoric**, also in two volumes, first published in 1776. The former is perhaps his most directly theological work, and by far the best-received, running through seven editions between 1790 and 1810; the latter is undoubtedly his least theological writing, but was also very well-received both by contemporary scholars and the general public. The two works are here taken together because they show Campbell's great literary skill and his deep concern that all religious truths, whether spoken or written, be clothed in the most winsome language possible. The serious study out of which both writings grew was begun during his first pastorate at Banchory Ternan, and occupied his leisure to a later period of his life.

Of the **Translation of the Gospels** he writes,

As far back as the year 1750, soon after I had gotten the charge of a country parish, I first formed the design of collecting such useful criticisms on the text of the New Testament, as should either occur to my own observation, or as I should meet with in the course of my reading...to yield a better meaning, or at least
to express the meaning with more perspicuity
or energy.  

In this work, Campbell maintains that Reason has a two-
fold use in considering the Scriptures: first, to judge
whether what is presented therein as a revelation from God is
really such, or not; second, to judge what is the meaning of
the revelation given. If God has chosen to employ human
language in revealing His will to man, He has thereby given
us reason to conclude that, by the established rules of inter-
pretation in that language, His meaning may be interpreted.

If the words of God were to be interpreted
by another set of rules than that which the
grammar of the language, founded in general
use, presents us; with no propriety could it
be said, that the divine will is revealed to
us, till there were a new revelation furnish-
ing us with a key for unlocking the old. 2

Common sense urges that if God has condescended to speak to
man, it is man's duty to attend to what He says; if in any
writing God has revealed His will to man, it is man's duty to
read that writing carefully, and to do his utmost to under-
stand it rightly. 3 The aim of all inquiries into the Scriptures,
then, is to lay hold of the truth of God. 4

1. Campbell, Translation of the Gospels with Preliminary
Dissertations and Notes, Preface, p. ii. Italics are
mine. Hereafter referred to simply as Translation of
the Gospels.

2. Ibid., Preface, p. xiii.

3. Ibid., Preface, p. lxiv.

4. Ibid., Preface, p. lix.
As a conscientious Christian translator, Campbell feels he is obliged "for the benefit of others, to communicate any lights I may have received from this exercise. When they are communicated, I have discharged a Christian duty."¹

This work consists of twelve Preliminary Dissertations, and the translation of the four Gospels separately, each preceded by a Preface containing introductory material and followed by copious grammatical, historical, and exegetical notes. For the Greek text of the New Testament, Campbell was chiefly indebted to Mill's critical folio edition with prologomena published in 1707, and Wetstein's two folio volume New Testament published in 1751-52. He also employed the Vulgate Latin and other ancient versions, the Latin translations of Erasmus, Beza, Castalio, and Montanus, and at least one French version. In addition, he took account of the earlier English translations, such as the Geneva and Rheish, and certain modern versions like E. Harwood's *Liberal Translation of the New Testament* published in 1768. He was well-acquainted, too, with the work of Richard Simon, "the father of Higher Criticism," and that of J.A. Bengal, one of the foremost commentators.² But his broad familiarity with and dependence upon the work of other scholars did not cripple his own powers of independent judgment.

¹. Ibid., Preface, p. lvii.
². Ibid., Preface, pp. xxv., ff.
I have always laid it down as a rule, in my researches, to divest myself, as much as possible, of an excessive deference to the judgement of men...I have learnt, in things spiritual, to call no man Master upon earth. At the same time...I have been ready to give a patient hearing, and impartial examination, to reason and argument, from whatsoever quarter it proceeded.¹

In the second part of Dissertation XI., Campbell gives an interesting estimate of the King James Version of 1611, calling it "upon the whole, one of the best of those composed so soon after the Reformation."² It might, however, have been better had its translators not had an immoderate attachment to the Geneva translators, Junius, Tremellius, and Beza, for its greatest faults are traceable to this source. Now that the reign of scholastic sophistry and altercation is ended, now that additional progress has been made in the domains of literature, antiquities, and criticism, he goes on, it is desirable to give effect to these in a new revision.³ To these reasons may be added the fact that certain of those terms which were in 1611 a proper version of the words in the original have already become archaic and obsolete.⁴

Campbell was ready, then, to alter and improve the King James' Version wherever it was incorrect, inexact, or

¹. Ibid., Preface, pp. iii., iv.
². Ibid., Vol. II., p. 308.
³. Ibid., Vol. II., p. 309.
⁴. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 310 ff.
inadequate in its translation of the Greek text. Specifically, he objected to the practice of the King James' translators in varying too freely the rendering of the same Greek word in different passages; he also objected to the opposite fault, of rendering Greek words which were clearly different in meaning by the same English term, holding that both these practices sinned against lucidity. And he offers a long list of words which had either become archaic or changed their meaning since 1611, such as quick for living, meat for food, pitiful for compassionate, cunning for skilful, and many others.¹ Finally, he objects to the use the King James' translators have made of italics to supply words not in the original, or to accommodate an expression of the original to English idiomatic usage, suggesting that all such words as are plainly implied in the original and necessary in the English should simply be printed in common type. In this regard, we may note, Campbell anticipated the work of the revisers of 1881, who followed exactly such a procedure.

All the foregoing discussion has been set forth in an effort to indicate the principles which guided Campbell in the translation of his own version and to show the spirit with which he approached the task. We turn now to a more systematic treatment of the contents of certain of the more important dissertations, and to some examples of his rendition of certain passages in this new translation.

Dissertation I deals with the language and idiom of the New Testament. While certain of Campbell's contemporaries were quite

¹ Ibid., Vol. II., p. 317.
unwilling to admit that the style of the Biblical authors was less classical than that, say, of Plato, and were inclined to classify all deviations from classical language as Hebraisms or Syriacisms, he was not. By their stalwart defence of the purity and elegance of the sacred penmen, these commentators sought to defend what they considered the dignity of the New Testament.

They seem to suspect, that to yield, even on the clearest evidence, a point of this nature, though regarding ornaments merely human and exterior, might bring dishonour on inspiration, or render it questionable.\(^1\)

But, Campbell argues, by admitting Hebraisms and Syriacisms these men have already given up their cause.

That only can be called a Hebraism in a Greek book, which, although agreeable to the Hebrew idiom, is not so to the Greek. Nobody would ever call that a Scotticism which is equally in the manner of both Scots and English.\(^2\)

Hellenistic Greek cannot strictly be called a separate language, or even dialect, when the term dialect is conceived to imply peculiarities in declension and conjugation.\(^3\) To enter thoroughly into an understanding of the idiom of the New Testament, we must familiarize ourselves with the idiom of the Septuagint, with the dialect of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The latter, as well as the Hebrew itself, has affected the language both of the old Greek translation and of

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1. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 17.
2. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 29.
3. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 32.
the New Testament. Here again Campbell exhibits keen insight, and anticipates the work of such outstanding later scholars as Dalman and Deissmann.

The second Dissertation treats six difficulties in translating Biblical writings: first, the singularity of Jewish customs; second, the poverty of their native language; third, the fewness of the books extant in it; fourth, the symbolical style of the prophets; fifth, the excessive influence which previous translations may effect; and, sixth, prepossessions in regard to religious tenets.

An admirable discussion of the style and manner of the Evangelists comprises the third Dissertation. Their style is marked by simplicity of structure, sentiment, and design.

The subject of the narrative so engrosses the attention of the writer, that he is himself as nobody, and is quite forgotten by the reader, who is never led, by the tenor of the narration, so much as to think of him.

There is what Campbell calls an absence of animation from their narratives.

The historians speak of nothing, not even the most atrocious actions of our Lord's persecutors, with symptoms of emotion; no angry epithet, or pathetic exclamation, ever escapes them; not a word that betrays passion in the writer, or is calculated to excite the passions of the reader. In displaying the most gracious, as well as marvellous, dispensation of Providence towards man, all is directed to mend his heart, nothing to move his pity, or kindle his resentment. If these effects be also produced, they

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1. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 31.
2. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 68-79.
4. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 120ff.
are manifestly the consequences of the naked exposition of the facts, and not of any adventitious art in the writers, nay not of any one term, not otherwise necessary, employed for the purpose."

The fourth Dissertation deals with the use to be made of the Fathers in studying Scriptures. Once again, Campbell's judgement is balanced and sane. We must avoid extreme deference and refrain from complete disregard. "The Fathers are not entitled to our adoration, neither do they merit our contempt. If some of them were weak and credulous, others of them were both learned and judicious." In every case where judgement depends on reason and argument, we ought to treat the Fathers as we do the moderns, weighing carefully what is said, not who says it. In every case where we must depend on testimony, we ought to prefer the Fathers to the moderns whenever we do not suspect that some particular passion has swayed them, for many points which were with the Fathers matters of testimony are with the moderns matters merely of conjecture or of abstruse discussion.

I do not say, therefore, that we ought to confide in the verdict of the Fathers as judges, but that we ought to give them an impartial hearing as, in many cases, the only competent witnesses. And everybody must be sensible that the direct testimony of a plain man, in a matter which comes within the sphere of his knowledge, is more to be regarded, than the subtle conjectures of an able scholar who does not speak from knowledge, but gives the conclusions he has drawn from his own precarious reasonings, or from those of others.

1. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 120, 121.
2. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 139.
3. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 140.
The next five Dissertations are concerned with technical linguistic problems, and exhibit to the greatest advantage Campbell's feeling for minute shades of difference in words. Dissertation V. is a discussion of "the proper version of some names of principal importance in the New Testament."¹ For example, the Greek word, ἡ βασίλεια, is uniformly rendered in the King James' Version as "kingdom," although this is not wholly adequate to its meaning. While ἡ βασίλεια does usually mean "kingdom" or something nearly related to that word, its full meaning cannot be embraced in that English word. βασίλεια corresponds to the Latin "regnum," which is able to express both our English terms, "reign" and "kingdom." The first of these relates to the time or the duration of sovereignty; the second, to the place or country over which the sovereignty extends.

Now, though it is manifest in the Gospels, that it is much oftener the time, than the place, that is alluded to; it is never, in the common version, translated reign, but always kingdom.² Yet by rendering ἡ βασίλεια invariably as "kingdom" the expression often becomes exceedingly awkward, as, for example, when the Bible speaks of the βασίλεια as "coming" or "approaching." Here Campbell shows a sensitivity much like that which led later revisers to vary their translations of ἡ βασίλεια along the

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¹. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 177ff.
Dissertation VI is undoubtedly the best of those which are devoted to semantic problems. In it Principal Campbell considers the "difference in the import of words commonly thought synonymous." Such synonyms as μετανοεῖν and μεταμελέομαι, καταλαλέειν and ἀλαλέειν, ὁγιος and ὀγιος are carefully and competently considered. The treatment of ὁγιος and ὀγιος and their Hebrew conjugates, to which he devotes more than thirty pages, is thoroughly scholarly. His thesis is that the Hebrew word תֹּנֵ is not synonymous with וּיִתַּי, and, consequently, neither ὀγιος with ὁγιος. In the more common acceptation of the term ὀγιος, there is this difference between it and ὁγιος, as applied to God, that the latter appellation represents the Deity as awful, or rather terrible; the former as amiable." The Old Testament and ὁγιος in the New ought generally to be translated "holy"; but תֹּנֵ and ὀγιος (except when used substantively, where it may be rendered "saint") ought, when it concerns the disposition towards God, to be translated as "pious"; when it expresses the disposition towards men, as "gracious," "kind," or "humane." Such a competent New Testament

1. Ibid., Vol. I., pp. 239ff.
3. Ibid., Vol. I., p. 368.
scholar as Archbishop Trent, whose *New Testament Synonyms* is a standard authority, shows in his own work an indebtedness to this excellent sixth Dissertation of Campbell.

The seventh Dissertation treats "the import of certain titles of honour occurring in the New Testament;" the eighth, "the manner of rendering some words to which there are not any that perfectly correspond in modern languages;" and the ninth is an inquiry as to whether or not such words as "mystery," "blasphemy," "schism," and "heresy" coincide with the original terms from which they are derived.

Three closing Dissertations set forth Campbell's analysis of the things to be attended to in translating, the regard due to the Vulgate and King James versions, and an account of what he himself has attempted in this translation of the Gospels. In Dissertation X. he writes of three things which a translator who would do justice to his materials has to perform: first, he must give a just representation of the sense of the original (this is the most essential of all); second, he must convey in his version, so far as it is possible in consistency with the language in which he writes, the author's spirit, manner, and style; and, third, he must take care that his version be natural and easy, free from any improper application of the

original words, any meanings not warranted by common usage, and any obscure sense or ungrammatical construction. Under the heading of these three great ends of translation, Campbell criticizes the work of Montanus, Jerome, Castalio, and Beza. In the eleventh Dissertation, Campbell holds that the weakness of the Vulgate lies in the tendency of Jerome to employ technical ecclesiastical terms in translating the plain and familiar idiom of Scripture, thereby frequently sacrificing the real dictates of the Spirit to the shadowy resemblance in sound and etymology of technical words and scholastic phrases. If terms which have obtained the sanction of ecclesiastical use can convey the same meaning as the original term, with the same plainness, simplicity, and perspicuity, such terms ought to be used. "But if the same meaning be not conveyed by them, or not conveyed in the same manner, they ought to be rejected." Concerning the King James' Version, although he believes it is one of the best composed after the Reformation, Campbell holds that there is ample ground for believing that the meaning of the sacred writers can be either more exactly or more perspicuously rendered, and the quality of the Biblical writers' style can be more adequately represented. The 1611 version carries too

1. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 142-146.
2. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 146ff.
3. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 300ff.
4. Ibid., Vol. II., p. 305.
5. Ibid., Vol. II. p. 329.
prominently the signs of Genevan influence, bears too many archaisms, and can readily be improved with the advantages of the advances in language study and literary criticism made available to the scholar over the succeeding century and a half.

The last Dissertation summarises under five headings what Campbell has tried to do in his own version: first, that which concerns the essential qualities of the version; second, that which relates to the diversity of readings in the original; third, remarks on the particular dialect of English used in the version; fourth, the outward form of the version; and, fifth, some account of the accompanying notes. In his version, he has tried to give constant attention to the three principal objects which every translator ought to achieve, and which he has already set forth in Dissertation X. This has led him to reject words that are too fine, too learned or too modern, and words that are too low and vulgar. He has avoided as much as possible the use of circumlocution, and attempted to render the Greek in as few plain English words as will do justice to its meaning. He has considered it pardonable to be obscure or ambiguous only when it was necessary for avoiding a greater evil. "I consider it a greater evil in a translator, to assign a meaning merely from conjecture, for which he is conscious he has little or no

1. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 332,333.
2. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 355-365.
He has deliberately tried to keep separate the commentator's business from that of the translator.

Wherever a diversity of readings appears in the text, Campbell has followed a procedure of ignoring those variations which do not affect either the sense or the connection, and those variations which are "not tolerably supported, either by external, or internal, evidence." But those variations which in some degree affect the sense or have the respectable support of manuscripts and versions, he has taken care to specify, and, when the evidence in their favour seemed to preponderate, admitted them into the text and assigned the reason in his notes. Wherever the matter was doubtful, he preferred the common reading, and suggested in the notes what might be advanced in favour of the other. If he rejected a reading commonly received, but felt its retention desirable on the grounds of familiarity to readers of the Bible, he enclosed such material in brackets. The doxology of the Lord's Prayer, for example, was treated in this way. It may be observed here that Campbell was by necessity of circumstances not in a position to make many textual alterations. The Textus Receptus was still the standard authority, and although he could consult the Alexandrine Codex and certain of the ancient versions, the main materials employed by later revisers were not yet available for his use.

1. Ibid., Vol., II., p. 377.
2. Ibid., Vol. II., p. 383.
3. Ibid., Vol. II., p. 420.
On the whole, he felt it wise to retain the dialect employed by the King James' Version. All ranks and denominations of Christians are habituated to this language and "as it has contracted a dignity, favourable to seriousness, from its appropriation to sacred purposes; it is, I think, in a version of any part of sacred writ, entitled to be preferred to the modern dialect."\(^1\) In the outward form of his translation, Campbell determined neither entirely to reject the common division of chapter and verses, nor to adopt in the usual manner. Wherever he has established new divisions, he indicates the old ones in the margin. In some cases he has adopted new sectional and paragraph divisions, whenever these appeared to be better suited to the subject and the manner of treatment. The sections are mostly equal to two chapters, and each includes such a portion of Scripture as might be read at one time by those who employ the Bible for daily devotional exercises.\(^2\) The major exceptions to this rule are the Sermon on the Mount, the prophecy on Olivet (in Matthew), and the valedictory addresses of Jesus to His disciples (in John). All purely narrative material is set in italics; all discourse, whether by Jesus or others, is set in Roman type.\(^3\) The foot-margin is employed for two purposes: to explain such appellatives as do not admit a proper translation

\(^1\) Ibid., Vol. II., p. 422.
\(^2\) Ibid., Vol II., pp. 445-448.
\(^3\) Ibid., Vol. II. p. 456.
into English and render it necessary for the translator to retain the original term; and to indicate the Old Testament passages wherein the Hebrew word Jehovah is rendered in the Greek of the New Testament as Ἑλευθερίαν.\(^1\)

The last section of this concluding Dissertation describes the notes which accompany the translation as scholia, or glosses on passages of doubtful or difficult interpretation. In them Campbell has kept as clear as possible from all scholastic disputes, maintaining that "the province of the translator, and that of the controvertist are so distinct...that it appears much better to keep them separate."\(^2\) The notes are placed at the end so that the reader will not be interrupted every moment, and may give an impartial hearing to the sacred authors.\(^3\) "It is always to be remembered that an acquaintance with the text is the principal object."\(^4\)

The Dissertations are the more meritorious part of the work on the Gospels, and offer ample evidence of Campbell's industry, scholarship, and acuteness. The great contemporary popularity of the Translation of the Gospels was primarily due to this critical work. His colleague, Beattie, writing to

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1. Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 462, 463.
2. Ibid., Vol. II., p. 468.
3. Ibid., Vol. II., p. 481.
4. Ibid., Vol. II. p. 482.
Sir William Forbes, said of the Dissertations that they were "really a treasure of theological learning, exact criticism, and sound divinity."¹

But when one turns to the translation itself the high expectations aroused by the Dissertations are left decidedly unfulfilled. A reviewer, in 1790, after praising the Dissertations, writes,

We are compelled to add that the instances of a partial improvement of the old version are comparatively few; that its simplicity and energy have been frequently injured without any change, or at least any material change of sense...nor can we suppress our opinion that to readers of learning and taste the general effect of this translation will appear very inferior to that of our common version.²

It is indeed true that Campbell fails markedly to maintain the rhythm and simplicity of the King James' Version whenever he deviates from its translation. His concern for greater precision sometimes leads to sheer pedantry. In other cases the deviation is so abrupt as to offend the taste and jar upon the ear.

Certain examples may here be given, which will exhibit the more striking deviations. In Matthew 18:35, for "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you," Campbell offers, "Thus will My celestial Father treat every one of you."³ In Mark 10:38, for "Can ye be baptized with the baptism that

¹ Beattie and His Friends, pp. 189-190.
I am baptized with?" he has "Can ye undergo an immersion like that which I must undergo?"¹ In Luke 17:20, for "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation," Campbell reads "The reign of God is not ushered in with parade."² And in John 21:5, for "Children, have ye any meat?" he presents "My lads, have ye any victuals?"³ One cannot help but feel that these and many other examples which might be advanced are ample evidence that Campbell failed, partially at least, to fulfill his own announced objectives in this translation. Despite the merit and excellence of certain passages, the work is blighted by numerous substitutions of colloquial, and even vulgar, expressions for others which were sufficiently plain.

In concluding this discussion of the Translation of the Gospels, we are bound to say that although Campbell's translation has not altogether met the expectations entertained of it, yet the Dissertations which accompany it are a treasure of Biblical criticism. The whole work will still repay perusal and cannot fail to evoke admiration of Campbell's literary skill and his deep concern that Biblical truths be clothed in the simplest, most exact, and most winsome language possible.

We turn now to a brief consideration of Campbell's least theological writing, the Philosophy of Rhetoric. His plan may be given in his own words, from the Preface:

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1. Ibid., Vol. III., p. 184.
2. Ibid., Vol. III., p. 296.
It is his purpose in this work, on the one hand, to exhibit, he does not say, a correct map, but a tolerable sketch of the human mind; and, aided by the lights which the Poet and the Orator so amply furnish, to disclose its secret movements, tracing its principal channels of perception and action, as near as possible, to their source: and, on the other hand, from the science of human nature, to ascertain, with greater precision, the radical principles of that art, whose object it is, by the use of language, to operate on the soul of the hearer, in the way of informing, convincing, pleasing, moving, or persuading.

This work, then, is psychology applied to rhetoric and literary criticism, with the principles of philosophy underlying. McCosh has pointed out that the Scottish metaphysicians following Shaftesbury were fond of speculating about beauty and taste, and that all the Scottish thinkers at this time were anxious to acquire an elegant style. Such men as Adam Smith, Lord Kames, and Hugh Blair all prepared useful lectures and books on rhetoric and composition. "These works were used for several ages, not only in Scotland, but even in England, and helped to make rhetoric a leading branch of study in all the American colleges."3

The Philosophy of Rhetoric is comprised of an Introduction and three Books: Book I., "The Nature and Foundations of Eloquence;" Book II., "The Foundations and Essential Properties of Elocution;" Book III., "The Discriminating Properties of Elocution." Of these parts, consideration will be given in this chapter primarily to the Introduction and Book I., the more philosophical parts of the work.

3. Ibid., p. 241.
No consideration will be given to those parts of Books II. and III. which deal with strictly grammatical problems, but notice will be taken of Campbell's concern for clarity and winsomeness of presentation as this emerges in his writing.

In the Introduction, Campbell is concerned to show the importance of Eloquence. "There is no art whatever," he writes, "that hath so close a connection with all the faculties and powers of the mind, as eloquence, or the art of speaking ..."\(^1\) It is a fine art in that it requires the aid of imagination; it is a useful art, if the power of speech be a useful faculty, in that it teaches us how to employ that faculty with the greatest possibility of success. And, further, if the logical art and the ethical be useful, eloquence is useful in that it instructs us how these arts may be applied for the conviction and the persuasion of others.\(^2\)

Book I. opens with a definition of Eloquence as "that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end."\(^3\) The ends of speaking are reduced to four: to enlighten the understanding; to please the imagination; to move the passions; and, to influence the will. In this order, each preceding species is preparatory to the subsequent, Campbell maintains,

Knowledge, the object of the intellect, furnisheth materials for the fancy; the fancy culls, compounds, and by hermimic art, disposes these materials so as

\(^1\) Campbell, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 7.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 7, 8.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 15.
to effect the passions; the passions are the natural spurs to volition and action, and so need only to be right directed.  

Different kinds of address are to be employed in seeking the several ends of speech. The enlightenment of the understanding calls for instruction and argument because the speaker's aim here is to impart information and establish conviction. The imagination must be addressed by "exhibiting to it a lively and beautiful representation of a suitable object," because here the orator's task consists in imitation, and

attains the summit of perfection in the sublime, or those great and noble images, which, when in suitable coloring presented to the mind, do, as it were, distend the imagination with some vast conception, and quite ravish the soul.  

The stirring of the passions demands the employment by the speaker of the fancy, which supplies tropes and figures that have "a marvellous efficacy ... (and) as it were by some magical spell, hurries them (the listeners), ere they are aware, into love, pity, grief, terror, desire, aversion, fury, or hatred." And, finally, the influencing of the will requires of the speaker a skilful mixture of the argumentative and the impassioned.

Would we not only touch the heart, but win it entirely to cooperate with our views, those affecting lineaments must be so interwoven with our argument, as that, from

1. Ibid., p. 17.
2. Ibid., p. 17.
3. Ibid., p. 18.
4. Ibid., p. 20.
the passion excited, our reasoning may derive importance, and so be fitted for commanding attention; and by the justness of the reasoning, the passion may be more deeply rooted and enforced; and that thus, both may be made to conspire in effectuating that persuasion which is the end proposed. ¹

Campbell now turns to oratory suited to light and trivial matters, and discusses wit, humour, and ridicule. The section on wit is of particular merit and worth noting. He writes,

> It is the design of wit to execute in the mind an agreeable surprise, and that arising, not from anything marvellous in the subject, but solely from the imagery she employs, or the strange assemblage of related ideas presented to the mind. ²

This end is effected in one or other of these three ways: first, by debasing things pompous or seemingly grave; second, in aggrandising things little and frivolous; third, in setting ordinary objects, by means not only remote but apparently contrary, in a particular and uncommon point of view. ³

Chapters v. and vi. of Book I. are of particular interest for the purpose of this thesis because they contain Campbell's criticism of the different sorts of evidence, and of the nature and use of the syllogism. He begins with intuitive evidence, which he holds to be of different sorts. The first is that which results primarily from intellecction. Of this kind is the evidence of such propositions as: "one and four make five"; or, "Things equal to the same

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¹ Ibid., p. 21.
² Ibid., p. 24.
³ Ibid., p. 25. Dr. Beattie's work, An Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Writing, contains remarkably similar sentiments, as Campbell observes, although the men had no communication on the subject.
or equal things are equal to one another." In fact, all axioms of arithmetic and geometry are included under this heading by Campbell.\(^1\) Such propositions are in effect but so many different expressions of our own general notions taken in different views. Some of them are no more than definitions, or equivalent definitions. But this does not mean that it is impossible to advance, by their means, beyond the simple ideas first perceived by the mind, for when the thing, though in effect coinciding, is considered under a different aspect; when what is single in the subject is divided in the predicate, and conversely; or when what is a whole in the one, is regarded as a part of something in the other; such propositions lead to the discovery of innumerable, and apparently remote relations.\(^2\)

A second kind of intuitive evidence is that which arises from consciousness, "whence every man derives the perfect assurance that he hath of his own existence."\(^3\) And a third is common sense, which is called "an original source of knowledge common to all mankind."\(^4\) This latter definition follows the main signification of the term in the philosophical works of the century, but Campbell introduces an ambiguity by going on to speak of common sense as prevailing in different degrees of strength in different persons.\(^5\) Thus he confounds the common principles of intelligence in all men with

\(^{1}\) Ibid., p. 60.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 61.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 62.
\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 64.
\(^{5}\) Ibid., pp. 64, 65.
the sound sense possessed only by certain persons.¹

Several distinctions are now drawn by Campbell between the different kinds of intuitive truth. Whereas mathematical axioms and the assurances of consciousness are so constituted that the denial of them implies a manifest contradiction, this is not true with the primary truths of the third order, common sense. He quotes approvingly a statement of Buffier, "'It must be owned that to maintain propositions, the reverse of the primary truths of common sense, doth not imply a contradiction, it only implies insanity.'"²

This whole attempt to distinguish between the various kinds of first truths is valid, but it is doubtful whether Campbell sees the distinction between what might be called primitive cognition and primitive judgments clearly enough to enunciate it.

Mc Cosh holds that Campbell is also unclear as to the relation of our primary perceptions to realities, and cites the following passage:

All the axioms in mathematics are but the enunciations of certain properties in our abstract notions, distinctly perceived by the mind, but have no relation to anything without themselves, and can never be made the foundation of any conclusion regarding actual existence ... ³

He (Mc Cosh) adds, "... as if the demonstrations of Archimedes as to conic sections had not been found to apply to the elliptical

¹. See Mc Cosh's criticism of Campbell, op. cit., p. 242, and of Thomas Reid, op. cit., pp. 221-222, on just this point.

². Campbell, op. cit., p. 68. Quotation is from Prémiers Verités, Part I., Chapt. II. Mc Cosh, op. cit., p. 242, is unwarranted in taking this to mean Campbell credited Buffier with first noting the principles of common sense, etc.

³. Ibid., p. 66, as quoted by Mc Cosh, op. cit., p. 243.
orbits of the comets as discovered by Kepler.¹

Deductive evidence is set into two classes by Campbell: scientific and moral.

All rational or deductive evidence is derived from one or other of these two sources: from the invariable properties, or relations, of various ideas; or, from the actual, though perhaps, variable connexions, subsisting among things. The former we call demonstration, or demonstrative (scientific), the latter, moral.²

There are four differences between scientific and moral deductive evidence. First, "the subject of the one is abstract independent truth, or the unchangeable and necessary relation of ideas; that of the other, the real, but often changeable and contingent connexions that subsist among things actually existing."³ Second, "moral evidence admits degrees, demonstration doth not."⁴ Third, "in the one there can never be any contrariety of proofs; in the other, there not only may be, but almost always is."⁵ And, fourth, "scientific evidence is simple, consisting of only one coherent series...; moral evidence is generally complicated, being in reality a bundle of independent proofs."⁶

Scientific evidence is infinitely superior in point of authority

¹. Mc Cosh, _op. cit._, p. 243.
². Campbell, _op. cit._, p. 69.
³. Ibid., p. 70.
⁴. Ibid., p. 71.
⁵. Ibid., p. 71.
⁶. Ibid., p. 72.
but moral evidence is infinitely superior in point of importance. The sphere of the former is narrower and its dominion is despotic within that sphere; the sphere of the latter is as wide as the world, but its force is not always irresistible.¹ Rhetoric has little to do with scientific evidence, its proper sphere is the realm of moral evidence.²

Moral reasoning has three subdivisions: experience, analogy, and testimony. Experience is either uniform or various. If uniform, "provided the facts on which it is founded be sufficiently numerous, the conclusion is said to be morally certain."³ If various, the conclusion built on the greater number of instances is said to be probable.⁴ Experience is never contradicted by one example only.⁵ The evidence of experience is, if not the foundation, at least the criterion of all moral reasoning whatever.⁶

The evidence of analogy is but "a more indirect experience, founded on some remote similitude."⁷ It is at best but a feeble

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1. Ibid., p. 73.
2. Ibid., p. 70.
3. Ibid., p. 79.
4. Ibid., p. 79.
5. Ibid., p. 79.
6. Ibid., p. 82.
7. Ibid., p. 82.
support, and is hardly ever honoured with the name of proof, but when the analogies are numerous and other evidence is unavailable, analogy has its efficacy. It may be called the defensive arms of the orator; it rarely refutes, though it frequently repels refutation.¹

Testimony is either oral or written. It is not, as some argue, solely and originally derived from experience, Campbell maintains.² The evidence of testimony is to be considered as logical,

no farther than human veracity in general, or the veracity of witnesses of such a character, and in such circumstances in particular, is supported; or perhaps more properly, hath not been refuted by experience.³

That testimony, antecedently to experience, has a natural effect and influence on belief, Campbell holds to be undeniable.⁴ In what concerns single facts, testimony is more adequate evidence than any conclusions from experience. Experience gives us general conclusions, which, when we descend to particulars, become weaker, for though all the known circumstances be similar, all the actual experiences and circumstances may not be similar, or even known to us.⁵ Hence, experience is "the foundation of philosophy, which consists in a collection of general truths, systematically digested."⁶ Testimony is

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 84.
². Ibid., p. 84. We shall see in the succeeding chapter how Campbell engages Hume on this very issue.
³. Ibid., p. 84.
⁴. See Chapter VII, in which Campbell's use of this argument against Hume is treated.
⁵. Ibid., p. 85.
⁶. Ibid., p. 85.
"the foundation of history, which is occupied about individuals."¹ From the evidence of testimony, we derive our knowledge of the actions and achievements of men in other regions and in former ages, and much of our acquaintance with nature and its works. And we are further indebted to testimony for the great part of what is "commonly known under the name of experience, but which is, in fact, not founded on our own personal observations, or the notices originally given by our senses, but on the attested experiences and observations of others."²

Experience, however, does teach us to confine our belief in testimony, and we are led by experience to consider such matters as the reputation of the attester, the nature of the fact attested, the occasion and the design in giving the testimony, and the disposition of the hearers to whom it was given.³

In his discussion of "the nature and use of the scholastic art of syllogising," Campbell maintains that the syllogism "bears the manifest indications of an artificial and ostentatious parade of learning, calculated for giving the appearance of great profundity, to what in fact is very shallow."⁴ Syllogistic reasoning has no affinity to moral reasoning, the procedure in the one case being the very reverse of that employed in the other. But though the syllogism

¹. Ibid., p. 87.
². Ibid., p. 86.
³. Ibid., p. 86.
⁴. Ibid., p. 95.
is more of the nature of scientific reasoning than of moral, it has not been thought worthy of adoption by scientists because it is too indirect, too tedious, and too obscure. Furthermore, the art of syllogising is of little or no utility when applied to matters with which we can be acquainted only by experience. Its proper province is "rather the adjustment of our language in expressing ourselves on subjects previously known, than the acquisition of knowledge of things themselves." In short, the art of syllogising in no sense deserves to be designated the art of reasoning; it is ill-adapted to scientific matters, and utterly incapable of assisting us in our researches into nature. It deserves to be called, Campbell says, "the science of logomachy or altercation," but he contents himself with calling it merely, "the scholastic art of disputation. It is the Schoolmen's science of defence." It has engendered two evils at least: an eagerness for disputing every subject, no matter how incontrovertible, and a sort of philosophical pride which will not permit us to believe anything, even a self-evident principle, without a previous argument or reason. "We imagine we are advancing and making wonderful progress, while the mist of words in which we have involved our intellects, hinders us from discerning that we are

1. Ibid., pp. 96-97.
2. Ibid., p. 100.
3. Ibid., p. 104.
4. Ibid., p. 105.
5. Ibid., p. 105.
moving in a circle all the time.\textsuperscript{1}

Campbell fails here to grasp the idea of the syllogism as being merely an analysis of the process which passes through the mind in all ratiocination. He proposes, and argues with some ingenuity, that every syllogism must be futile and worthless, because the premisses virtually assert the conclusion. This line of argument is plausible only if one makes the prior assumption that the syllogism is a distinct kind of argument, and that the rules of it do not apply, nor were intended to apply, to all reasoning whatever. Such an assumption would seem unwarranted. Under this misapprehension, Campbell fails to see that his objections, however specious, lie against the process of reasoning itself universally, and will, therefore, of course, apply to those very arguments he is himself adducing. Archbishop Whately has observed correctly that Campbell's "great defect, which not only leads him into occasional errors, but leaves many of his best ideas but imperfectly developed, is his ignorance and utter misconception of the nature and object of logic."\textsuperscript{2}

We have now set forth the more philosophical parts of this work. Mc Cosh has said that of all the eighteenth century Scottish works on rhetoric Campbell's is "perhaps the most philosophical, or is, at least the one in which there is the most frequent discussion of philosophical problems."\textsuperscript{3} Yet it is doubtful whether the work has any real philosophical merit. The author's misconception of common sense,

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., pp. 105-106.
\item Whately, "Rhetoric," Encyclopedia of Mental Philosophy, 1817, p. 243.
\item Mc Cosh, op. cit., p. 241.
\end{enumerate}
and his inadequate understanding of the syllogism's use in formal logic, are but two bits of evidence which might be adduced to support this contention. We shall have occasion to criticise Campbell's conception of the relationship of experience and testimony in the succeeding chapter. On the whole, our judgment of this work in rhetoric may best be phrased in the words of a nineteenth century Aberdonian, James Bruce, who calls the Philosophy of Rhetoric, "a wonderful work of literary criticism to have been the product of a clergyman and a Principal of a college." ¹

Campbell is most effective in Books II. and III. when he is setting forth his views on such matters as the consideration which the speaker ought to have of the hearers, and the qualities of style strictly rhetorical. Under the first of these headings, he observes that if the hearers are to be convinced by the orator's arguments, these must be understood, attended to, and remembered. And, if the hearers are to be persuaded by the arguments, it is further requisite that they be felt.²

Inasmuch as the aim of the orator is a certain effect to be produced in the hearers he must be concerned with his style. Because all men are creatures of understanding, imagination, memory, and passions, the orator is called upon to be perspicuous, if he wishes to inform the understanding, vivacious and elegant to please the imagination, and hold the memory, and animated to work upon the passions.³

¹ Bruce, Eminent Men of Aberdeen, p. 338.
³ Ibid., p. 296.
To these qualities of style, Campbell adds music, "an excellence of which language is susceptible as an audible object, distinct from its aptitude for conveying the sentiments of the orator with light and energy into the mind of the hearers."¹ This "music" is to the ear what beauty is to the eye.

At the outset of this chapter it was noted that Campbell's Translation of the Gospels and his Philosophy of Rhetoric were to be taken together because both showed his concern that truth be clothed in the most winsome language possible. We may here observe the remarkable similarity of sentiment concerning the exposition of truth found in both these works. Time and again, Campbell urges upon his readers perspicuity, vivacity, animation, and simplicity, as essential elements of both speech and writing, whether the Biblical or the more abstract philosophical truths are being set forth. It may, therefore, be fitting to close this chapter with a quotation which exhibits best this characteristic attitude. Campbell writes:

> Without the grand art of communication ... the greatest talents, even wisdom itself, lose much of their lustre, and still more of their usefulness. The wise in heart, saith Solomon, shall be called prudent, but the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning."²

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¹ Ibid., p. 296.
² Ibid., p. 8. Italics are his.
CHAPTER VII.

CAMPBELL AS APOLOGIST

Campbell first replied to David Hume's Essay on Miracles in a sermon preached before the Synod of Aberdeen on 9 October 1760, which, on their requesting him to publish it, he afterwards moulded into the form of a dissertation, published in 1762. By this time, a considerable amount of criticism had already been directed against Hume and his work, for it had been published, as part of his Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding, in 1748.

Certain of the critics had attracted widespread notice, particularly William Adams for his Essay on Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles, which appeared in 1754, and John Douglas for his Criterion, published in the following year. But the greatest contemporary approval was to await the appearance of George Campbell's Dissertation on Miracles in the next decade.

Before turning to an examination of Hume's argument and Campbell's reply, let us note briefly the circumstances surrounding the preparation and publication of the latter. It has already been noted that Campbell sent his manuscript to his old friend Dr. Hugh Blair in Edinburgh, before publication, with the request that he read it and express his judgement concerning its worth. This Blair did, and then asked and received the author's permission to show


2. See Chapter II., p. 40.
the work to Hume. As Campbell remarks, in a typically generous sentence,

To this I heartily agreed; and did it the more readily, as I thought it very possible that, in some things, I might have mistaken that author's meaning; in which case, he was surely better qualified than any other person to set me right.¹

When Hume had completed his perusal of the manuscript, he returned it to Blair with a letter² containing certain observations that had occurred to him. This the Edinburgh clergymen forwarded to Campbell, who, before publication of his Dissertation, "... in regard to a few particular expressions complained of ... either removed or softened them, that I might, as much as possible, avoid the offence, without impairing the argument."³ When this had been done, Campbell sent the work off to the printer.

For the moment we pass by the details of Hume's criticism of Campbell's effort, but we must note in passing that Hume objects to being considered an atheist, writing,

I could wish your friend had not denominated me an infidel writer, on account of ten or twelve pages which seem to him to have that tendency: While I have wrote (sic) so many volumes on history, literature, politics, trade, morals, which, in that particular at least, are entirely inoffensive. Is a man to be called a drunkard because he has been fuddled once in his lifetime?⁴

¹. Campbell, Dissertation on Miracles, 1812 edition, p. 5. Hume found no instance, apparently, either of misunderstanding or misrepresentation.

². See Campbell, op. cit., pp. 6-10.

³. Campbell, op. cit., p. 5.

After the publication of the Dissertation, Hume wrote directly to Campbell, commending him for the "civil and obliging way in which you have conducted the dispute against me," and adding "it is impossible for me not to see the ingenuity of your performance, and the great learning which you have displayed against me."⁠¹ As we have already seen, Hume refused to defend himself, though he admitted never having felt so violent an inclination to do so, avowing that he had long preferred to allow the public to judge between his adversaries and himself, without making any reply.⁠² The letter ends with the intimation that the argument of his Essay had first occurred to him while he was in conversation with a Jesuit in the College of La Fleche.

In reply to Hume's letter, there is one from Campbell which closes the correspondence, in which, as Burton says, "he endeavours to rival his opponent in candour, politeness, and gentlemanlike feeling."³ The closing sentences are a further indication of the gentle framework within which this controversy took place. Campbell writes:

There is in all controversy a struggle for victory, which I may say compels one to take every fair advantage that either the sentiments or the words of an antagonist present him with. But the appearances of asperity or raillery, which one will be thereby necessarily drawn into, ought not to be constructed as in the least affecting the

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2. See Chapter II., p. 40.
habitually good opinion, or even the highest esteem, which the writer may nevertheless entertain of his adversary.¹

We now turn to the controversy itself. It will be necessary first to consider, in a more general way, some aspects of Hume's philosophy which have bearing on his thought concerning miracles. From that we shall turn to his argument in the Essay on Miracles; then to Campbell's reply in the Dissertation on Miracles. Hume's criticism of the Dissertation, in his letter to Blair, will be noted as we present Campbell's argument. Our own criticism will appear throughout the chapter, and in a final statement at its close.

The reasoning of Hume's Essay follows naturally from his whole philosophical position. While Professor Taylor may be quite right in holding that, for the purposes of the Enquiry, the whole section is superfluous,² and he and Mr. Selby-Bigge may be correct in believing that Hume's motive was a simple craving for notoriety at any cost,³ the fact remains that the argument, though it may not represent Hume at his best, is not inconsistent with his general point of view.⁴ On the contrary, when the Essay, Section X of the Enquiry, is taken together with Section XI, Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State, it may be seen that we have here

¹ Burton, op. cit., p. 120.
² Taylor, David Hume and the Miraculous, p. 3.
⁴ Smith, Hume's Dialogues, pp. 58ff.
a complete and connected argument.¹

Professor N. Kemp Smith, in commenting on this point, makes a suggestion which might well explain why so many scholars tend to ignore Section XI. The difficulty lies in the reluctance of Hume to do, in 1748, what he was to do so efficiently in his posthumously published Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, namely make an open attack on what was regarded at the earlier date as the chief argument for a divine existence, the argument from design.

Thus, evidently, Hume's treatment of miracles has a premiss to which he has not in this section (X, Of Miracles) referred—namely, that we have, and can have, no grounds either in reason or in experience for postulating the kind of God to whom alone the Scriptural or other miracles can be fittingly ascribed. This, and not the sheerly logical considerations bearing on belief, testimony, and evidence generally, is the context within which the issues regarding miracles properly arise. To supply this context would, however, have involved a discussion of the dangerous issues dealt with in the Dialogues. On the other hand, to give the argument on miracles without this context would have left his argument very much in the air. Hume's problem, therefore, in the Enquiry, was to introduce it without yet saying too much. How was this to be done? Section XI (Of a Particular Providence, etc.) of the Enquiry gives Hume's answer to this question.

This reluctance led Hume to abandon his original title for Section XI, which was to have been called: "Of the Practical Consequences of Natural Theology." The present title is quite misleading, for providence is hardly considered at all, and the future state is no more than implied in the discussion.

¹. See Stephen, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 310, on this point.
². Smith, op. cit., p. 64. Italics are his.
The argument of Section XI as it now stands may be summed up in a single sentence: No more may be discovered of a cause than is revealed in the effect. The argument, unlike any other section of the Enquiry, is set in the form of a dialogue, in which Epicurus is imagined to defend himself against certain accusers who hold his doctrines to be immoral. In reply, the philosopher holds that "... when, in my philosophical disquisitions, I deny a providence and a future state, I undermine not the foundations of society, but advance principles, which they themselves, upon their own topics, if they argue consistently, must allow to be solid and satisfactory."¹

Greig believes that, in this Essay, Hume is thus dramatising his own situation.

In his capacity of philosopher, he felt himself alone, facing a temporary but hostile combination of plain Christians, Christian apologists, and Deists. Though he wanted to accept the teleological argument, he could not quite allay his doubts regarding it.²

This would explain the invention of a friend "who loves sceptical paradoxes,"³ and the danger of atheism in 1748⁴ would explain why the doubts that Hume put into the mouth of his sceptical friend were left unanswered, being merely part of "a question (which) is entirely speculative."⁵

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2. Greig, David Hume, p. 168.  
Hume begins the argument of Section XI by stating the principle by which he would bring the teleological argument under question.

When we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other, and can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities, but what are exactly efficient to produce the effect.¹

The same rule holds, he goes on,

...whether the cause assigned be brute unconscious matter, or a rational intelligent being. If the cause be known only by the effect, we never ought to ascribe to it any qualities, beyond what are precisely requisite to produce the effect; Nor can we, by any rules of just reasoning, return back from the cause, and infer other effects from it, beyond those by which alone it is known to us.²

Then follows an illustration, in which Hume shows that from viewing one of Zeuxis' pictures, it could never be inferred that he was also a statuary (that is, sculptor) or architect, but only that he possessed precisely the amount of skill we see exhibited in the picture. So much, and not a whit more, is permissible inference.

Now, allowing this principle to be true, when it is applied to the universe we see that the gods who may be supposed to be the cause of the universe can be said to possess "that precise degree of power, intelligence, and benevolence, which appears in their workmanship; but nothing farther can ever be proved, except we call in the assistance of exaggeration and flattery to supply the defects of argument and reasoning."³

2. Ibid., p. 136.
3. Ibid., p. 137.
That is to say, Hume goes on,

We can never be allowed to mount up from the universe, the effect, to Jupiter, the cause; and then descend downwards, to infer any new effect from that cause; as if the present effects were not entirely worthy of the glorious attributes, which we ascribe to that deity.¹

Now, we can see, Epicurus (or Hume) has reached the point in his argument where it is possible for him to maintain that the religious hypothesis is no more than a particular method of accounting for the discernible phenomena of the universe. As he adds, "... no just reasoner will ever presume to infer from it any single fact, and alter or think to add to the phenomena, in any single particular."²

But, he goes on,

If you think that the appearances of things prove such causes, it is allowable for you to draw an inference concerning the existence of these causes ... But here you ought to rest.³

You are not permitted to come backward from the causes that you have inferred and conclude that any other fact has existed, or will exist, which may serve as a fuller display of the attributes of what you have inferred. In short, you are not allowed to add anything to the effect.

... all your reasonings on this subject can only be drawn from effects to causes; and (that) every argument, deduced from causes to effects, must of necessity be a gross sophism; since it is impossible for you to know anything

1. Enquiry, p. 137.
2. Ibid., p. 139.
3. Ibid., p. 139.
of the cause, but what you have antecedently, not inferred, but discovered to the full, in the effect.  

Whereas one may learn from experience that a man who can do one thing or another under certain conditions may be able to do still other things under different conditions, it is apparent upon closer analysis that this does not alter the argument already put forth, or weaken it in any respect.

Did we know man only from the single work or production which we examine, it were impossible for us to argue in this manner; because our knowledge of all the qualities, which we ascribe to him, being in that case derived from the production, it is impossible they could point to anything further, or be the foundation of any new inference.

If we see a single footprint on the sand, we may legitimately infer that there was probably another footprint which time or other accidents effaced. But this alteration in the effect is not a continuation of the same simple chain of reasoning which first led us, upon viewing the single footprint, to infer the existence of some figure adapted to it. Rather, this second inference may be made because

We comprehend in this case a hundred other experiences and observations, concerning the usual figure and members of that species of animal ...

That is, we know independently of this particular effect that most men have two feet, and our secondary inference, therefore, becomes permissible and probable.

1. Enquiry, p. 141.
2. Ibid., p. 144.
3. Ibid., p. 144.
The application of the foregoing principles is then turned to the "chief or sole argument for a divine existence ... derived from the order of nature."1 The Deity is known to us only by his productions, and is a single being in the universe, not comprehended under any species or genus, from whose experienced attributes or qualities, we can, by analogy, infer any attribute or quality in him. But we cannot infer any farther attributes or farther degrees of the same attributes than what we have experienced in the particular relation between the universe as effect and the Deity as cause which has come under our observation.

Just as we were restricted earlier in the argument to thinking of Zeuxis only in so far as he was acting in the relationship discernible through his painting, so here we are restricted in thinking about Deity. As earlier, Zeuxis was discovered only as the producer of that single effect, the picture, so here, Deity is discovered only as the cause of the single effect, the universe.

The force of Hume's argument is clear. His own summation is brief and to the point:

That the divinity may possibly be endowed with attributes, which we have never seen exerted; may be governed by principles of action, which we cannot discover to be satisfied: all this will freely be allowed. But this is mere possibility and hypothesis. We never can have reason to infer any attributes, or any principles of action in him, but so far as we know them to have been exerted and satisfied.3

2. Ibid., p. 114.
3. Ibid., p. 111.
With these few pages, Hume overthrew Joseph Butler's thesis in his *Analogy*, published in 1736. Butler had argued that the Christian view of the world was analogous to that which any fair-minded analysis of human experience would produce. If we assume, therefore, the truth of Christian belief, and proceed with our investigation of human experience, we will discover that the latter confirms the former. And, thereby, our provisional belief will acquire a degree of probability very much like certainty, and sufficient to prompt us to act upon it.

But, as Hume points out, this procedure requires us to read far more into the cause than the visible effect will warrant. He offers as an example, the familiar argument for the justice of the gods which is based upon the marks of a distributive justice in the world.

Are there any marks of a distributive justice in the world? If you answer in the affirmative, I conclude, that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude, that you have then no reason to ascribe justice, in our sense of it, to the gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying, that the justice of the gods, at present, exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent; I answer, that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only so far as you see it, at present, exert itself.1

There being no previous experience of the gods, and no other experience of the gods, to fall back upon—because here we are arguing from a unique effect, the universe, to a unique cause, Deity—it becomes impossible to add anything to nature, beyond what nature is found to be.

So, then, at the conclusion of this interesting and crucial Section of the Enquiry, Hume is suggesting that "the argument from design is ... the 'religious hypothesis' par excellence, and yet is not defensible."¹

As has been observed above, circumstances forced Hume to present the argument of Section XI with great circumspection in 1748. His later writings elaborate the same theme with much greater daring. Before turning to the Essay on Miracles, therefore, we will attempt to summarise briefly the two elements in his later thought which are basic to any understanding of his discussion of miracles, his conception of God and his doctrine of causation, as these appear in his later publications.

First of all, Hume always professes belief in a Supreme Being, however inconsistently this notion may fit into his system. But he is not a Theist in the true sense of the term. Professor James Orr states that the principles of Hume's philosophy destroy the foundation of Theism;² yet if Hume's repeated professions carry any weight, "he did stop short in practice of this extreme position, and gave Theism the benefit of the Academic doubt."³ However, Orr continues, when we grant the utmost to the claims of Hume, "his Theism is found to be a purely speculative, inoperative thing, hardly deserving to

¹ Smith, op. cit., p. 72.
² Orr, David Hume, p. 207.
³ Ibid., p. 208. See his letter to Blair above, p. 160.
be described by so dignified a name."¹ We may, I think, safely conclude that Hume's profession of belief in an intelligent Being in the theistic sense is more an adjustment to popular opinion than an earnest belief. This will be shown more clearly as we take note of the argument pursued by Hume in his Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.²

In the Dialogues, Philo represents the main current of Hume's thought; it is he who emerges victoriously from the argument. He prosecutes with success the refutation of both the argument a posteriori and the argument a priori for an intelligent Being behind the universe. The substance of the book may be summarised under three general ideas: (1) Man's mental endowments do not enable him to comprehend the nature of an infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient Being. "We must be far removed from the smallest tendency to scepticism not to be apprehensive, that we have here got quite beyond the reach of our faculties."³ When we speculate about such a Being, we become like foreigners in a strange country who may at any time transgress the laws and customs of the people among whom they

¹. Orr, David Hume, p. 208.
². Composed in 1751-55, but not published until 1779, three years after Hume's death, by his nephew. While Hume insisted upon their publication, his friends advised against it because of their dangerous character. See Burton, Life, Vol. II., pp. 489ff.
live. The difference between human intelligence and infinite intelligence is so immense that we cannot reason from the one to the other. "But let us beware, lest we think that our ideas anywise correspond to his perfections, or that his attributes have any resemblance to these qualities among men."^2

(2) The principle of causation is the result of custom, and can thus furnish no proof of God. Our experience shows us a certain conjunction between causes and effects: for example, when we see a house, we conclude that it had an architect, because we have experienced this effect to proceed from this cause. But we cannot compare the universe to the house, and thereby infer a similar cause. ^3 Our ideas reach no further than our experience: We have no experience of divine attributes and operations..."^4 "Experience alone can point out to him the true cause of any phenomenon."^5 Thus, Philo concludes, the order of final causes is of itself no proof of design; but "only so far as it has been experienced to proceed from that principle."^6 It shows simply this: "From similar effects we infer similar causes."^7 We cannot reason from the part to the

2. Ibid., p. 439.
3. Ibid., p. 442.
4. Ibid., p. 439.
5. Ibid., p. 444.
6. Ibid., p. 444.
7. Ibid., p. 444.
whole, or even from one part to another, if the latter is far removed from the former.¹

A very small part of this great system, during a very short time, is very imperfectly discovered to us; and do we thence pronounce decisively concerning the origin of the whole? Admirable conclusion!²

Here the logic of the concluding paragraphs of Section XI of the Enquiry is picked up and pushed to its conclusion. God's manner, ways, and attributes are incomprehensible.³ Nothing is to be gained by the argument from design. "Have we not the same reason to trace that ideal world into another ideal world, or new intelligent principle?...How can we satisfy ourselves without going on in infinitum?"⁴

It were, therefore, wise in us to limit all our inquiries to the present world, without looking farther. No satisfaction can ever be attained by these speculations, which so far exceed the narrow bounds of human understanding.⁵

And (3) the misery, catastrophe, and imperfection of the universe nullify the idea of a benevolent, kindly Being.⁶ Look, says Philo, upon the human sphere alone, and see what tremendous ills it inculcates.

1. Hume, Philosophical Works, p. 447.
2. Ibid., p. 448.
3. Ibid., p. 457.
4. Ibid., p. 463.
5. Ibid., p. 464.
6. Ibid., pp. 502-529.
Man is the greatest enemy of man. Oppression, injustice, contempt, contumely, violence, sedition, war, calumny, treachery, fraud; by these they mutually torment each other; and they would soon dissolve that society which they had formed, were it not for the dread of still greater ills, which must attend their separation.  

With this argument Philo, the sceptic, concludes his destructive criticism of the theistic conception of God.

Now, if these three arguments are to be admitted, Theism falls to the ground, and, with it, the idea of divine revelation. Consequently, miracles have no place in this system, for Theism is a necessary presupposition to the idea of a miracle. Thus we readily see that Hume's rejection of the miraculous is the inevitable result of his rejection of Theism.

The second element of Hume's philosophical system which bears a definite relation to his discussion of miracles is his doctrine of causation. His whole philosophy may be said to center about this doctrine—we have already seen its influence upon the concept of Theism. Now, the doctrine of causation as such ordinarily implies that a definite cause will produce a definite effect, a fact which we learn from experiment and observation. Thus, given a certain set of conditions, we may reason a priori to a certain effect or set of events; or from like conditions, we may reasonably expect like effects. Hume rejects this thesis, for he argues that reason cannot discover any constant conjunction between one object and another. This

l. Hume, Philosophical Works, p. 505.
connection is discoverable only through experience; for instance, when we infer heat from the sight of a flame, this inference is the product of habitual or customary experience. The one object we reckon as the cause, the other as the effect. The idea of causation, or the idea of necessary connection, is simply habit or custom. Cause and effect signify, then, nothing more than conjoined phenomena.¹ "But no man, having seen only one body move after being impelled by another, could infer, that every other body would move after a like impulse. All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, not of reasoning."² When we say that one object is connected with another, we mean only that they "have acquired a connexion in our thought, and give rise to this inference, by which they become proofs of each other's existence..."³

Now when we push this theory to its logical conclusion, a conclusion to which Hume wished to press it, we find that there is no causal nexus. The regularity and order which we discover in the universe is relative to the experience of the observer. Pure experience, in the final analysis, is the only guide to truth, and it is not infallible.⁴

Let us now, bearing in mind Hume's idea of Theism and

² Ibid., Vol. IV., p. 53.
³ Ibid., p. 89.
⁴ Ibid., p. 128.
causation, consider his Essay on Miracles. We shall discover here how effectively Hume's philosophical position lends itself to the purposes of religious scepticism. To summarise his purpose in this Essay, it will be well to quote his evaluation of Archbishop Tillotson's famous argument against the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

I flatter myself that I have discovered an argument of a like nature, which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and consequently will be useful as long as the world endures; for so long, I presume, will the accounts of miracles and prodigies be found in all history, sacred and profane.1

The principle which Tillotson established is that the testimony of others taken by itself is inferior to the evidence of our senses; also, the evidential value of this testimony diminishes with the passing of time. However, the validity of testimony depends upon the validity of the sense evidence; and thus, since transubstantiation contradicts the senses, it must be a false doctrine.

Now, says Hume, this same argument may be applied with great force against any historical account of an extraordinary or miraculous event. Here we find the true purpose of his Essay: it is intended to show that miracles and prodigies -- which seem to be equivalent terms in Hume's mind -- do not carry the sort or the amount of evidence necessary to prove their occurrence.

This purpose, as Professor Taylor points out,\(^1\) Hume combines throughout the *Essay* with another, that is, to show whether or not miracles and prodigies prove the control of events by a divine purpose. Since the one design is logical and the other theological, Hume has introduced a source of confusion into his argument. Yet, Professor Taylor suggests, not perhaps without warrant, that this confusion of issues was intentional, for without it, Hume could not have created any special attention; "and Hume was, above everything, determined that he would be talked about."\(^2\)

In strict accordance with his doctrine of causation, Hume rejects experience as an infallible guide. There is no "necessary connection" between events—"all effects" do not follow their supposed causes with like certainty. Some, we observe, are constantly conjoined; others are variable or even adverse to our expectations. "A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence."\(^3\) If his past experience has shown that a certain event proceeds invariably from a given cause, he accepts this experience as a full assurance of the future existence of that event; but in those instances where experience shows no constant conjunction of events, the most that he can be certain of is a "probability." In these doubtful cases, the

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2. Ibid., p. 23.
"wise man" weighs the evidence cautiously; he balances the instances of regular sequence with the irregular ones, and deducts the smaller number from the greater. So the determination of the superior evidence becomes simply a matter of arithmetic, and the superiority on any side carries the strength of the evidence, although the assurance of its force, in virtue of this irregularity, is diminished.

There are several causes for this contrariety of evidence in support of general and ordinary matters of fact. These are, primarily, the fact of opposing testimony, the character and number of witnesses, their manner of delivering their testimony, and all these conditions taken together. Therefore,

We entertain a suspicion concerning any matter of fact when the witnesses contradict each other; when they are but few or of a doubtful character; when they have an interest in what they affirm; when they deliver their evidence with hesitation, or, on the contrary, with too violent asseverations.

The presence of such particulars makes human testimony a most precarious sort of evidence, even of the general facts of experience. Now, says Hume, let us suppose that the fact which human testimony is trying to establish is of an extraordinary or marvellous character. We will be predisposed, he holds, to doubt the truth of the fact upon testimony, since our belief of witnesses rests, not in the a priori connection between testimony

2. Ibid., p. 112.
3. Ibid., p. 112-113.
and reality, but in the fact that "we are accustomed to find a conformity between them."\(^1\)

But an extraordinary phenomenon falls outside the sphere of our common experience, and the strength of the testimony in support of it is opposed by our ordinary experience of the course of events:\(^2\) for example, an Indian who has never seen water freeze will rightly conclude that the report of such a strange phenomenon is false. Therefore, the evidence in support of such an extraordinary event, derived from human testimony, "admits of a diminution, greater or less, in proportion as the fact is more or less unusual."\(^3\)

The next step Hume takes is to press his inquiry into the realm of the miraculous. He argues that upon the supposition that the evidence considered in itself amounts to a complete proof, we have here "proof against proof." The stronger proof prevails, but its force is diminished "in proportion to that of its antagonist."\(^4\)

Hume's argument thus far proceeds naturally from his premises, and pursues the primary purpose of his Essay: that is, to show that no evidence is sufficient to establish belief in the reality of miraculous events. In a pertinent footnote,

\(^1\) Hume, *Enquiry*, p. 113.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 113-114.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 113.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 114.
Professor Norman Kemp Smith writes,

In substance, Hume's professedly 'decisive' argument against miracles is that a complete induction based on all previously experienced instances of the kind can never be overturned by testimony (itself a mode of experience) to what, as miraculous, is ex hypothesi, contrary to this induction—i.e. 'a weaker evidence (numerically considered) can never destroy a stronger'.

Now Hume goes a step further and defines miracle as "a violation of the laws of nature." He adds that since a "firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can be possibly imagined." The implication here is that there is no necessity for examining the testimony to a miraculous event, however great that testimony may be; for the nature of the event precludes its reality. The fact that all men must die is an acknowledged law of nature, and is thus in no way miraculous; but that a man should be raised from the dead is an event which contradicts experience. Therefore, uniform experience provides "a direct and full proof" against the reality of any miracle.

It should be noted that Hume's notion of "laws of nature," established by "uniform experience," is extraneous not only to his argument here, but to his whole philosophical theory. As

3. Ibid., p. 114.
Leslie Stephen has pointed out, the very purpose of Hume's argument is to dismiss the question of the a priori possibility of miracles as irrelevant, and to set aside the whole discussion as to the meaning of natural laws and their adaptation and modification. Kemp Smith rightly observes that by the phrase "violation of the laws of nature" Hume means merely to indicate what is contrary to the ordinary course of nature, that is, the supernatural. For, as Hume has told us elsewhere, the sequence of events is in no way necessary, but is only relative and causal. This suggests that the credibility of an event depends in the last analysis, not upon its agreement to a uniform experience of the laws of nature, but simply upon its familiarity. We are, he says, as incredulous of an unfamiliar effect as the Indian is of the freezing of water.

On the point just discussed, Professor Taylor remarks,

The shift from the unfamiliar to the 'contrary to uniform experience' is confusing and unjustified, but indispensable to the further development of the argument, and directly causes the inconsequence on which Hume's critics have remarked.

Whatever may have been Hume's intention here—and such competent scholars as A. E. Taylor and N. Kemp Smith do not agree—he turns away from this first definition of a miracle, and introduces a second, in a footnote. Here he speaks of a

2. Smith, op. cit., p. 61.
miracle, not, as earlier, as a wonder or supernatural event, but as "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." It is a means of manifesting God's immediate interposition in the sequence of events.

With this "surprising and famous volte-face," as Taylor calls it, Hume ends the first part of his Essay. He has argued from his first definition for the inviolability of the laws of nature; now, from the second, he argues, it would seem, that events may occur outside the order of nature. The second definition transfers his emphasis from the effect to the cause. We grant, Hume says, the possibility of extraordinary or supernatural events, and these may be established by means of human testimony; yet, on the other hand, no amount of testimony may prove a particular volition of the Deity.

Hume is undoubtedly aware of the difficulty involved in his reasoning, and he seems eager to return to the position he has temporarily abandoned; that is, that no sort or amount of evidence can establish the reality of a miracle. It is true that human testimony cannot establish the probability of a miraculous event, unless the falsity of the testimony "would be

more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish..."¹

There is a reasonable propension against an extraordinary event of any kind; and therefore greater evidence is necessary to establish its reality than is required for events within the reach of common knowledge. But, Hume continues, the result in the event of such testimony is a "mutual destruction of arguments."² In accordance with the arithmetical principle laid down at an earlier point, the true strength of this testimony is ascertained by subtracting the contrary evidence from it; for example, the probability of resurrection must be measured by its improbability. He says, "I weigh the one miracle against the other; and according to the superiority which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle."³

The second part of Hume's Essay is essentially an amplification of the argument pursued in the first part, freed from the irrelevancy of conflicting definitions of miracle. Here he concedes that the testimony for miracles may amount to entire proof; but, in reality, he adds, when we consider the several circumstances intricately involved in testimony, we find that "there never was a miraculous event established on so full an evidence."⁴ In the first place, the number, ability, and

². Ibid., p. 116.
³. Ibid., p. 116.
⁴. Ibid., p. 116.
character of witnesses are such that we can never believe their reports. Secondly, the tendency of human nature is to be over-credulous of strange and extraordinary events, a fact which is proved by the many instances of forged miracles. Thirdly, stories of miraculous events abound chiefly among "ignorant and barbarous nations." And, finally, the fact that miracles have been worked in support of rival or incompatible systems of religion diminishes their authority.

The chief point which Hume is trying to make in this part of the Essay is that a miracle may possibly be proved by human testimony, but it "can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion." It is for the purpose of illustrating this contention that he introduces the following comparison: On the one hand, he says, it is certain that the unanimous testimony of contemporary authors could establish, were it accompanied by the testimony of a constant tradition, the fact that from the first of January, 1600 A.D., the whole earth was enveloped in total darkness for eight days. On the other hand, no amount of testimony or tradition could prove the fact that Queen Elizabeth died on that same day, was buried, and

2. Ibid., p. 116 ff.
3. Ibid., p. 119, ff.
4. Ibid., p. 121.
5. Ibid., p. 127.
rose again a month later, to rule for another three years.¹

The latter phenomenon, Hume tells us, would be the product of the "knavery and folly of men"; and, should it be ascribed to any new system of religion, an intelligent man would reject the testimony "without further examination."² It is difficult to see how these two "miracles" differ. Since both are strange and extraordinary, why is full evidence sufficient in the one case to establish the fact, but equally full evidence is, in the other case, insufficient?

The famous last point, which serves as a sensational conclusion to the Essay on Miracles, has horrified most of Hume's critics. He declares that he has rescued the Christian religion from all those enemies who would place its defence upon the judgement of human reason. "Our most holy religion," he says, "is founded on Faith, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure."³ The Scriptures contain accounts of many things which are utterly improbable and irreconcilable with reason. Only by surrendering the fundamental principles of understanding can a man who is reasonable establish his belief in Christianity. The Christian religion in its beginning was attended by miracles, and, in fact, still depends

². Ibid., pp. 128-129.
³. Ibid., p. 130.
upon the miraculous; therefore a believer must be conscious of a "continued miracle in his own person," a consciousness which is the work of faith.¹

These words are in bad taste, yet they reflect a quite characteristic feature of the deistic and sceptical literature of the eighteenth century.² Professor James Orr remarks of this passage,

We may conjecture how much 'faith' Hume would be prepared to concede to a system against which reason was in arms. This mocking deference to a religion in which he had no particle of real belief, is one of the most offensive features in his writings—the adding, if that were possible, of insult to injury.³

But we prefer the more moderate judgement of Professor Norman Kamp Smith who points out that Hume was here deliberately patterning his conclusion after the declared teaching of the Reformed Churches, that Faith is not possible unless one has the aid of a divinely-bestowed Grace, and then Faith is operated in an entirely miraculous manner. Surely, says Smith, "...in these circumstances his irony is not unpardonable."⁴

And now we are ready to turn to George Campbell's reply to Hume's Essay. We reserve our final judgement as to the merit and significance of the sceptic's performance for later comment, after we have considered the scheme of the Aberdeen Principal's

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1. Hume, op. cit., pp. 128-129
2. Cf. Woolston, Six Discourses, who states that his purpose is to serve "the Honour of the Holy Jesus"—sheer mockery.
3. Orr, David Hume, p. 196.
Dissertation on Miracles.

In the Advertisement attached to his Dissertation, Campbell is apprehensive of the dangerous character of Hume's Essay, in which, however, he finds the chief danger to be lodged, not so much in the contents of the treatise, as in the literary reputation of its author.

The piece itself, like every other work of Mr. Hume, is ingenious, but its merit is more of the oratorical kind than of the philosophical. The merit of the author, I acknowledge is great. 1

He tells us that the edition of Hume's Essay to which he refers in his own work is that printed in London in 1750, and adds that, since finishing his own Dissertation, he has seen a later edition of Hume's work, but found so few variations that it was unnecessary for him to alter his quotations and references to conform with the newer edition.

Campbell then disavows any intention of meeting Hume on less than reasonable grounds:

The arguments of the essayist I have endeavoured to refute by argument. Mere declamation I know no way of refuting but by analysing it; nor do I conceive how inconsistencies can be answered otherwise than by exposing them. 2

Like Hume's Essay, Campbell's Dissertation is in two parts. Part I is entitled, "Miracles are capable of Proof from Testimony, and Religious Miracles are not less Capable of this Evidence than others." Part II bears the heading, "The Miracles on which the

2. Ibid., p. vi.
Belief of Christianity is founded are sufficiently attested.\(^1\)

In a brief Introduction, the Principal reveals his own position regarding the use of reason in the Christian religion. He disavows any belief in the ability of unaided Reason to produce Christian truths:

\[\ldots\text{the religion of Jesus could not, by the single aid of reasoning, produce its full effect upon the heart...No arguments, un-accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, can convert the soul from sin to God...The principles of our religion would never have been discovered by the natural and unassisted faculties of man...}\]

But this does not mean for Campbell that Reason has no place to take in Christian religion. The Gospel and common sense both rebel against the notion, proclaimed by some, that the principles of Christianity can admit no rational evidence of their truth. On the contrary, Campbell insists, the Lord himself "argued, both with his disciples and with his adversaries, as with reasonable men, on the principle of reason."\(^3\) We, like Jesus, must employ reason, so that we may show that God has given evidence of himself in this world, both moral and external, "sufficient to convince the impartial, to silence the gainsayer, and to render inexcusable the atheist and the unbeliever."\(^4\)

\(^1\) Campbell, \emph{op. cit.}, p. vii.
\(^2\) \emph{Ibid.}, p. 12.
\(^3\) \emph{Ibid.}, p. 12.
\(^4\) \emph{Ibid.}, p. 13.
The purpose of the Dissertation, then, is two-fold, ... to contribute all in my power to the defence of a religion ... (and) at the same time to vindicate philosophy ... from those absurd consequences which this author's theory naturally leads us to.

Campbell begins the Dissertation itself by pointing out that Hume's argument is "built upon a false hypothesis." Testimony does not, as Hume maintains, derive its validity as evidence from experience, but, rather, it has a "natural and original influence on belief, antecedent to experience."^3

This fact is demonstrated, he goes on, in the life history of an individual. A person is far more credulous of testimony when a child than he is when he has grown in years, for then he relies more completely upon experience. In other words, inexperienced youth is unsuspecting; age is cautious and doubting. Yet Hume's theory suggests the reverse of this; that is, that testimony must be tried if it is to carry any weight as evidence. Campbell argues that "there is the strongest presumption in favour of the testimony, till properly refuted by experience."^4

Campbell's argument here is philosophically rather weak, since the worth of testimony must, obviously, be determined from experience. Experience shows us certain criteria by which we may judge the value of a report, and these standards form a basis whereby the

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2. Ibid., p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 18.
4. Ibid., p. 18.
testimony of all witnesses must be evaluated. Campbell does not
directly deny this conclusion. He admits that experience may
correct certain defects or misrepresentations in testimony; but he
argues that the conception of testimony as prior to experience is a
necessary principle in explaining the source of human knowledge,
since "there are, and must be, in human nature, some original grounds
of belief, beyond which our researches cannot proceed, and of which
therefore it is vain to attempt a rational account."¹

Campbell then challenges Hume to give a "reasonable account of
his faith"² in causation or in the uniform course of nature. These,
he argues, like testimony, are not intuitively evident or logically
deduced, yet they are readily presupposed in all our dealings with
experience, even by Hume, and are assigned authority by all reason¬
able men. If we may be permitted to presuppose them, we may also
be permitted to presuppose the truthfulness of testimony. In any
event, until it is "properly refuted" by experience.

How, then, may testimony be refuted, if we are required to
accept it as a presupposition "in all our reasonings from experience."³
Hume had argued that the nature of the event determines the worth of
the testimony, and that the truth of a given fact must be determined
by balancing the evidence for and against it. Campbell allows that
the content of the report influences the value of the testimony, but

2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Ibid., p. 19.
he disagrees that it can be the deciding factor in judging the validity of the evidence from testimony.

What, rejoins my antagonist, cannot then testimony be confuted by the extraordinary nature of the fact attested? ... That this consideration has no weight at all, it never was my intention to maintain; that by itself it can rarely, if ever, amount to a refutation against ample and unexceptionable testimony, I hope to make extremely plain.  

Campbell holds that he has not denied this point in Hume's thought, but wonders how far one should carry the presumption against the reality of an event on the mere grounds of its uncommonness, and concludes that Hume goes too far.

Campbell then turns to Hume's argument that when there is a contest of two opposite experiences, one must weigh the evidence and decide for that which has the superior force. This argument, he holds, is an example of Hume's great ability to give "a plausible appearance to things the most unintelligible in nature." Hume throws the candid observer off-guard and leads him to regard a weak argument favourably by employing a happy choice of metaphors. "Who can suspect his exactness who determines everything by a numerical computation?" But, when the argument is examined closely, it is seen to be "impracticable to find an application, of which, in consistency with good sense, it is capable."

2. Ibid., p. 20.
3. Ibid., p. 21.
4. Ibid., p. 21.
For example, Campbell goes on, there is a ferry-boat which in my experience I have seen crossing the river safely a thousand times. But if an unknown man now comes and tells me that he has seen this boat overturned and the passengers carried downstream, although that man's testimony is opposed to all my own past experience, it is not to be disbelieved on that account. If I am to know the truth what shall I do?

Must I set the thousand, or rather the two thousand instances of the one side against the single instance of the other? In that case, it is easy to see, I have 1999 degrees of evidence, that my information is false ... (or) must the evidence I have of the veracity of the witness be a full equivalent to the 2000 instances, which oppose the fact attested? By the supposition, I have no positive evidence for or against his veracity, he being a person whom I never saw before. Yet if none of these be the balancing, which the essay-writer means, I despair of being able to discover his meaning.¹

Campbell does not, however, employ this illustration only to show how weak a proof from testimony can overcome overwhelming contrary experience. Rather, he uses it also to set the stage for the presentation of his own views on the refutation of testimony.

The refutation of testimony is accomplished "principally" in either of two ways: first, by contradictory testimony; second, by evidence of the incapacity or bad character of the witnesses which is sufficient to discredit them.²

We return, then, to the illustration of the ferry-boat. Campbell asks us to suppose that he has now met a second man, also

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 22.
². Ibid., pp. 19-20.
unknown to him, who has just come from the ferry. He says that he
has seen the boat, and all its passengers, come safely to land. Now,
says Campbell, on Hume's terms, these two opposing testimonies
ought to "destroy each other, and leave the mind entirely under the
influence of its former experience, in the same state as if neither
testimony had been given."1 But this is not the case. Actually,
the mind remains in suspense, and considers it equally probable that
the report is true, or that it is false. If a third, fourth, and
fifth man come along and confirm the declaration of the second,
Campbell maintains, this would effectively refute the testimony of
the first.2

Let us suppose again that some who are acquainted with the
bearer of the original testimony now inform me that the man is
notoriously untruthful, and, moreover, takes delight in alarming
strangers. This, says Campbell, "though not so direct a refutation
as the former, will be sufficient to discredit his report."3

It may be seen here that when there are conflicting or contra-
dictory testimonies, Campbell holds that Hume's metaphor of a
balance may be properly applied. That is, testimony may be balanced
by testimony. "The things weighed are homogenial."4

2. Ibid., p. 23. This whole argument occurred to Campbell one day
while he was taking his constitutional along the banks of the
Dee. See Fergusson, Sons of the Manse, p. 190.
3. Ibid., p. 23.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
But in the original illustration, he adds, the 2000 instances and the one relate to different facts which, though contrary in nature, are not contradictory.

There is no inconsistency in believing both...Will it be said, that though the former instances are not themselves contradictory to the fact recently attested, they lead to a conclusion that is contradictory? I answer, It is true, that the experienced frequency of the conjunction of any two events, leads the mind to infer a similar conjunction in time to come. But...no man considers this inference, as having equal evidence with any one of those past events, on which it is founded, and for the belief of which we have had sufficient testimony.¹

The contrast here between Hume and Campbell is a sharp one. Let us illustrate it. If someone were to tell us that a huge rock had suddenly raised itself from the ground, this, according to Hume, would be palpably ridiculous, and would be proof against itself. Campbell, on the other hand, is suggesting that the principal refutation of this phenomenon would be to discredit the testimony for it: either by collecting the evidence of those who testify against the fact, or by showing that the reporter of the fact is not to be trusted.

As Leslie Stephen has pointed out,

This amounts to saying, except so far as the vague term 'principally' provides a loophole for evasions, that, in considering the probability of any statement, we are to discard from consideration the contents of the statement. We are, in fact, deprived of any independent criterion whatever of the value of historical evidence; and have opened a door wide enough to admit any prodigies whatever.²

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 23.
Campbell attempts to strengthen his case with an argument taken from Bishop Butler.\(^1\) Suppose, he says, that an ordinary man mentions at random that one certain day, at a certain hour, in a certain part of the universe, a comet will appear. The chances that such an occurrence will not actually come about are infinite. There is the highest presumption, on the basis of experience, that the proposition is false. But, now suppose that you have the testimony of an astronomer that on that certain day, at that certain hour, and in that certain part of the heavens, a comet did appear. At once, this man's testimony will be given credit, though the same presumption against its truth exists.\(^2\)

The superiority here of the evidence of testimony lies in the fact that it is particular, Campbell argues, while the evidence from experience is general and becomes weaker when we descend to particulars. Our knowledge of the past does enable us, in a general way, to say what future events may reasonably be expected, provided that the future circumstances are entirely similar.

So, in those cases where we have no testimony, we may recur to experience, but we must always remember that

the evidence resulting hence, even in the clearest cases, is acknowledged to be so weak, compared with that which results from testimony, that the strongest conviction, built merely on the former, may be overturned by the slightest proof exhibited by the latter.\(^3\)

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1. See Campbell, *Dissertation*, p. 25. Butler argues that there is a strong presumption against the occurrence of most ordinary facts, until they have actually taken place. Campbell applies this reasoning to uncommon facts.


It would seem here that Campbell regards the improbability of the comet's appearing to be an actuality, whereas, in fact, it really has no ontological status at all. The infinite number of chances against the occurrence of a particular, uncommon fact cannot be treated as an actual thing, which the slightest testimony overcomes.

Indeed, the argument would either prove that we should never believe anything—for the chances against any particular occurrence are infinite so long as we are in absolute ignorance; or else that we should believe everything—for no improbability is allowed any weight against any evidence. Neither conclusion would really suit Campbell.¹

Campbell's case thus far may be summarized: (1) Testimony does not derive its evidence solely from experience, as Hume holds, but is prior to experience and is an original ground of belief akin to our faith in causation or in the uniform course of nature; (2) Contrary observations do not, as Hume holds, have a weight in opposing testimony, but, rather, testimony must be refuted by contradictory testimony, or by discrediting the capacity or character of the witnesses; (3) The "magical balance and arithmetic, for the weighing and subtracting of evidence," which Hume proposes, is impracticable and "tends to mislead the judgement."²

Now Campbell proceeds to take up two fallacies in his opponent's Essay. The first is Hume's ambiguous use of the word, experience. Hume never defines this term, and, as Campbell points out, he uses it in two distinct senses: either the term refers to that which is

strictly personal or individual—that is, it "consists solely of the general maxims or conclusions, that each individual hath formed from the comparison of the particular facts remembered by him"\(^1\); or, it refers to that which is public or universal—that is, it is founded in testimony, and consists not only of all the experience of others, which have, through that channel, been communicated to us, but of all the general maxims and conclusions we have formed, from the comparison of particular facts attested.\(^2\)

Campbell argues that for Hume to be consistent he ought to use the term, experience, only in the personal sense; "otherwise, his making testimony derive its light from an experience which derives its light from testimony, would be introducing what logicians term a circle in causes."\(^3\)

This argument is really a reassertion of Campbell's original principle, that testimony is an independent source of evidence. The only sort of testimony which should carry any validity for Hume, Campbell insists, must be of an event which corresponds to our own experience; for example, a man who has never seen a negro could never believe, upon any amount of attestation, in the existence of such a being.\(^4\) Thus, Hume's contention that a miracle violates the "uniform experience" of every age and country simply has no meaning.

\(^1\) Campbell, op. cit., p. 30.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 30.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 30.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 30ff.
Now, what has been observed, and what has not been observed, in all ages and countries, pray how can you, Sir, or I, or any man, come to the knowledge of? Only, I suppose, by testimony, oral or written.¹

Hume replied to this objection quite briefly in his letter to Dr. Hugh Blair:

No man can have any experience but his own. The experience of others becomes his only by the credit which he gives to their testimony; which proceeds from his experience of human nature. ²

The second fallacy which Campbell points out is Hume's distinction between what is contrary to experience and that which is not conformable to it. Hume, while he admits that an event not conformable to experience can be proved by testimony, denies that an event contrary to experience can be so proved. Campbell observes that what Hume means by the term, contrary to experience, is nothing more than that which has not been experienced.

All the contrariety, then, that there is in miracles to experience, does, by his own concession, consist solely in this, that they have never been observed; that is, they are not conformable to experience.³

Campbell is driving, though falteringly, at a real difficulty not met by Hume's argument; namely, the fact that a single experience of an event may amount to a certainty in one case, while innumerable experiences of another may result in no sort of certainty whatever.

A miracle, according to Hume, is by nature such an event that it is

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 31. Underscoring is mine.

². Ibid., p. 7. Hume's letter to Blair, after the latter had placed the manuscript of Campbell's work in his hands.

³. Ibid., p. 35.
more reasonable to conclude that it is false, than that it is true; and that the witnesses of it have been deceived, than that their testimony is true.

Campbell argues that upon the basis of Hume's thesis an unusual fact, since it is not conformable with experience, is as incapable of proof from testimony as miracles are. Thus, for example, Hume's illustration of the Indian who accepts upon testimony the fact of water freezing is not a proper one, for this is a phenomenon completely outside the experience of the Indian, and can no more be verified by testimony, than can a miracle. Or again, he continues, on Hume's own terms, the astonishing effects of electricity recently discovered would have to be judged incredible, because they are "entirely unanalogous to everything before experienced."¹ But would Hume apply his own logic to this case, Campbell asks: "... will he say, that such facts no reasonable man could have sufficient evidence from testimony to believe? No."² Then, Campbell continues, if it be true that it would be absurd to refuse to believe the facts about electricity, simply because they are not conformable to our experience, it is equally absurd to be incredulous about miracles.³ That is, Campbell is here maintaining that Hume's logic ought to force him to reject both miraculous and marvellous events, since both are "alike


2. Ibid., p. 38.

3. Ibid., p. 38.
unconformable, or alike contrary, to former experiences." But Hume does not do this. Therefore, Campbell concludes, if even David Hume would be willing to believe the latest discoveries concerning electricity, though they are evidenced only by testimony and are not conformable to experience, he ought to be equally willing to accept miracles, which are attested by the same evidence.

It is apparent that Campbell has hit upon a real difficulty in Hume's case here, in asking what difference there is between an event which is "contrary to experience" and an event which is "not conformable to experience." Hume is not clear on this point, and, in reply, contents himself with writing to Blair,

I find no difficulty in explaining my meaning, and yet shall not probably do it in any further edition. The proof against a miracle, as it is founded on invariable experience, is of that species or kind of proof, which is full and certain when taken alone, because it implies no doubt, as is the case with all probabilities; but there are degrees of this species, and when a weaker proof is opposed to a stronger, it is overcome.

But if Hume is not very helpful on the meaning of his own distinction, it is certain that Campbell is mistaken to think that such a distinction makes no real difference, and that events "contrary to experience" and events "not conformable to experience" are, in the end, the same thing. In his zeal to maintain his thesis, that testimony is prior to experience, Campbell seems continually to fall victim to the supposition that experience has

2. Ibid., p. 8. Hume's letter to Dr. Blair.
no relationship at all to testimony. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, this led Campbell first to deny, in effect, any criterion independent of testimony whereby its value as historical evidence may be tested. It now seems to lead him to the point where it becomes impossible to make any real distinction between what is extraordinary or marvellous, and what is truly miraculous. It is difficult to see how one can determine what is a true miracle and what a false one if one maintains, as Campbell would seem to, that all events are equally likely to happen, and testimony is to be refuted only by contradictory testimony, or by discrediting the witnesses.

Principal Campbell now goes on to consider the concession made by Hume, that a miracle may possibly be proved by human testimony, though it "can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion." In making the concession, Campbell argues, Hume gave up his own favourite argument. Quoting the illustration used by Hume to show that possibility, Campbell underscores the closing lines,

Suppose all authors, in all languages, agree, that from the 1st January 1600, there was a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days; suppose that the tradition of this extraordinary event is still strong and lively among the people; that all travellers, who return from foreign countries, bring us accounts of the same tradition, without the least variation or contradiction: It is evident, that our present philosophers, instead of doubting of that fact, ought to receive it for certain, and ought to search for the causes whence it might be derived.

Over against this quotation, Campbell sets several of Hume's statements, in a composite sentence,

A miracle ... supported by human testimony is more properly a subject of derision than of argument ... it is not requisite, in order to reject the fact, to be able accurately to disprove the testimony, and to trace its falsehood, ... such an evidence carries falsehood on the very face of it ... NO testimony for ANY KIND OF MIRACLE can ever possibly amount to a probability.¹

Here, says Campbell, is a glaring contradiction. In the illustration, he goes on, Hume maintains that the testimony would amount to a proof. What is the nature of that proof? By Hume's own estimate, there is "a direct and full proof, from the nature of the (miraculous) fact, against the existence of any miracle."² Consequently, when, in this illustration, he grants testimony to be a proof, Hume is really saying that it is "not only superior to a direct and full proof, but even superior to as entire a proof as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined."³

It is clear, Campbell concludes, that either Hume's principles condemn his method of judging about miracles, or his method of judging subverts, and so tacitly deserts, his principles. To Campbell's charge, Hume replies that there is no contradiction here, for his illustration was but a fiction, created to show what testimony "might not only merit attention, but amount to a full proof."⁴ If such an event actually occurred, Hume says, "reasonable

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 42. Underscoring is smaller upper-case.
³. Ibid., p. 43.
⁴. Ibid., p. 7. Hume's letter to Blair
men would only conclude from this fact, that the machine of the globe was disordered during the time.¹

We have noted above our own criticism of this, and the accompanying illustration, employed by Hume. Campbell seems, quite inexplicably, to have missed Hume's opening sentences in Part II of the Essay, which, together with the observation quoted immediately above, would seem to dull the edge of Campbell's criticism. Here Hume expressly states that in the foregoing pages he has merely been supposing that the testimony which establishes a miracle may possibly amount to an entire proof,² and adds that, "it is easy to shew, that we have been a great deal too liberal in our concession, and that there never was a miraculous event established on so full an evidence."³

Campbell now addresses himself directly to the second part of Hume's work. He considers first Hume's contentions⁴ that the presence of belief in miracles among the several religions may be accounted for by pointing to the passion for the marvellous and the religious affection.⁵ Campbell's attack here partly takes the form of an argumentum ad hominem. Hume, he says, is not himself free of the passion for the marvellous but his "particular delicacy ... makes him nauseate even to wonder with the crowd."⁶ If the spirit of

¹. Campbell, op. cit., p. 7.
². Hume, Enquiry, p. 116. Italics are his.
³. Ibid., p. 116.
⁴. See above, p. 184. Hume's second and fourth points.
⁵. Campbell, op. cit., p. 45.
⁶. Ibid., p. 46.
religion could be kept out of the picture, he adds, Hume's own love of wonder would overcome even his "inclination" not to believe, his unwillingness to give way to the religious affection, yet

He thinks it not safe to give religion even a hearing ... the old way of scrutiny and argument must now be laid aside ... 'Form,' says he, 'a GENERAL RESOLUTION, never to lend any attention to testimonies or facts urged by religion, with whatever specific pretext they may be covered.'

Campbell acknowledges that the Creator has given all men curiosity, and that this principle is likely to be abased, even to give the mind a bias which, in dealing with marvellous things, may induce belief on the basis of insufficient evidence. But this bias is no stronger with miracles than with any other extraordinary events. In short, Hume's argument has no real merit, Campbell concludes, save as it suggests the need for confirmation of testimony by additional testimony, so that credulity may be avoided.

So, also, with the religious affection which Hume derides. It is true, Campbell concedes, that we have reason to be cautious here, not hasty of belief. But, he adds, Mr. Hume overlooks the fact that the religious affection may "just as readily obstruct as promote our faith in a religious miracle." The religious zeal which gives a Christian a propensity to believe in miracles supporting Christianity gives him an aversion to those supporting other religions.

2. Ibid., p. 49.
3. Ibid., p. 50.
Consequently, Hume's principle is of no value until we first discover whether the tenets of the witnesses to any miracles have biassed their minds in favour of, or against it. If the former, the testimony should be regarded less favourably; if the latter, more favourably. It has frequently been true, Campbell continues, that the faith of the witnesses originally stood in opposition to the doctrine attested by the miracles. In such cases, it would be preposterous to account for their belief in the miracles in terms of religious zeal. Rather, it should be said, the conviction produced in them by the miracles accounts for their religious zeal. Hume is wrong in concluding that there is a peculiar presumption against religious miracles as such.

... if in certain circumstances there is a presumption against them, the presumption arises solely from the circumstances.

As a matter of fact, Campbell adds, there is a peculiar presumption in favour of religious miracles. Here he introduces an assumption borrowed from Horatio, that a god must never be introduced, unless to accomplish some important design, which could not otherwise be effected. We ought, Campbell urges, to believe in the miraculous agency as little as possible. Yet, such doctrines as the immortality of the soul or a future and eternal state, are objects

2. Ibid., p. 51.
worthy of divine interposals, in order that these truths might be revealed to mankind. Ergo, there is a peculiar presumption in favour of religious miracles executed for this purpose.

Thus it appears that from the dignity of the end, there arises a peculiar presumption in favour of such miracles, as are said to have been wrought in support of religion.¹

In commenting on the above criticism, Hume, we have already noted,² takes exception to the ad hominem aspect, denying that he is an infidel. The first argument he dismisses in two sentences: "If a miracle proves a doctrine to be revealed from God, and consequently true, a miracle can never be wrought for a contrary doctrine. The facts are therefore as incompatible as the doctrines."³ Apparently, Hume is willing to stand on his original assertion that a miracle, by its very nature, destroys the credit of testimony, and the invariable opposition of witnesses destroys the testimony itself.⁴ To Campbell's second argument, Hume makes no reply at all.

We may observe that there are no discernible logical grounds in Campbell's argument for a peculiar presumption in favour of religious miracles. In fact, the whole modified deus ex machina motif seems quite unphilosophic. Leslie Stephen calls this a priori type of reasoning, "the sufficiently useful canon of historical evidence, that we are not to believe a miracle when any other hypothesis will

¹ Campbell, op. cit., p. 53.
² See above, p. 160.
⁴ Hume, Enquiry, p. 121.
It seems clear that there is a real danger here of breaking down altogether the distinction between that which is truly miraculous, and that which is merely unusual.

We turn now to the second part of the Dissertation, called, "The Miracles on which the Belief of Christianity is Founded, Are Sufficiently Attested." Like the latter part of Hume's Essay, it is largely illustrative of the principles set forth in Part I, and adds little to Campbell's case. We may summarize Part II briefly: (1) Not only the apostles who attested them, but the persecutors of Jesus also, acknowledged his miracles. The number, ability, and character of the witnesses here are such that we can hardly believe them all to have been deceived by their enthusiasm, as Hume alleges. As a matter of fact, Christianity could hardly have been propagated so successfully in the world, on the false pretence of miracles. Indeed, the miracles of Jesus were worked in the face of prejudiced spectators, which forces us to regard the Biblical testimony about them more favourably.²

(2) The religion of the Bible is the only living religion which claims to have been recommended by the evidence of miracles."³ Since the end of the apostolic era, it has never been in the power of even the most daring enthusiast to revive such miracles in favour of a new religious system. The mere fact that credulous people of

3. Ibid., p. 84.
the Pagan, Mohammedan, and Roman religions have tended, from time to time, to accept alleged miracles with unthinking enthusiasm does not in any way undermine the validity of the miracles recorded in holy writ.¹

The value of the genuine New Testament miracles is enhanced by contrast with those paltry counterfeits (the Pagan and Roman Catholic miracles) Hume offers in trying to make his point, that the fact that miracles have been worked in support of rival religious systems diminishes their authority.²

Campbell closes his Dissertation with a few remarks on Hume's famous last words of the Essay.³ To Hume's observation that Christianity is founded on Faith, not on Reason, he replies,

I say not, on the contrary, that our most holy religion is founded on reason, because this expression, in my opinion, is both ambiguous and inaccurate; but I say that we have sufficient reason for the belief of our religion ...⁴

In a typically broad mood, Campbell welcomes the assaults of the infidels, and ventures to prophesy that they will never overturn the Christian religion, but will serve only to make it stand firmer than ever.

The last paragraph of the Dissertation is a copy of Hume's own ending, and summarizes Campbell's argument:

2. See above, p. 184.
3. See above, p. 185.
4. Campbell, op. cit., p. 140. Italics are mine.
... I should also conclude upon the whole, That miracles are capable of proof from testimony, and that there is a full proof of this kind, for those said to have been wrought in support of Christianity ... 1

Those, therefore, who accept Mr. Hume's ingenious argument are, with him, forced to deny what the common sense of mankind should lead them to believe.

It is now possible for us to make several additional judgements about Campbell's apologetic efforts. (1) He has successfully pointed to the weakness of what Professor Norman Kemp Smith calls "Hume's unfortunate emphasis upon mere number of instances," and has shown that this principle is, in fact, not practicable. (2) He has shown that Hume uses the term, experience, in an ambiguous way. But, in this connection, he fails to grasp the fact that, despite the ambiguity, Hume has allowed a place for public experience, which includes testimony. (3) He has made it clear that Hume underestimates the validity and the worth of human testimony. It is doubtful, however, whether Campbell has presented a strong enough case to set aside Hume's contention that the worth of testimony is determined from experience. (4) In making too sharp a distinction between testimony and experience, Campbell is frequently led to maintain that testimony is independent of experience. This overstating of his case, it would seem, leads him to hold that the content of any report concerning a miraculous event has no real bearing on our judgement concerning the truth of the report. (5) Campbell's own positive

arguments are quite unphilosophic, and smack of an appeal to
universal agreement. Everyone who has common sense, he seems to argue, will concede that the highest anterior improbability of an alleged event is counterbalanced by slight direct evidence. But this would show an unwarranted disregard for experience, we believe, and would seem to force us to a perpetually unempirical view of the world, with any event quite as likely to happen as any other. Or again, he seems to argue that, all reasonable men will agree that any time we cannot account for the facts by ordinary hypotheses, we may assume we have a miracle to contend with. By such a procedure, it would seem, all unusual events would tend to fall under the heading of miracle, and the distinction between that which is truly miraculous, even in Campbell's own terms, and that which is merely unusual, would be impossible to maintain.

The greatest defect of Campbell's effort, however, seems to lie in his failure to see that the Essay is related to the following section of the Enquiry, in which Hume has delivered a powerful attack on the whole teleological argument for the existence of God. As Professor Kemp Smith has pointed out¹, this section contains a premiss which is presupposed in Hume's whole treatment of miracles, though he never refers to it directly in the Essay, namely, "that we have, and can have, no grounds either in reason or experience for postulating the kind of God to whom alone the Scriptural or

¹. See above, pp. 163ff.
other miracles can be fittingly ascribed."¹

Had Campbell understood this, he might have seen that the real issue of the controversy about miracles is not to be settled by logical distinctions between experience and testimony, or a thorough consideration of the problem of evidence. Had he understood this, he might have attempted to show what independent reasons, aside from the evidential value of any miracles, may be offered for believing in the kind of God who would be likely to interpose himself in the established order of the world of experience.

It remained for Immanuel Kant to take Hume's scepticism seriously enough to realise that it destroyed utterly the type of reasoning which seeks to advance "proofs" for the existence of God. It remained also for Kant to show that Hume's scepticism could issue in something other than unbelief, that it served also to clear the room for faith.

Perhaps it is too much to expect that eighteenth century Scottish thought could have produced another philosopher of the same stature as Hume himself, one who could have seen that the centre of the theological problem for Hume is framed in a serious challenge of the argument from design, in any and every form. Failing to see this, his critics merited the criticism which Kant himself makes of them,

We cannot without a certain sense of pain consider how utterly his opponents ... missed the point of the problem. For while they were ever assuming as conceded what he doubted, and demonstrating with eagerness and

¹ Smith, op. cit., p. 64. Italics are his.
often with arrogance what he never thought of disputing
... everything remained undisturbed in its old condition.1

1. Kant, Prologomena to any Future Metaphysic, p. 5. Kant's reference here is to other aspects of Hume's thought, and the opponents he has in mind are Reid, Oswald, Beattie, and Priestly. However, the reference may readily be applied by us to Hume's opponents, including Campbell, in the controversy over miracles.
CHAPTER VIII.

AN APPRAISAL OF GEORGE CAMPELL, MODERATE

The eighteenth century was a period in which the prevailing religion of the intellectually inclined and cultivated gentlemen was a theistic moralism. Philosophy was sovereign, and religion was permitted to live only by the light which philosophy gave, and in the sphere which it allowed. Nothing more was to be accepted from revealed religion than what men were able to discover for themselves by the use of their own reason. Revelation had its place, of course, but only because God in His goodness desired to impress the truths which philosophy discovers upon even the most unphilosophic minds.

The Moderates in the Scottish church were very much the offspring of this Age of Reason. As Cairns has pointed out, "We can no more sum up against an ecclesiastical party than bring an indictment against a whole nation," yet it can hardly be denied that the bulk of the adherents of that ecclesiastical party were quite willing to accept the prevailing philosophical approach, and conceded the priority and supremacy of Nature and natural science over religious thought. A generation at once scientific and pious, their mood has been caught by Alexander Pope in a couplet:

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:
God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Cairns, The Religion of Doctor Johnson and Other Essays, p. 86.

\(^2\) As quoted by Willey, Eighteenth Century Background, p. 5.
George Campbell, whose life spans three-quarters of this century, was also very much its child. Like most of the other Moderates, he was intrigued by the release from the ignorance and barbarism of the Gothic centuries which the rise of the new Rationalism afforded. During earlier centuries, the Christian religion had rested primarily upon Revelation; now it rested primarily upon Nature, "and even the orthodox, who retained the supernatural basis, felt that faith must be grounded firmly upon Nature before one had recourse to super-nature."¹

In the preceding chapters of this thesis, we have had occasion to see how the adoption of this standpoint affected the thought of George Campbell. In his sermons and lectures, there was an abundant concern to evoke a sweet reasonableness among men, in a day when that quality of life was rare, yet we waited in vain for the triumphant proclamation of Christian faith, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ...."² We saw that Campbell knew much of the meekness, gentleness, and patience of Jesus, and believed that common sense required the adoption of this pattern for Christian conduct. But nowhere did we discover any real recognition of the insight of Christian faith, that it is not by the power of example alone that men are led into such a life; that, indeed, such a life can be firmly grounded only in the sort of vibrant faith which St. Paul declared:

¹. Willey, op. cit., p. 3.
². II Corinthians 5:19.
I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.\(^1\)

To preach a moralism, however lofty, and call it the Gospel is to send forth no announcement worthy of God's mighty act in Christ Jesus. A religion like Campbell's, and that of Moderatism generally, being but slightly interested in theology, is always in peril of ignoring the essential relationship between theology and ethics, faith and life. The stress on toleration and broadmindedness may, and in the eighteenth century did, lead to the abandonment of the peculiarly Christian convictions. "A Christianity grew up which practically ignored the founder."\(^2\)

At the end of Chapter I. we observed that the greatest "virtue" of Moderatism in Scottish history was to gain for Scotland a more charitable creed, a greater freedom of thought, and a wiser tolerance of religious opinion than had ever before been known, and that its broadminded spirit made it possible for the Church to commend itself to the cultured classes. This was because the whole movement of Moderatism had its roots not only in rationalism but in Scottish history as well. Even in the seventeenth century, there were those who "held that the things which make for peace might be of greater value than the strife of contending parties."\(^3\) Indeed, both Moderatism and Evangelicalism gained momentum from the reaction

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2. Watt, Representative Churchmen of Twenty Centuries, p. 228.
3. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, p. 35.
against the political religion of the seventeenth century which swept over Scotland from 1689 onwards.

But we observed, too, that this greatest "virtue" was perhaps also the greatest weakness of Moderatism. A religion which, like Moderatism, gains the ascendancy primarily because it is in harmony with the spirit of the times always stands in peril of passing out of fashion. And this is what happened to Moderatism. Towards the end of the century, say at 1789, another note became dominant in Scottish life, and "not moderation but zeal was the watchword to which men were rallying in every sphere of action."¹ It is, of course, not difficult to understand why Moderatism spread like wildfire, nor is it easy to condemn its sweet, tolerant, broadminded reasonableness. One need only look at the crudely superstitious and self-righteous clergy of the Revolution and their successors in the Popular party, and examine their bigotry, cant, vulgarity, and intolerance to appreciate why men became "tired of fighting about religion, and wanted rest,"² why they turned to preachers who concerned themselves with "honesty, good neighbourhood, kindliness."³ The best of the Moderates, men like George Campbell, were "cultured gentlemen, liberal-minded, tolerant, and high-principled, concerned for public order and practical religion."⁴

². Watt, op. cit., p. 228.
Yet, their bigotry, cant, intolerance, and obscurantism notwithstanding, it may well be that the Popular party, the Evangelicals, were more true to the insights of Christianity than were their Moderate opponents. As Henderson has pointed out,¹ they had an over-ruling interest in the eternal, a belief in Revelation, a sense of Providence, a consciousness of human corruption and God's justice and mercy, a devotion to prayer and Bible reading, and serious piety, and a passion for saving souls. It was their zeal, modified and, in large measure, purified, which captured the hearts of such men as Andrew Thomson, John Erskine, and Thomas Chalmers, and swept Scotland into a new revival of evangelicalism early in the next century.

To his own age, George Campbell appeared as the champion of true religion, especially in his controversy with David Hume. Casserley has wisely observed:

In the history of Christian thought, indeed, the apologist almost always appears to his contemporaries a more impressive person than the philosopher. For the apologist sets out to show them how they can see God from their own existing point of view, whereas the philosopher often attempts the more ambitious task of persuading them to try a new point of view altogether, and in consequence his work is apt to appear irrelevant and vain. ²

It is clear that Campbell has seen and exposed several weaknesses and defects in Hume's argument as set forth in the Essay on Miracles. He has observed that Hume makes an unfortunate and impracticable emphasis upon mere number of instances in building his argument.

He has shown that Hume uses the term, experience, in an ambiguous way, although he has failed to see that Hume does allow a place for public experience, which includes testimony. He has demonstrated that Hume is inclined to underestimate the validity and the worth of human testimony. But Campbell's own case is weak, largely because it is fought on Hume's ground, but without an adequate understanding of Hume's purposes. This lack of understanding has, in turn, led Campbell to make so sharp a distinction between testimony and experience as to maintain frequently throughout the Dissertation on Miracles that testimony is independent of experience.

The clue to Hume's position on miracles is, as Professor Kemp Smith has observed, a premiss never referred to directly in the Essay, although it is implied in the following section of the Enquiry, namely, "that we have, and can have, no grounds either in reason or experience for postulating the kind of God to whom alone the Scriptural or other miracles can be fittingly ascribed." Campbell fails to see that "Hume seems to be delicately poised upon the escarpment of eighteenth century thought, and needing only a touch to topple him down the Kantian incline."2

There is a certain deliberate irrationalism in Hume's thought which has escaped the attention of many of his critics, including Campbell. They fail to see that,

The 'vulgar belief' or 'opinion' which from the time of Plato had been subordinated by philosophers to rational

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 64. Italics are his.
2. Willey, op. cit., p. 129.
demonstration, as a grossly inferior way of knowledge, is reinstated by Hume as ultimately the basic and universal way of knowledge for philosophers and non-philosophers alike. 1

To put this another way, one might maintain that Hume believed he had proved that most of our cherished convictions are based upon neither direct experience nor rational reflection, and yet philosophers are as convinced in practice of their truth as children and savages. Such a doctrine lends itself to a parallel irrationalist interpretation of religious belief, and this may be what Hume had in mind when he concluded the Essay on Miracles with the very puzzling observation that, "Our most holy religion is founded on Faith, not on reason..."2

The remark is usually interpreted as a sneer, and as such it may well have been intended, but our assessment of its significance cannot be uninfluenced by the fact that the same writer taught that our belief in things like cause and effect, the external world and the self rests upon similar foundations.3

Kant saw more clearly than Campbell or any other Scottish critic of the Essay what the achievement of Hume was, and it was this which awakened him from his "dogmatic slumbers." He accepted Hume's argument that we can neither empirically apprehend nor rationally demonstrate the convictions with which we make sense of our experience, and turned this to a devastating criticism of the so-called "proofs"

1. Casserley, op. cit., p. 115. Italics are mine.
of natural theology. It might, indeed, be said quite literally that Hume cleared the room for Kant to "clear the room for faith."

Because Campbell failed to be struck by the full impact of Hume's thought upon natural theology altogether, he never went on, as Kant did, to assert the primacy of "faith" over reason. Professor Kroner has keenly observed:

As Luther stressed the primacy of faith against any objective guarantee on the part of man, so Kant defended the primacy of God against any objective knowledge of God. Of course, Luther and Kant do not mean the same thing when they speak of faith. Luther means belief in the word of God as revealed in Scripture, especially in the Gospel; Kant means rational faith. But despite this difference ... there is a common ground for both Luther and Kant to stand on. Both mean by faith a relation of God to man, not founded on objective facts but rather on our conscience; both mean a practical relation, i.e., a relation which concerns primarily man's will in its moral aspect; both mean, therefore, something that affects a person as a person, and not something which would satisfy the human intellect or reason in general. 1

Campbell chose neither the alternative of Luther nor of Kant, asserting neither the primacy of Biblical faith as Luther did, nor the "primacy of the practical reason" as Kant did. Despite his many references to Biblical passages in his writings, Campbell accepted the sovereignty of philosophy throughout his controversy with Hume, and so never permitted himself to be more religious than philosophy would allow. In this sense he is very much the child of his age.

The Bible never looks upon the revelation to which it bears witness as a mere body of knowledge which men might otherwise and readily discover by the natural light of reason. On the contrary,

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it makes no effort to conceal the mysterious character of God and His world, and insists, therefore, on the contrast of divine revelation and human wisdom. The use of miracles as external evidences of the truth of Christianity, which by their extraordinary character would awaken faith, is nowhere held, as such, in either the Old or the New Testament. The New Testament, especially, represents miracles as an integral part of the faith. The belief in miracles, as a number of recent writers have observed, is the result, not the cause, of religious faith.¹

We may recall here that Campbell urges us to believe in the miraculous as little as possible. When any other hypothesis will tolerably account for the facts, we are not to believe a miracle. Such a viewpoint illustrates once again, though more obliquely, Campbell's bondage to his age. The apologists of the eighteenth century were all confronted with the difficulty of reconciling their belief in an active, creative, and personal God with the idea of nature as an unchangeable causal order. They tended to accept the assumption of their opponents, that the course of nature was a "closed system," that the laws of nature were determined from the beginning and their operation was immutable. Nothing new or extraordinary could enter into this system without violating its laws. Hence, miracles were "violations of the laws of nature." And one must defend some such argument as Campbell's, that there is a

¹ See Cairns, The Faith That Rebels; Farmer, The World and God; Hogg, Redemption from this World.
"peculiar presumption in favour of such miracles as are ... wrought in support of religion," if miracle is to survive at all in such a setting.

But surely Christianity is founded on faith in the greatest of all miracles, that the transcendent God has descended from His throne and entered history and the soul of man uniquely through His Son, Jesus Christ. Professor Kroner has written:

All lesser miracles are but symbols of this mystic deed. It is mystical not because it violates the laws of nature, but because it interprets the mystical intuition of man, as, in fact, does the whole of revelation. It is a miracle, not because God is a magician or exerts some witchery, but because His act transforms the innermost substance of man, his very self. Whereas this self is a self only because it strives after the infinite good without being able to reach it, now this infinite good appears in the selfhood of Jesus and proclaims that faith can accomplish what man of his own will never can.

One fruit of the eighteenth century discussion of the miraculous which merits attention, although Campbell did not contribute directly to it, was the shift of emphasis by certain apologists, men like Soame Jenyns, from the external to the internal evidences of Christianity. These new champions of revealed religion, however, as Professor Baillie points out, utilised the same points that the Deists had insisted upon in the interest of Natural Religion. The true religion, they said, is tested by its practical character and its correspondence to our moral needs — a test which

is basically deistical. But, at the very least, such men did open the way for a consideration by subsequent thinkers of how the concept of an active, creative, personal, and present God can be reconciled with the conception of the world as a causal order.

Our appraisal of Campbell thus far has been critical, dealing exclusively with his shortcomings, both religious and philosophical. It would be manifestly unfair to conclude here, without first saying some appreciative words about his life and thought. Although he was not philosophically adequate to deal with Hume's scepticism in the fashion of a Kant, he was a man of considerable intellectual ability, and his reply to Hume is the best advanced by any eighteenth century cleric. The whole wide range of his writings shows a truly amazing breadth of knowledge.

But it is Campbell's complete sincerity and genuine piety, both of which make themselves manifest on every page of his work, which commend him to us most highly. His Lectures on Systematic Theology and his Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence and the Pastoral Character, especially, breathe a liberal spirit which it is refreshing to meet in an age of controversy and polemics. And, they contain very sound advice for the young theological student and the minister. Few will wish to disagree with Campbell's strict insistence that theology must be both Biblical and practical, or with his contention that preaching is more than imparting the knowledge of God by oral precept, and the preacher must, therefore, personally exemplify the practicability of the way of life in which he seeks to instruct the
people.

A foe of all self-display, and a staunch champion of Christian humility, George Campbell represents admirably the sweet reasonableness which was Moderatism's greatest appeal. His life and thought, indeed, reflect accurately the strengths and the shortcomings of the energetic, peculiar, and varied life of eighteenth century Scotland. A true Moderate, his most fitting eulogy may well be that which his successor at Marischal College actually pronounced:

He was satisfied that the more the pure dictates of the Gospel were studied, the more they would approve themselves to the mind, and bring forth, in the affections and conduct, all the peaceable fruits of righteousness.¹

Perhaps we may dare to add an epitaph in the words of Carlyle of Inveresk:

Let us not complain of poverty, for it is a splendid poverty indeed! It is paupertas fecunda vivorum! ²

¹ Brown, op. cit., p. 25.
² Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 561. From a speech before the General Assembly of 1789, in defense of the Moderate clergy.
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